

\ service plan 2010

Finance Advisory Network

What is the network?

The CIPFA Finance Advisory Network (FAN) celebrated its seventh birthday in December 2009, and since its inception, it has gone from strength to strength. The network has an impressive membership of over 350 public sector bodies including local authorities, police (which have a dedicated associate membership network), fire and transport authorities. It has approximately a 95% subscriber retention rate which amply demonstrates how highly its help and support is valued by its subscribers.

The CIPFA FAN has been built upon a clear vision and objective. It is designed to assist finance professionals, local authority members and other local authority officers who wish to work together to enhance the effectiveness of their financial management and financial reporting in supporting improved service delivery during a period of unprecedented public sector financial and policy reform.

The network achieves this objective through effectively briefing and advising its members on legislative, professional and other guidance that is issued and, in particular, on the practical issues and implications arising from such guidance. Timely and practical advice is offered to support action planning for reform as it impacts upon a wide range of financial management issues, processes, strategies and procedures. In addition, through its team of advisors, the CIPFA FAN provides expertly facilitated peer networking, advice and support across its whole membership.

FAN members are given access to the benefits detailed below. These are outlined in more detail in the following section.

- Regional events on the technical accounting developments and the latest developments in local government financial management.
- Access to documentation through a dedicated website. This includes a library of past FAN publications.
- The ability to network with other finance professionals across local government facing similar challenges.

\ service plan 2010

Membership benefits

Regional Events

Through attending regional events FAN members are kept up to date with the latest developments in local government finance. This includes technical accounting requirements and more broader financial management considerations. These events allow delegates to hear from experts in the field, share local authority experiences and discuss the implications with other practitioners facing similar challenges.

CIPFA FAN Documentation

Finance networks team members prepare and publish relevant briefings and guidance on the main local government financial management issues of the day. They also encourage members of the network to share or write their own documentation covering specific areas of work which subscribers find to be extremely useful. The FAN website at www.cipfanetworks.net/fan/ contains a wealth of published information this has been especially useful under our IFRS developments page where authorities have shared IFRS plans, documents and committee reports.

National Advisory Reports, Briefings and Guides

These reports and briefings avoid theory and concentrate on dealing with practical issues and implications for practitioners. The most popular downloads from the FAN website for December 2009 included:

- How to Prepare for the Introduction of IFRS in Local Government.
- Rough Guide to Balance Sheet Management.
- Rough Guide to Accounting for Tangible Assets under IFRS.
- Dealing with the Recession briefing document.
- IFRS Lease Analysis Matrix.

CIPFA FAN – Rough Guides

In addition to our advisory reports and legislative briefings, the FAN will periodically champion separate research and analysis around certain topics or issues affecting local government finance and performance. This will often involve drawing together a dedicated team of local government practitioners and other experts in the field, with a view to compiling a user-friendly publication around the subject being researched.

The resulting rough guides normally provide front line officers and other practitioners with a mix of detailed commentary, review, analysis, insight, suggested approaches and case studies around how to approach and deliver upon these themes and are offered as an additional (unofficial) aid to practitioners. All of our rough guides are available to subscribers of the FAN as part of their subscription service. Current themes on our website include:

- Rough Guide to Accounting for Tangible Assets under IFRS.
- Balance Sheet Management.
- Annual Governance Statement.
- Developing a Financial Strategy in a Local Authority.
- Better Practices in Financial Management.
- Service Review in Accountancy and Financial Management.

\ service plan 2010

CIPFA Networks and CIPFA Seminars & Conferences - Coming Together to Broaden Subscriber Choice

For the first time in 2010 FAN subscribers will be able to use their network subscription places at network events and/or those CIPFA Seminars and Conferences that are directly related to the network.

Details of the 7 seminar and conferences open to FAN subscribers are included within the Themes for 2010 section of this plan.

In addition you will have received a letter detailing how the integrated arrangement will work in practice. If you have any queries, please contact one of the advisors.

FAN subscribers will also, in 2010, have access to a wider range of event materials and briefings. As well as the traditional materials from our networks events and the excellent related guidance subscribers already receive; subscribers will now be able to have electronic access to a selection of the materials from the CIPFA Seminars and Conferences directly related to the FAN network. This will be delivered through the medium of the FAN's already successful dedicated website.

Access to CIPFA Training Events

From April 2010 FAN subscribers will now be able to use their pre-paid delegate places to attend any CIPFA Leadership or Finance Professional Training event.

These are events which have previously been run independently of FAN by CIPFA Training.

During 2010 this new partnership arrangement with CIPFA Training will open up numerous personal and professional development opportunities to FAN members. It is a key development in our attempts to maximise the flexibility and value for money now available to all of our subscribers at this most crucial time of tighter resources and reduced departmental budgets.

More detail about these CIPFA Training courses can be found by clicking on the following link:

www.cipfanetworks.net/training/portfolio

\ service plan 2010

Main themes and activities

The CIPFA FAN is aiming for the individual elements of its annual financial management and reporting programme to cover the following key strands:

1. Technical and Regulatory Developments.
2. Performance and Transformation of Financial Services.

Technical and Regulatory Developments

The technical and regulatory strand will consider the technical accounting, financial reporting and legislative areas that form the backbone of financial management in local government.

Under this strand it is intended to cover:

- IFRS restatement of financial statements for 2009/10.
- Specialist topics, for example, group accounts under IFRS and capital financing / accounting.
- The 2010/11 financial closedown under IFRS.
- Providing better financial information to aid decision making and inform stakeholders of financial performance.

The Performance and Transformation of Financial Services

This strand focuses on how the delivery and performance of local authority financial services can be transformed to serve the needs of our stakeholders in a more efficient and effective manner. It will also consider how authorities can change and adapt services to meet the budget reductions that will affect all authorities.

Under this strand it is intended to cover:

- Best practice in terms of structure, systems and processes of a finance function.
- In readiness for substantial budget reductions from 2011/12 how the private sector deals with cost and revenue control.
- Planning and delivering service reductions.

Programme Caveat

All the programmes highlighted by the CIPFA FAN in this service plan, are subject to change. Where new topics emerge that are considered as either more important or more urgent than those within the existing programme, the CIPFA FAN will attempt to add them to the programme as outlined above. However there may be occasions when a new programme has to replace an existing programme already highlighted at short notice.

\ service plan 2010

Programme details

Characteristics of a Modern Finance Function – May 2010

Events will be held in: Manchester / Birmingham / York / London

How do you know whether your Finance Function is operating in the most effective and efficient manner? This series of events will highlight best practice and practical solutions to enable you to improve your finance service. The events will consider the outcomes of the Audit Commission study on strategic financial management. The events will also draw on experience from authorities that have made the best use of information technology to improve their financial processes and other techniques to improve the provision of services including sharing finance services between authorities.

Cost and Revenue Control a Private Sector Approach – June 2010

Events will be held in: Manchester / York / London / Bristol / Birmingham

This series of events will provide practitioners with different approaches to financial control during difficult economic times. It will provide an opportunity to examine how the private sector controls its finances to provide long term stability and remains competitive in the market place. The events will also investigate areas within local government that have different approaches to financial control including a focus on unit costing and modelling financial forecasts and service costs.

IFRS Group Accounts – July 2010

Events will be held in: Manchester / York / London

These specialist events will assist local authorities with group activities to prepare group accounts under IFRS, in readiness for disclosure in their final accounts for 2010/11. It is envisaged that FAN subscribers who have substantial group interests will play a key role in facilitating this series.

Service Reduction Planning – September 2010

Events will be held in: London / Manchester / York / Southampton / Exeter / Birmingham

Whichever party wins the general election it will impose tough financial settlements for local authorities from April 2011. This series of events will explore government policy around financial settlements taking onboard any recent announcements regarding likely levels of funding for local authorities post April 2011. The events will also discuss and debate practical examples of organisations that have made significant service cuts. This will include prioritisation methods for financial planning.

The A to Z of Local Authority Capital - October 2010

Events will be held in: Manchester / York / London / Bristol

The aim of these events is to consider comprehensively the financial aspects of capital to enable organisations to improve their overall arrangements around capital. The events will consider how capital programmes are devised, capital expenditure monitoring, capital financing and accounting. Important considerations such as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and how authorities deal with this requirement will be explored at the events.

IFRS Restatement 2009/10 – October and November 2010

Events will be held in: Leeds/ Chester / Durham / Birmingham / London / Cambridge / Exeter / London / Southampton

The CIPFA IFRS Code, through International Accounting Standard (IAS), places a requirement on local authorities to restate fully their 2009/10 financial statements for the provisions of IFRS. This includes comprehensive income and expenditure account, balance sheet, cash flow statement, movement in

\ service plan 2010

reserves statement and related notes. This series will therefore assist authorities in this restatement exercise in readiness for closedown 2010/11 by offering suggested approaches for practitioners to follow.

Explaining the Numbers – January 2011

Events will be held in: London / Manchester / York / Birmingham

This series of events will explore the different approaches organisations take to financial reporting to enable finances to be understood better and acted upon. This will include narrative reporting, summary accounts and annual reports.

The overall aim of the events is for organisations to improve their financial reporting to stakeholders. It is intended that a particular part of these events will focus on specific proposals for local authority narrative reporting under IFRS and that a subscribing authority will lead on this part of the series.

Undertaking the 2010/11 Accounts Closedown under IFRS – February and March 2011

Events will be held in: Leeds/ Chester / Durham / Birmingham / London / Cambridge / Exeter / London / Southampton

Following on from our very successful series which have taken place in previous years covering accounting closedown. This series will focus on the requirement for local authorities to close their accounts for the first time under the CIPFA IFRS Code. The series will cover the main considerations and actions that should be undertaken to ensure organisations comply with the CIPFA IFRS Code and close their accounts effectively.

Access to Integrated Seminars and Conferences

From this subscription year, subscribers to the CIPFA FAN will have access to the following integrated finance seminars and conferences events as part of their subscription;

- Capital Conference (June 2010)
- SORP (IFRS Code) days x 2 (July 2010)
- Finance and Policy developments in Local Government (October 2010)
- Technical Update days x 2 (November 2010)
- Introduction to the IFRS Code (December 2010)
- Local Government Funding Seminar (December 2010)
- Introduction to Local Authority Capital Finance (January 2011)

Details of how this arrangement will work have been sent to subscribers in a separate communication.

All fan events (including the integrated finance seminars and conferences) will be listed under the events pages of our Fan website at www.cipfanetworks.net/fan/. For further information on the exact dates of these integrated finance seminars and conferences please contact: Kirsten.Ewald@cipfa.org.uk.

Online Booking

During 2010, delegates will be able to book onto FAN events using a new online facility. This is easy to use and will save you time. Further details of these developments will be available shortly

Updating the CIPFA FAN Website

The CIPFA FAN website will be re-vamped for April 2010, giving subscribers a clearer perspective on the FAN's products and services with special pages designed for those subscribers who wish to volunteer to undertake research, speaking or document sharing activities. The range of links will be improved as will the search facility. It is also envisaged that the FAN website will show a directory of locally based

\ service plan 2010

practitioner finance groups to assist authorities to seek localised advice and support on financial challenges.

Subscriber Advice

FAN advisors will respond to requests from subscribers on local government finance issues and/or will put subscribers in touch with the appropriate CIPFA contact who will offer them assistance.

FANzine

All back issues of our in-house magazine (launched in the summer of 2003) are readily available to all subscribers together with email alerts to key issues. FANZINE has proved to be a popular and invaluable source of local authority financial management information and it has frequently provided the basis for articles and briefings for in-house local authority reports and publications.

Monthly E Alerts

FAN subscribers receive a monthly e alert providing information about all the latest developments in local government finance.

FAN Planned Documentation for 2010

The appendix to this service plan details the documentation the FAN plans to produce during 2010.

Discussion Forums, Volunteering, Networking and External Partnerships – New Developments for 2010

Aimed at making best use of our rich client base, The FAN is anxious to create better networking opportunities for its subscribers and has passed on subscriber requests for assistance from the whole FAN network on such topics as: charging policy, capital software developments, governance research, research on narrative reporting and assistance with capital policy for debt free authorities.

The response to these requests for help from the FAN community has been encouraging. The CIPFA FAN intends to develop this approach further for 2010 under the heading of "Ask the Network." The CIPFA FAN has joined forces with the CIPFA TIS to stream the latter's discussion pages through its CIPFA FAN website and this has proved to be extremely successful.

For 2010, the CIPFA FAN plans to utilise the talents and expertise of its subscribers through the medium of volunteer special interest groups, covering certain key issues. It is felt that the development of a vibrant FAN community can only benefit the growth in learning, knowledge and personal development of its subscriber members.

In 2009 the CIPFA FAN continued to partner Grant Thornton on the delivery of certain events. In 2010 it intends to continue this trend thus adding value to its subscriber service offerings. In 2009 authorities contributed many of their own working documents and briefings to share with their peers. This is also aimed to continue and deepen in the coming year.

\ service plan 2010

Key contact details

Roman Haluszczak
Manager, CIPFA Finance Networks
Email: Roman.Haluszczak@cipfa.org.uk
Tel: 01274 533231
Mobile: 07919 018751

Paul Boden
Finance Advisor, England FAN
Email: Paul.Boden@cipfa.org.uk
Tel: 01270 610465
Mobile: 07787 282095

Mark Kenyon
Finance Advisor, England FAN
Email: Mark.Kenyon@cipfa.org.uk
Tel: 01922 452416
Mobile: 07766 246356

Dean Henry
Business Support Officer, FAN
Email: Dean.Henry@cipfa.org.uk
Tel: 020 8667 8578

Website: www.cipfanetworks.net/fan/

\ service plan 2010

Appendix – FAN Planned Documentation

Event Topic	Planned Date	Planned Documentation
Characteristics of a Modern Finance Function	May 2010	Briefing document detailing best practice in terms of financial processes and characteristics of a modern finance function.
Cost & Revenue Control a Private Sector Approach	June 2010	Briefing document detailing different approaches to cost and revenue control. This will include case studies of particular organisational approaches.
IFRS Group Accounts	July 2010	How to guide on preparing group accounts under IFRS.
Service Reduction Planning	September 2010	FAN briefing on financial settlements for local authorities from 2011 onwards. Also documentation containing case studies of organisations that have implemented service reductions.
The A to Z of Capital	October 2010	Briefing document around capital finance and accounting.
IFRS Restatement 2009/10	Oct & Nov 2010	Updated version of the FAN rough guide to Accounting for Capital Assets under IFRS.
Explaining the Numbers	January 2011	A guide to presenting financial information to meet stakeholder requirements.
Undertaking the 2010/11 Closedown	Feb & March 2011	Briefing document that covers issues that need to be considered for the 2010/11 closedown of accounts.