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**CIPFA FINANCE  
ADVISORY NETWORK (FAN)  
SUPPORTING BEST PRACTICE IN  
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

CIPFA

AT THE HEART OF  
PUBLIC SERVICES



# The CIPFA Finance Advisory Network

The CIPFA Finance Advisory Network (FAN) was launched in January 2002, and has since gone from strength to strength. The network now boasts an impressive membership of some 300 public sector bodies including local authorities, police (which have a dedicated associate membership network), fire and transport authorities.

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

The network achieves this objective through effectively briefing its members on legislative, professional and other guidance that is issued and, in particular, on the practical issues and implications arising. Timely and relevant 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 lead and regional advisers, the CIPFA FAN provides expertly facilitated peer support across its membership.

## A Look at 2005

During 2005 the network has supported members in a number of crucial areas, covering new regulatory demands as well as helping to promote good practice in a broader financial management agenda.

The network developed practitioner '*Rough Guides*' covering Financial Strategy and guidance on the Statement on Internal Control. We also provided advice and guidance on how to make best use of the new CIPFA Financial Management Model.

Themes covered during 2005 included:

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- Group and Whole of Government Accounts
- 
- Efficiency Planning
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- CPA
- 
- 3-Year Settlements
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- The Statement on Internal Control
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## Themes for 2006/07

The programme of workshops and seminars for the 2006/07 membership year has been carefully considered in the light of the current issues facing local government finance teams, in particular, CPA improvement themes.

In 2006/07 we plan to cover:

- 
- Financial Management Improvement Themes
    - with two series of events covering the financial aspects of partnerships and risk management
- 
- Achieving Effective Option Appraisal
- 
- Financial Reporting: Preparing for UK GAAP
- 
- The Implications of Rolling Budgets and Three-Year Settlements
- 
- Technical Briefings - a round up of the latest legislative and regulatory issues affecting financial management in local authorities
- 
- Accounts Closure: Compliance and Improvement Theme
-

# CIPFA FAN Service Themes for 2006/07

## English Programme

### Series 1 - April 2006

Financial Management Improvement Themes  
- Partnerships

Birmingham / Cambridge / Exeter / Leeds  
/ London / Manchester / Newcastle / Southampton

Following their annual use of resources assessment, councils will be in little doubt about the Audit Commission's opinion of their financial management arrangements. If a low score has highlighted areas of weakness, how can the underlying, cross cutting improvement themes be identified, and how can finance professionals engage the whole organisation in action planning for financial management reform?

An analysis of the CPA use of resources scores and examples of best practice will be used to identify the most commonly occurring and critical improvement themes. Delegates will discover:

- what actually works in practice to address these issues;
- how this can be shown to support the council in meeting its business objectives; and
- how this can impact on their CPA score.

### Series 2 - June 2006

Achieving Effective Option Appraisal

Cambridge / Coventry / Exeter / Leeds / London  
/ Manchester / Newcastle / Southampton

Option appraisal and the review of project performance are described by authorities as two of the weakest areas of their financial management. This series will consider effective approaches to assessing different capital and project options and the way that such assessments can effectively involve key project stakeholders.

We will consider:

- the processes outlined in the HM Treasury Green Book on option appraisal;
- practical experiences of authorities in designing and delivering their own option appraisal; and
- post implementation review approaches.

The financial elements of option appraisal and the approaches that the HM Treasury recommends for specific capital projects will also be examined.

### Series 3 - September 2006

Technical Briefing

Birmingham / Exeter / Leeds / London  
/ Manchester / Newcastle

The pace of change and new legislative requirements can be overwhelming and difficult to keep pace with. How can you be sure that you haven't missed a vital piece of legislation affecting your authority? Or ignored some crucial guidance that could help with the challenges you face?

At the request of CIPFA FAN members, this series of briefings will focus on these very issues. We will look at the current and hot topics at the time and assess the implications that each will have for authorities over the coming 12 months and beyond.

### Series 4 - October 2006

The Implications of Rolling Budgets  
and Three-Year Settlements

Birmingham / Cambridge / Exeter / Leeds  
/ London / Manchester / Newcastle / Southampton

Authorities are moving closer towards full three-year grant settlements and are enjoying greater freedoms in determining their own capital spending levels over the medium to longer term through the prudential regime. This series looks at what authorities need to do to improve their current financial and service planning arrangements to better fit with these new freedoms, flexibilities and increasing expectations from Government.

Drawing on new research commissioned by CIPFA on rolling budgets that seek to maintain a constant strategic planning horizon, this series will look at the changes that will be needed by authorities to bring their financial management arrangements, more in line with today's service delivery.

continued >>

### Series 5 - November 2006

Financial Reporting: Preparing for UK GAAP

Birmingham / Cambridge / Exeter / Leeds  
/ London / Manchester / Newcastle / Southampton

The position regarding SORP 2006 and its proposals to move local authority accounts more onto a UK GAAP basis will become clearer by Autumn 2006.

The purpose of this series will be to:

- examine and assess these proposed changes for 2006/07 as they will relate to the financial reporting and accounting responsibilities of the authority;
- review the significant implications for the structure and delivery of final accounts; and
- assess the need to explain any new reporting conventions to key stakeholders.

The financial systems and structures of the authority will be touched by these changes and the skills base of those involved will have to be augmented.

The aim of this series is to give practitioners and those with a more strategic overview of the financial process a better understanding of the changes that they will face as a result of the move towards UK GAAP.

### Series 6 - January 2007

Accounts Closure: Compliance and Improvement Theme

Birmingham / Cambridge / Exeter / Leeds  
/ London / Manchester / Newcastle / Southampton

Given that financial reporting was the lowest scoring CPA theme across authorities during 2005, what is the likelihood of a step change improvement following the further demands of UK GAAP, CIPFA SORP and other technical developments (researched in Series 5) during 2006?

Drawing on key messages from practitioners and further qualitative guidance from CIPFA and the Audit Commission, this series will look at the implications of these new reporting expectations and will consider how authorities can best achieve them.

### Series 7 - March 2007

Financial Management Improvement Themes  
- Financial Risk Management

Birmingham / Cambridge / Exeter / Leeds  
/ London / Manchester / Newcastle / Southampton

Following on from the FAN April 2006 series, and informed by the second round of use of resources assessments, the March 2007 series will continue the coverage of the critical financial management improvement themes. The series will also highlight Audit Commission messages about financial management improvement and revisions to the underlying criteria which will need to be addressed by councils in future assessments.

An analysis of the CPA use of resources scores and examples of best practice will be used to identify the most commonly occurring and critical improvement themes. Delegates will discover:

- what actually works in practice to address these issues;
- how this can be shown to support the council in meeting its business objectives; and
- how this can impact on their CPA score.

**"I have attended a number of FAN workshops and have always found the presenters knowledgeable and they impart this knowledge in a structured and well presented way."**

**Please Note:** All CIPFA FAN service themes are subject to change. Where new topics emerge that are either more important or more urgent than those within our existing programme, the CIPFA FAN will attempt to add them to the programme outlined above. However there may be occasions when a new programme has to replace the existing service theme already highlighted.

All members have online access to a library of documentation produced by the CIPFA FAN, which can be readily accessed on [www.cipfanetworks.net/fan](http://www.cipfanetworks.net/fan)

## National Advisory Reports

These advisory reports concentrate on dealing with practical issues and implications for practitioners. Topical issues covered include:

- Implications of Three-Year Settlements
- Using the CIPFA Financial Management Model
- Learning the Lessons of FRS 17
- Preparing for Group Accounts, Whole of Government Accounts and Closing Accounts

## Legislative briefings

These offer a rapid response to new legislation and guidance issued by central government. Concise summaries for use across your organisation, they provide analysis of practical issues and implications as they impact upon practitioners.

## FAN - Rough Guides

The CIPFA FAN will periodically champion separate research and analysis around certain topics and produce a rough guide to provide practitioners with a mix of detailed commentary, review, analysis, insight and suggested approaches to deliver upon these themes.

## FANzine

All back issues of our in-house magazine (launched in the summer of 2003) are readily available to all members.

## FAN E-Alerts

Members are provided with regular email alerts on key issues. These are also available on the website.

In 2006/7 the CIPFA FAN will continue to develop its support to Welsh members, led by the newly appointed associate adviser for Wales who brings a wealth of experience of public sector finance in Wales.

The programme of workshops and seminars for 2006/07 has been carefully considered in the light of the current issues facing Welsh local government finance teams. It will provide a range of both generic and 'Wales specific' topics, involving key decision makers and staff from agencies responsible for policy making and monitoring of effective service delivery initiatives.

In 2006/07 we plan to cover:

- Option Appraisal
- Financial Reporting Developments
- SIC – First Year Issues
- Efficiency Planning Developments
- Rolling Budgets
- Three-Year Settlements
- Accounts Closure

Following discussions with CIPFA FAN members, we are currently reviewing the delivery side of the program, including the feasibility of conducting events at different geographical locations. Further details on this, and the program content, will be contained in our annual membership pack. Welsh members will, of course, also be able to continue to use their free delegate place allocations at events in England.

“Excellent...really useful day.”

For Details of Membership to CIPFA FAN in Wales Contact:

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# Joining the CIPFA FAN

## Support and Benefits of Membership

As a member of the CIPFA Finance Advisory Network, you will benefit from:

- Flexibility - to use your selected number of delegate places at any combination of events across the programme for 2006/07 (see pages 2 and 3)
- Expert Technical and Advisory Support - from a team of four regionally based advisers
- A Unique Opportunity to Network - and share best practice with other members of a wider network of peers
- Exclusive Website Access - to our full web-based library of documentation and briefing notes, with coverage across a wide variety of the latest technical issues.
- Access to Rough Guides - copies of our latest Rough Guides on the Statement on Internal Control and Developing a Financial Strategy
- FANzine - a quarterly in-house magazine covering the latest topical issues and development for finance practitioners
- FAN e-Alerts - regular and timely email news alerts and briefing notes
- CPD - the opportunity to support enhanced CPD across the finance team

All CIPFA FAN membership options offer access to our full range of support and benefits, with a flexible pricing structure that takes into account the varied needs of different organisations.

Membership levels are based on the total number of delegate places your organisation wishes to take at events throughout the year. Prices for English unitary or district/county (multi-tier) councils as at 1 April 2006 are shown in the table below.

No. of delegate places at events	Unitary (£ excluding VAT)	Multi-tier (£ excluding VAT)
14	4,800	4,350
13	4,640	4,190
12	4,480	4,030
11	4,300	3,850
10	4,120	3,670
9	3,940	3,490
8	3,760	3,310
7	3,555	3,105
6	3,350	2,900
5	3,145	2,695
4	2,940	2,490

The membership period runs from 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007 and all prices/places are pro-rata at time of subscription.

For details of membership in Wales and for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England please contact us.

“Well presented with good opportunities to discuss issues and experiences.”

For Further Information Contact:

Annette Millar  
Memberships Information Manager

020 8667 8535  
Annette.Millar@ipf.co.uk

# CIPFA Police Finance Advisory Network

Launched in June 2002, the CIPFA Police Finance Advisory Network (Police FAN) aims to provide police finance practitioners with timely, relevant and up-to-date information on financial issues facing police forces and authorities.

In 2005, we offered four series of workshops on Whole of Government Accounts (WGA), developing a financial strategy, taking stock of efficiency plans and accessing specific funding. Feedback documents were also produced.

## Themes for 2006/07

The programme of workshops and briefings for the remainder of the 2005/06 membership period (until August) and for the 2006/07 membership period (starting 1 September 2006) has been carefully considered in the light of current issues facing police finance practitioners.

In the remainder of the 2005/06 membership period, we intend to cover:

- Implementing the New Police Officer Pension Arrangements
- Option Appraisal

In the 2006/07 membership period, we intend to cover:

- Technical Briefing for Police Finance Practitioners
- Improving the Use of Resources
- Early Lessons from the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund
- Strategic Forces: Maintaining Effective Financial Management

### For Further Information Contact:

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Police FAN Adviser

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Alison.Dewhirst@ipf.co.uk

# CIPFA Education Finance Advisory Network

During 2006 the CIPFA Education Finance Advisory Network (EdFAN) will be building on its very successful first year by increasing the range and volume of activities. In terms of events, there will be three series of hands-on workshops this year, plus two sets of the very popular half-day briefings, focusing on:

Workshops	
Jan/Feb	Getting to Grips with Social Services Finance
May/June	Using the Prudential Code and Maximising School Estate
October	Progress on Management Issues in Education Finance

Briefings	
April	Implementing Developments in Local Authority Education and Schools Accounting
September	Preparing for Year 2 of the DSG

The CIPFA EdFAN will continue the very successful Network Queries Activity which gives members instant access to current practice in local authorities around the country. We will also produce regular briefings on the latest developments in Education and Children's Services financial policy.

Please Note: The timetable and events are subject to change.

### For Further Information Contact:

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EdFAN Adviser

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Shane.Flynn@ipf.co.uk

# The CIPFA FAN Professional Development Programme (PDP)

To support finance directors in meeting the professional development needs of all their finance staff, the CIPFA FAN has launched a new Professional Development Programme (PDP).

Designed for those working in local government finance, it offers a structured programme of technical briefings that will provide an understanding of current and critical local government finance issues, strengthening the organisation's capacity as well as supporting individual development.

Delivered on site, authorities will be able to tailor their own programme to best meet their needs by selecting from a menu of carefully chosen and current topics that will be refreshed during the year to ensure that they remain current and relevant.

There will be two separate options to maximise the range and experience of staff that can potentially benefit.

## Compulsory Professional Development (CPD)

Mandatory participation in the CIPFA CPD scheme is being phased in over a three-year period from January 2005. The CIPFA FAN is extremely pleased to be able to provide CPD certificates with all its events. The array of documentary support can also play a crucial role in supporting staff in furthering their CPD.

“Very good coverage from presentations...enabled good discussions.”

### Option 1

#### Finance Briefings

A full day providing an overview of 4 or 5 current topics selected from the PDP menu - most suitable for more senior finance staff.

### Option 2

#### Finance Updates

A full day providing two half-day sessions each covering a summary of 4 or 5 topics from the PDP menu - suitable for all levels of finance related staff.

### Price (£ per day)

CIPFA FAN Members (plus expenses)	Non-Members (plus expenses)
1,400	1,500

### For Further Information Contact:

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[www.cipfanetworks.net/fan/pdp/](http://www.cipfanetworks.net/fan/pdp/)

# CIPFA FAN Training and Development Services

One of the many significant challenges currently facing local government is how to ensure that financial management supports both strategic decision-making and effective performance management while ensuring that there is capacity to enable financial management to shape and support transformational programmes.

To meet this challenge, local government is recognising the importance of:

- ensuring financial literacy is diffused throughout the organisation;
- equipping the organisation with financial management competencies; and
- managers' accountability for managing their budgets and ensuring they are matched by suitable skills and competencies in financial management.

The CIPFA FAN, building upon our past success and experience in delivering training support, has re-designed IPF's approach to providing financial management related training and development support. Our aim is quite simple.

'To strengthen and transform the success of financial management arrangements across local government through the provision of relevant, high quality training to finance practitioners, service managers and their staff and members.'

To help you in meeting your financial management challenges, we have developed:

- a series of core programmes around which to base our future on-site support to service managers, their staff and Members in a local authority; and
- programmes to support the professional training requirements of your finance staff.

During 2005 we have been building a team of highly experienced full time and associate trainers, all CIPFA qualified. Our colleagues have a great breadth and depth of career achievement garnered from many years work within local government.

## Core Programmes for Service Managers

We have developed the following series of courses, for delivery in-house, to enhance the skills and competencies of service managers across the authority.

- Financial Management for Non-Financial Managers
- An Introduction to Local Government Finance
- Capital Budgeting and Business Case Appraisal

## Core Programmes for Members

To meet the needs of Members, we offer the following series of programmes, again to be delivered on an in-house basis.

- An Introduction to Local Government Finance for Elected Members
- Effective Budget Scrutiny - Adding Value to the Budget Setting Process
- Understanding Your Statement of Accounts

We regularly address bespoke requirements, on an individual client basis, to meet particular local needs.

Further information on our work with service managers and members can be seen at [www.ipftraining.net](http://www.ipftraining.net)

Please Note: [www.ipf.training.net](http://www.ipf.training.net) is currently being re-designed to reflect our new portfolio for 2006/07.

For Further Information Contact:

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# CIPFA Networks

CIPFA Networks deliver support in the form of an integrated series of practitioner-based communities. By subscribing to one of our networks, you immediately benefit from the ability to 'freely' attend tailored events (ranging from national seminars to regionally held workshops) and secure ongoing access to a wide range of non-event deliverables encompassing practical briefings, newsletters, help-lines and other guidance.

There are currently more than a dozen networks and forums supporting over 1700 members drawn from some 400 public service bodies. In 2006, we are planning to deliver over 600 separate events for our members across the UK; often delivered locally on a regional workshop basis to save valuable staff time and travel expenses.

In addition to those outlined within this brochure we also provide a:

- Benefits and Revenues Consortium
- Better Governance Forum
- Treasury Management Forum
- Network for Improvement Through Technology
- Housing Advisory Network

For Further Information About These and Other CIPFA Networks, Please Visit:

[www.cipfanetworks.net](http://www.cipfanetworks.net)

# IPF Consultancy

Every public representative and public service manager knows that money is a key scarce resource. Managing it well is crucial to the delivery of cost effective public services.

Chief executives, Members and senior managers are increasingly grappling with complex financial issues to ensure their organisations:

- access the maximum available resources;
- deploy their limited resources in line with organisational priorities;
- use their resources effectively;
- are transparent and accountable; and
- perform well in the eyes of their customers, staff and external inspectors.

At IPF we can help our clients achieve these objectives. We offer a tailored, well networked, independent and objective consultancy service that has particular expertise in:

- Local Government Finance - including recent developments such as The CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance and The CIPFA Financial Management Model
- Integrating Strategic and Financial Planning
- Business Cases and Option Appraisal
- Efficiency and VFM Requirements
- CPA and Issues Surrounding the Use of Resources
- Financial Arrangements for Partnerships
- Internal and External Audit
- Presenting Complex Finance Issues to Non-Finance Professionals
- The Development of National Level Accounting and Auditing

For Further Information Contact:

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# IPF

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IPF is a support services company wholly owned by CIPFA.

We specialise in financial advice and governance, property and asset management solutions, the supply of information, expertise and people with the skills to help you at the highest level.

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**www.ipf.com**

# CIPFA

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) is the leading professional body for public services, whether in the public or private sectors. It provides education and training in accountancy and financial management, and sets and monitors professional standards. Its professional qualification is high quality, relevant and practical, and is supported by a range of other products and services.

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