INTRODUCTION

Musing, as I sometimes do, I thought it would be helpful for Council and for me to take a rather wider view of CIBSE life and share some thoughts. These are my own but I have consulted the senior staff, and I hope they will help set the Strategic direction for the Institution. One of our tasks for this year is to revalidate the Strategic Plan. Ideally we need to create a vision for CIBSE that takes us beyond the next decade. Many of you will be aware of the The Edge and they are about to report on the “Edge Commission on Professionalism”, which was chaired by Paul Morrell. In essence the Review will seek not only to identify the challenges the professional bodies face but also provide a commentary. I would suggest that CIBSE would not wish to ignore this piece of work.

So this report is written in order to try and assist the validation of the Strategic Plan. First and foremost we are a membership organisation – everything we do must be focused on our members and, naturally, serving society in the widest sense as reflected in our Charter. Supporting our members we have two equal pillars, - Knowledge and Building Performance, and these two pillars also support our chartered purpose.

Knowledge is best exemplified by our publications, including the outputs of our Technical Symposium, BSSERT and LR&T, but there are many other aspects that are not peer reviewed; networking, articles in the Journal, and discussions on social media for example. Technical events, CIBSE Regions and the work of the Societies, Networks and Special Interest Groups etc. all have the sharing of CIBSE knowledge at their heart. This was precisely why we have devoted so much time and effort in creating a Technical Department to be able to harness and promote the creation, review and dissemination of this vital knowledge.

Identifying “Building Performance” as the second pillar has been a much longer journey. We started with carbon reduction, low-carbon, low energy and then four years ago we created the Building Performance Awards (BPA), deliberately focused on Clients. We realise that without good design, building, operation and then measurement of performance, in engineering terms, delivering the performance and creating the feedback loop – that is how we improve! In simple terms, it is much easier to deliver a building that meets the Client’s requirement with access to the best possible quality Knowledge, best practice and the understanding to apply all of this in order to have Building Performance. This is one of the reasons that for many of us this has been a very exciting journey and one that requires further development and adoption.
Let me say something about Membership. We remain one of the very few Professional Engineering Institutions (PEIs) with growth in Engineering Council Registrations and substantial growth Internationally. Our Membership Department now has the reputation for being young and dynamic but they also have a huge amount to do and only limited resources. We need to find a more effective way of engaging with our volunteers, encouraging them to do things and an IT system that makes it easier not harder! In simple terms we need improved membership engagement and IT support; such as a good video conferencing and virtual meetings capability and a really effective CRM that does most of the legwork.

I was fortunate to accompany the President Elect, Nick Mead, recently on his trip to Hong Kong and Shanghai. While there were many noteworthy aspects of the trip, the sheer opportunity and passion for CIBSE and what we offer was simply humbling. The enthusiasm in Shanghai could be illustrated by a set of students who had travelled for four and a half hours to meet us at an evening reception and then faced the return journey that evening! Developing CIBSE membership internationally there are huge opportunities for us in the next 10 years. I suggest that we need to develop processes that allow growth and development with minimal Balham involvement.

Membership Subscriptions will never be enough to support even 75% of our essential activity. That is why the role CIBSE Services plays is so important; there are two tangible benefits; firstly, the staff activity in Journal, Certification, Training, Events etc. gives us a bigger footprint; and secondly ~£500k contribution pa. CIBSE Services with ~£4m turnover pa is at best a minor player: is there an ambition to double, treble turnover and make a £1.5M contribution pa?

Returning to Knowledge, we have achieved much with the Journal and Knowledge Portal but there is still more to do. We have around 38 titles for Publication this year but that still is not enough I think. We should also explore the potential to develop a “collaborative knowledge-sharing platform” for building services, perhaps as the next stage for the Knowledge Portal development and seeking to embrace BIM templates too perhaps. I am really keen to break the “Balham centric” approach and encourage Knowledge from bottom-up; the question is how do we do this while maintaining the quality and peer review that gives our knowledge much of its value and sets it apart from a wiki, blog or social media discussion. The Knowledge Management Committee is now well established and there are very positive signs but there is so much more to do, have we the energy and vigour to up our game?
Building Performance is still an “embryonic pillar” but we hope that the BPA at Grosvenor House Hotel on the 10th February will be the best yet. As I write table sales are at an all-time high, and I hope it will be a good night. We also have a serious message on the importance of Building Performance by Ken Shuttleworth. We are looking forward to the Technical Symposium at UCL on the 16/17 April that will cover knowledge as well as Performance. Later in the year, we shall run our second Building Performance Conference at the QE2 Centre in November. We shall continue to use Case Studies and the 90 or so entries for the BPA to underpin the technical programme. If Council members have thoughts to offer to our planning team, please do share them with us now, and I would encourage all on Council to mark the dates in their diaries to join us.

Internally we are facing significant challenges; while our new Content Management System is now live and the majority view is it has been a huge improvement, we are fully focused on the new CRM which is planned to go live at the end of May. So far it has been a roller-coaster ride! Financially we are awaiting the auditors but we believe we have delivered a modest surplus in 2014 against a deficit budget and especially pleasing is the improved performance of Services in Q4. Our Marketing Team continues to develop; with two staff members going on maternity leave we shall be looking for temporary staff cover to continue all the good work. I hope we can identify a sensible option to at least re-provide the HQ and Offices in Balham in order to face the future in appropriate premises. Our Strategic challenge is not the shortage of opportunities but to correctly select the right ones in order to deliver tangible improvement. 2015 will be an exciting year with much to do.