



An Institution for 2010

25 September 2002

Foreword

In 1999, the Institution published *A Strategy for Evolution*, having undertaken a comprehensive review of activities. A Task Group, chaired by John Hill, developed the report after wide consultation, and it included some 125 recommendations for action. Since its publication, the various Committees and Panels of the Institution, together with the secretariat, have been addressing all the recommendations, and nearly all of them have now been implemented or are still ongoing.

Moving on from that activity, the President's Committee decided to undertake a further, longer-term strategic review. This document is the result of that activity.

This document was originally prepared by the President's Committee at a meeting on 10 June 2001 at Belle Isle, County Fermanagh. The meeting was divided into seven sessions, each addressing a separate theme. This document is presented in those same seven sections. Those contributing to the discussion and to this subsequent document have been:

John Hill, David Blockley, Sarah Buck, Les Clark, Michael Dickson, Bob McKittrick, David Nethercot, John Roberts, Billy Walker, Ron Watermeyer, Keith Eaton, Marie Dignan and Stuart Kitching.

It has now been further revised with inputs from Council members, Branches, Sections, Divisions and Representatives, Committee and Panel members, and individuals.

The document captures the discussion at Belle Isle on a vision for the Institution in 2010. It is a statement of policy and is not intended as a business plan. The next stage of its development will be to establish measurable objectives and a plan for their implementation. This will involve Branches, Sections and Divisions, Committees and Panels, individual members and the Institution's staff. Both the Strategy Review Committee and the President's Committee will be reviewing continuously its development and implementation and periodic reports will be made to Council.

Professor David Blockley, President
30 September 2002

Section 1 – Aims

Strategic aims:

The Institution will....

- 1.1be acknowledged internationally as the pre-eminent body promoting high standards of structural engineering, maintaining high standards of professional qualification in structural engineering, and assisting structural engineers to maintain their professional competence (bearing in mind that it is the only body that rigorously qualifies structural engineers and operates as a learned society on a worldwide basis).
- 1.2interest and enthuse students and graduates to bring them into professional membership of the Institution, and be acknowledged as the centre for structural engineers and the centre for structural engineering knowledge and advancement.
- 1.3...ensure that it remains as an independent and specialised Institution focused on structural engineering, confidently playing a significant, but holistic and learned society, role with others in the construction industry.

What we have to do:

- 1) Establish a clearer identity - to potential members, employers, governments, clients and the public generally - for chartered structural engineers, incorporated structural engineers and the Institution. The key justification for the Institution must be its qualifying body role, linked to a concern for public safety and the effective and efficient use of the world's resources. This may possibly lead to the future licensing of structural engineers.
- 2) Follow our own agenda in bringing structural engineers from other institutions into IStructE. We have to continue to work alongside other institutions; we need to demonstrate as clearly as we can the value to individuals of joining IStructE.
- 3) Consider how we promote IStructE as the Institution which all structural engineers should want to join, whilst maintaining our standards and ethos. The Institution must be the focus for structural engineering – not belonging should mean being not properly accepted as a structural engineer. We must be much less accommodating in future regarding members of other institutions (both in the UK and elsewhere) and others who have not satisfied the membership requirements of IStructE as structural engineers.
- 4) Seek to recruit all eligible structural engineers, with a particular focus on increasing the proportion of females.
- 5) Carry out a strategic study into the changing role of structural engineers in society.

Section 2 – International Considerations

Strategic aims:

The Institution will....

- 2.1respond to its position as a recognised international network for structural engineering, and the advancement of it, by fully reflecting structural engineering achievement and expertise on a worldwide basis.
- 2.2ensure the pre-eminence of its qualifying examinations as second to none internationally, enabling new relationships in countries where the examinations add value for structural engineers and for the public interest in those countries.
- 2.3ensure the governance of the Institution properly reflects and represents the worldwide membership of the Institution. In addition, the Institution will represent the structural engineering profession to the United Kingdom government and appropriate public bodies, recognising that its Royal Charter establishes a British connection.

What we have to do:

- 6) **Aspire** to be the international network and centre of excellence for structural engineering whilst recognising the concerns and needs of **all** members. Institution membership should be recognised as the international ‘passport’ for structural engineers. Strategic relationships with national institutions and registration councils will be formed to strengthen the position of members practicing and residing throughout the world.
- 7) Establish a working party to review the governance (including the committee structure) of the Institution in order to improve the participation in and contribution to the workings of the Institution of non-UK based members and to broaden the focus of the Institution’s activities.
- 8) Ensure that the Journal continues to attract and publish authoritative papers on structural engineering from engineers and other construction professionals worldwide, whether or not they are members. We **must** get many more papers, describing structural engineering projects, structural engineering issues and indigenous technologies and construction techniques from countries outside the UK in order to make the journal more “international” in content and to express the international dimension of the Institution for the benefit of all members.
- 9) Develop the aspiration to be an international body which happens to have its HQ in London - that will take some selling and may require organisational changes. It needs to be a slow process of development which may involve changes in methods of communication and in the decision making processes.
- 10) Develop a generic model for assessing structural competence, based on the Institution’s qualifying examinations. General guidance needs to be developed on how the Institution’s qualifying examinations can be used to facilitate regulatory requirements and also how they can be linked to licensing to practise. We need to clarify what such examinations qualify members to do.

- 11) Ensure that the language, culture and content of our publications and communications is not confined to the perspective and needs of those members residing in the UK. Our target audience for publications that deal with global issues will encompass all our members living in both developed and developing countries.
- 12) Respond to global issues, including those pertaining to sustainable development, which impact upon structural engineering by issuing statements, reports and guidelines. Ensure that appropriate technologies are disseminated in areas where it is most needed, and indigenous construction technologies which constitute best practices in the locality in which they are utilized are given due recognition and are promoted.
- 13) Disseminate information on structural engineering on the Institution's website so that the Institution becomes the first "port of call". Review and endorse publications on structural engineering from other organizations.

Section 3 – Membership

Strategic aims:

The Institution will....

- 3.1define new terms of reference for the Membership Committee such that they will permit a greater recognition of regional input to candidate assessment, more secretariat responsibility for 'routine' cases, and a greater proportion of committee effort to be applied to the development and implementation of a membership recruitment strategy.
- 3.2recognise that courses in civil engineering presented by tertiary educational institutions provide the foundation for structural engineering, but encourage the development of courses specialising in structures or structures with architecture.
- 3.3actively promote Student membership in all tertiary institutions, encourage transfer from Student to Graduate and then to Associate-Member or Member, and seek convergence with, and acceptability of, the ICE's core IPD requirements, so providing a common structured path for those with civil engineering qualifications prior to sitting the Institution's exam.
- 3.4re-brand the Associate-Membership examination and the grade of Associate-Member, giving a defined route (with a need for further achievement beyond that necessary to become an Associate-Member) through to full Chartered Structural Engineer status via the Chartered Membership examination.
- 3.5 guard jealously the membership examinations and the research assessment route.
- 3.6 ...enhance recognition of the grade of Fellow as representing substantial achievement in structural engineering by the peer group, clients and the general public.
- 3.7make welcome to its lectures and other public events, centrally, in UK regions and elsewhere, all who may have an interest in structural engineering whether or not they aspire to membership. (In short: "Non-members are welcome".)

- 3.8**promote to potential members and to the public at large the benefit and value of Chartered (or Incorporated) Structural Engineer status, and the test of personal competence demonstrated through the membership examination and subsequent CPD.
- 3.9**seek to attract members from other (non cognitive) professions such as naval architects, historians, medical engineers, vessel designers and constructors, who have a passion to understand more of the background and techniques of structural engineering to become affiliates of the Institution so that they can share in the contributions structural engineering makes to society.

What we have to do:

- 14) Promote more actively membership of all grades, with particular promotion of Fellows (but direct Fellows need to be approved by the President’s Committee).
- 15) Review the system for considering applications and for delivering a membership recruitment strategy.
- 16) Give responsibility to the Membership Committee (with suitable guidance on overall Institution objectives from the President's Committee) to sort out the many issues that require attention. This will require a reduction of Membership Committee time spent on points of detail that ought to be covered by giving Institution staff greater authority. It will be necessary to ensure that the Chairman and members are capable of operating in this new, more demanding, role.
- 17) Conduct a review of the implications of SARTOR.
- 18) Aim to understand our membership better by determining how, where and under what regulatory regime they earn their living together with the scale and nature of their organisations and indigenous construction industries.
- 19) Seek to recruit more female members.
- 20) Review Engineering Technician as a possible grade of membership.

Section 4 – Services to members

Strategic aims:

The Institution will....

- 4.1**have a coherent policy on the development and timely production of a wide range of relevant documents in concert with other bodies as appropriate, to provide members with a ‘bookshelf’ of the guidance they need..
- 4.2**ensure that continuing education activities will not have profit as a primary purpose. Branches and Divisions will be encouraged to develop seminars for their members, with

any surplus offset against grants and used for the benefit of members of their Branches and Divisions.

- 4.3seek to obtain copyright to course material for the benefit of members at large and the right to publish it by any means without further payment to lecturers.
- 4.4disseminate widely advice to candidates on the Chartered Membership and the Associate-Membership examinations, particularly to candidates who may not have access to preparation courses. A clear distinction will be made between the teaching of structural engineering (which will not be the prime remit of such courses) and helping candidates to prepare for IStructE examinations.
- 4.5use appropriate information/Internet technology, as it develops and becomes feasible, to give access to its publications and other relevant information. This will be done mindful of the need for structural engineers to meet and enjoy the professional fellowship and enthusiasm which is a special characteristic of this well focused institution.

What we have to do:

- 21) Keep under continuous review the needs of members (including the competencies required of them) and where appropriate identify how IStructE can help members meet those needs through its learned society activities.
- 22) Establish the Institution as the market leader for structural engineering publications, including codes and standards. Produce a more coherent and structured approach to the Institution's publications list. Review the content and scope of the reports and other documents we produce and whether we should be more pro-active in deciding the timing and production of a new report. Aim to produce and maintain a set of documents that every structural engineer should want to have. These should be both deepening (e.g. a specific technical matter such as fatigue damage) and broadening (e.g. sustainability). Accept that the Institution cannot produce all the guidance documents for the profession and investigate how it might endorse or commission publications produced by other organizations.
- 23) Continuously review and update how we provide courses, distance-learning and other means of meeting the needs of members including CPD..
- 24) Examine all that we do and identify the "value" of each activity to members, students, children, governments/policy makers, other professionals, clients/customers, the general public and opinion formers including the media. We should be more selective and act more quickly and decisively when an opportunity is recognised.
- 25) Develop the use of IT to deliver services such as video conferencing, computer assisted CPD and other electronic services (e.g. on-line membership processes).

Section 5 – Strategic relationships

Strategic aims:

The Institution will....

- 5.1ensure that its Royal Charter, with its charitable status, remains the form of governance in preference to a company or other form of legal entity, unless it proves a significant obstacle to the development of the Institution or the members' wishes.
- 5.2be strong and independent.
- 5.3ensure that its relationships with other institutions (both in the UK and elsewhere) continue to be characterised as cordial and productive, but the independence of other institutions will be recognised and respected.
- 5.4champion the professionally qualified Structural Engineer to the public.
- 5.5encourage any individual who is not a member of IStructE but describing themselves as a structural engineer, to demonstrate their competence by sitting the IStructE membership examinations and obtaining the right to use the title 'Chartered Structural Engineer' or 'Incorporated Structural Engineer'.
- 5.6remain committed to supporting and participating in the activities of bodies closely reflecting and representing the construction industry, and other allied professions, such as the Construction Industry Council in the UK, and other such multi-disciplinary bodies worldwide.
- 5.7ensure that, as a Licensed Member of the Engineering Council (UK), the transition from the Engineering Council to the Engineering & Technology Board (ETB) and the Engineering Council (UK) is smooth and well supported, even though clear strategic relationships cannot currently be described. New groupings of institutions of like mind may emerge in any country and inspire new strategic relationships in which we might well participate.

What we have to do:

- 26) Retain links with the emerging ETB and EC(UK) in the UK, but closely review developments.
- 27) Continue our discussions with other institutions, but from a position of strength as the structural engineers' Institution.
- 28) Ensure that we continue to put our effort into supporting and participating in the multi-disciplinary bodies such as the Construction Industry Council in the UK, and, through such bodies, other relevant professional bodies.
- 29) Limit our involvement with other organisations on the basis of a) the necessity to be there, and b) the benefits of being there.

- 30) Insist that Institution representatives on outside bodies file written (or e-mail) reports on meetings back to HQ and make these available to appropriate sections of the membership on an Institution Intranet.

Section 6 – The organisation

Strategic aims:

The Institution will....

- 6.1 recognise the need for the enfranchisement and representation of all eligible membership grades irrespective of where the members live.
- 6.2 use members' time at meetings to ever-greater effect, recognising the need for a streamlined structure, for Council to debate issues properly and to make strategic decisions, dealing with a limited range of essential business, and leaving other business to be delegated to committees or to staff.
- 6.3ensure that strong links and relationships with Branches, Sections and Divisions are maintained, understanding the importance of the presence of Branch Chairmen at Council and committee meetings, and that this is not to be measured solely by their contribution during the actual meetings.

What we have to do:

- 31) Carry out a review to consider the location of the premises with respect to the functions of the Institution and the needs of members. A considered long-term strategy should be established – via a sub-group of the Resources Committee. That sub-group will consider many parameters, including a strong view that we should stay in central London for the kudos, ease of travelling to the Institution building from most places, and the need for any easy access to decision makers.
- 32) Review the future governance of the Institution, the composition and functions of Council and Committees and the frequency of meetings. It will be important to ensure that attendees should be more involved in Council meetings.
- 33) Ensure that an important issue is debated at each Council meeting. We should consider the introduction of a "split" day for Council meetings – morning for routine business and afternoon for discussing critical issues (a selected Council member being notified in advance to lead the debate).
- 34) Review formally the electoral arrangements of the Institution. That review might consider the possibility of 'Regional Representatives to Council', in which case voting rights for 'Regional Representatives to Council' could be limited to members in the relevant area. This debate is intimately linked to the international/UK roles and to questions of governance which must be sorted out first.

Section 7 – Finance

Strategic aims:

The Institution will....

- 7.1 ...regularly review its premises and the need for space in central London or elsewhere. It must be prepared to respond to its changing needs and changes in property market constraints.
- 7.2 ...offer best value for the services it provides. In particular, overhead and staff costs should be understood, compared with those of other institutions, and then suitably managed to provide this best value.
- 7.3 ...develop its Premises Fund in a controlled way to avoid an undue burden now or on future generations of members.
- 7.4 ...develop the General Reserve as part of risk management and the possibility of short or medium term reduced income endangering the Institution. The target for the reserve should be set equal to one year of subscription income since, unlike a business, it might not be possible for the Institution to make sudden substantial savings to meet an income shortfall.
- 7.5 ...reduce its dependence on journal advertising revenue by the development of other significant income streams such as sales of reports and other documents – the ‘bookshelf’ concept – as typically in place in other institutions.

What we have to do:

- 35) Compare the Institution's activities, finances and staffing with those of other institutions to establish whether corrective action is needed. In particular we need to understand how other Institutions exist with lower subscriptions, before we attempt additional cost cutting or revenue generating initiatives.
- 36) Seek income from sources other than subscriptions. This should include publications on other databases – Technical Index etc.
- 37) Plan for the Institution’s Centenary celebrations.
- 38) Create an increased understanding of the key elements of income and cost – perhaps through an appropriately summarised document for the President's Committee.
- 39) Remember that whilst our role is not to make profits, nevertheless the absence of financial strength severely hampers our ability to operate effectively.

The Institution will provide appropriate resources to undertake all these actions, with a suitable prioritising and phasing within the budget. The progress of the actions will be monitored by the Strategy Review Committee and the President’s Committee, with appropriate reports being made to Council.