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LISTENING AND ACTING

The results of the GAI and Institute's membership surveys are now in and are being collated and analysed by the Communications Committee.

In general, feedback is positive but there are plenty of constructive comments for the GAI and IAI, and their committees to address. These issues are being taken extremely seriously and a full report and action plans are being formulated for presentation to members before Christmas.

But with a view to ensuring that members are kept informed of the findings and the actions which the GAI has already undertaken, the Committee has put together a brief summary:

Reg AI: still seen as a yardstick for excellence, but there is a strong feeling that Reg AI status is not fully appreciated by the industry and that the scheme needs a boost, updating and refreshing:

- A working party, led by the Institute, is working on plans to refresh the scheme, communicate the benefits of IAI members becoming a Reg AI and generally review the processes involved
- Key changes proposed include a move towards annual CPD points collection, away from the current three years, and a conscious communications exercise to raise the Reg AI profile

Education Programme: quite rightly, the GAI's education programme is very highly regarded in the industry. The changes to the way education is delivered, with open learning manuals and online course work for Level 1 is being well received. But the GAI is not resting on its laurels and there are further developments planned:

- A serious review of staff resources to drive through changes and improvements
- Replace hard copy manuals with a student development pack provided electronically
- Accelerate the conversion of the remaining manuals to open learning format and delivering Levels 2 & 3 course work online
- There are plans to bring the education programme into line with external education benchmarks



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Member Communication: this has long been a bone of contention, seen as slow and old fashioned. But big strides are currently being made:

- The databases of members are being brought up to date and formulated in a way which will allow the GAI's first e-bulletin to be issued before Christmas
- The Construction Products Association's publications are to be made more available to members via the GAI website
- The GAI is committed to providing members with more market data

Technical Support: access to technical information is highly valued by members who use the Technical Updates and helpline service:

- More active support and guidance is to be provided on the GAI website to include status reports on developments in standards, links to best practice guides, templates for preambles, and FAQs from the technical helpline
- The GAI continues to lobby in conjunction with other relevant trade associations for product standards that are practical whilst at the same time allowing our members to write specifications of the highest quality
- Overseeing, in conjunction with Exova Warrington Certification, product claims made by members to ensure they are not misleading or false

Publications: in general, the GAI's publications – especially the AIJ – are well received and valued but continual improvements are planned and underway:

- The editorial contents of the AIJ have been significantly upgraded over recent issues which, along with the redesign, have boosted the AIJ's profile. Now improvements have been made to the distribution with a new influx of architects added to the circulation, along with a significantly cleansed AI list
- Guild News and Technical Updates will be converted into electronic format

Website: members expressed concern that the GAI website needs updating and revamping to make it a more relevant business tool to the industry. The appointment of a skilled marketing professional at Stepney Green has led to major improvements in the website over recent months:

- Updated content including improved members areas, increased and improved links, online booking for GAI events, and an improved members search facility
- Further improvements are planned including RSS feeds, online communication, and a campaign to improve member participation