

Institution of Civil Engineers

PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION INTO THE GOVERNANCE OF THE INSTITUTION

Written evidence submitted by Professor John Parkin CEng FICE (Membership Number 45817853)

My evidence concerns the following [term of reference](#) of the commission:

1) g) consider means to identify and nominate the best candidates for the ICE President and Vice-President

The Institution of Civil Engineers' (ICE) Council is the body to which members of the ICE can, by vote, elect representatives. The Council is no longer the trustee body of the ICE under current governance arrangements. That trustee body, as of 2018, comprises of between eight and twelve people as follows (by-law 27):

(1) The President; (2) Vice Presidents of whom there shall be no fewer than three nor more than seven; (3) Three Council Appointee Members; and (4) One Ordinary Member.

Under these arrangements, at no time will the majority of trustees be drawn from a constituency of people who have been elected into office by the plurality of the membership. This is a significant issue for a membership body, and this issue is at the root of my concerns. The identification and nomination of ICE Presidents and Vice-Presidents has now become a significant issue because of the current governance arrangements.

Under the current by-laws, Vice-presidents, all of whom will be members of the trustee body, are recommended to the Council by the Trustee body (By-law 36). The Council has the power not to approve such a recommendation. By-law 39 provides for the Trustee body to recommend to Council a President nominated from amongst the current Vice-Presidents, or in the case of death of an incumbent any member of the Trustee body or a former member of Council (by-law 41).

There are several reasons why a professional membership body with a governing trustee body appointed in this way is problematic. Firstly, there is no clarity to the membership in the way that nominations have been made to the Council for their approval. Transparency is important. Secondly, even though the member elected Council has power to not approve a nomination, they have no power to nominate in the first place. A nomination by a body that is directly elected by the membership will align better with democratic processes and their suggestions will be more closely aligned with the aspirations of the membership. Thirdly, such top down decision making methodologies build in the greater likelihood of less diversity within the trustee body. Finally, there is the rather obvious claim that members should have, in some way, voted for members who serve on the trustee body.

The most appropriate methodology, I would suggest, for appointing The President and the Vice-Presidents is that they should be nominated by the Council for approval by the voting members at the annual general meeting. This is the methodology adopted by the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation, of which I am also a Fellow. The resolution of vacancies which may arise should also be in the gift of the Council. In this way, the Trustees will be representative of the Council, which itself in turn is a body democratically elected and representative of the membership.

John Parkin 21st January 2019