



Minutes of the Executive Committee

6th September 2024

Venue: Virtual (Private) Meeting

SDCT Website: www.cipfa.org/partners/society-of-district-council-treasurers

LinkedIn: Society of District Council Treasurers (SDCT)

SDCT Members in Attendance: Adrian Rowbotham (President), Angela George (Secretary), Emma Foy, Alison Scott, David Stanley, Jon Illingworth, Hannah Doney, Richard Baker, Homira Javadi, Paul Stone, Bec Maher, Simon Hewings, Lorraine Rogers, Colleen Warren.

❖ It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate (i.e. one third of Executive members were present)

Also in attendance: Kate Ogden (IFS) – for item 3.

1. **SDCT Executive Apologies:** Clare Fletcher, Christine Marshall, Simon Freeman, Terry Collier, Suzanne Jones, Peter Catchpole, Richard Bates.

2. **Welcome to new SDCT Executive Members:**

The Executive welcomed back Richard Bates (Waverley and Guildford), who unfortunately could not attend the meeting.

3. **IFS Proposal (Kate Ogden)**

The IFS have made a proposal to the SDCT for the SDCT to fund work to analyse local government finance related issues in relation to District Council issues. The proposal from Kate Ogden had previously been circulated, and Kate made a presentation of the key points (slide presentation circulated).

Following the presentation the Executive asked for clarification on several issues, thanked Kate for her presentation and undertook to feedback following a private Executive discussion.

4. **Minutes of previous meetings:**

The minutes of the previous meeting of 26th July 2024 were agreed and will be published on the website.

Outstanding Actions:

- Peter to progress the suggested group of LA's who have limited companies. Several Executive members are interested in taking part and are willing to be involved in the set-up (Lorraine, Jon, David)

Action – Peter to liaise with the interested members to progress the initiative.

- Jon to progress staff sharing / secondments.

Action - Jon

Any other matters arising have either been actioned or are considered further on the agenda.

5. Feedback from IFS Proposal

The Executive discussed the proposal from the IFS in detail. It was agreed that funding would be found from within SDCT balances for a one-year trial after which the benefit of continuing the funding would be assessed.

Adrian – to progress

6. Financial Issues:

Several issues were discussed:

- There had been no feedback on the submitted Productivity Plans.
- CIPFA had requested input into their budget submission to MHCLG.

The areas that the SDCT thinks should be included are:

- Ending the referendum limit.
- LA Housing Allowance increased to have a closer link to actual prices.
- Extend NHB/Funding Guarantee.
- The importance of multi year settlements.
- Significant reduction in the cost of borrowing for housing schemes (i.e. lower POWLB rate). For both HRA and non HRA.

7. Local Government Audit update

- New backstop dates have been announced.
- How to deal with opening balances has not been clarified therefore expect disclaimed opinions for 23/24 as well as earlier years.
- Audit fees – this was published/updated on the MHCLG site. :

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/202324-15-million-grant-to-support-local-bodies-with-financial-reporting/27b844f9-5a08-43d9-af26-350b6d51aa75#:~:text=The%20%C2%A315%20million%20grant,to%20the%20%C2%A315%20million>

8. Streamlining the Accounts

Following a meeting of the SDCT working group, Alison had circulated a paper setting out the SDCT 'asks' for streamlining the accounts. Following discussion this was agreed by the Executive and subject to finalising a couple of issues this will be submitted to CIPFA / LASAAC, the wider District group and press contacts.

Action – Alison to finalise the report and issue by the end of September.

9. Upcoming Consultations:

There are no upcoming consultations. However, it is anticipated that there will be a number to come once the new Government gets established.

Jon updated the Executive on progress with the SharePoint file.

Action - Jon

10. SDCT Executive - Advisor updates

There were no updates from the Executive.

The SharePoint template will enable an easier process for updates in future.

Action – Jon

11. SDCT Executive Member and Advisor area update

Angela advised that there are currently no vacancies to the Executive Committee.

It was considered and agreed that the advisor areas would be reviewed in the autumn given the potential for new workstreams arising from new Government policy.

Action - Angela

12. Any Other Business

- LGA – navigating financial uncertainty. The LGA would be invited to speak on this at a future meeting.

Action - Adrian

- Procurement Act – this would be brought to a future meeting and could potentially be a new advisor area.

Action – Adrian to agree speaker to future meeting.

- Hannah and Paul updated the meeting on then CIPFA AGS meeting which took place last week. More detailed guidance was needed.
- David updated the meeting on an ongoing Cyber incident at Tewkesbury Borough Council: <https://tewkesbury.gov.uk/cyber-incident-fags/>. CDC's shared Counter Fraud Team are supporting and once the dust has settled can share a short paper on what lessons were learned from the recovery phase.

13. DONM – 11th October 2024 10am (PUBLIC)