



Minutes of the Executive Committee

20th June 2025

Venue: Virtual (Public) Meeting

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

LinkedIn: Society of District Council Treasurers (SDCT)

This meeting has been rearranged from 6th June due to the timing of the Government Spending Review.

SDCT Members in Attendance: David Stanley (Vice President), Adrian Rowbotham, Clare Fletcher, Homira Javadi, Richard Bates, Paul Stone, Richard Baker, Colleen Warren, Bec Maher (Minutes)

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

Also in attendance: Nico Heslop (MHCLG) for item 3, Mike Newbury (NAO), Phil Hyde (NAO), Andrew Chappell (PSAA), Lee Geraghty (LG Futures), Paul Dossett (GT). Sarah Ironmonger (GT), Alex Burfitt (LGA), Robert Baxter (MUFG)

1. SDCT Executive Apologies:

Apologies: Jon Illingworth, Suzanne Jones, Angela George, Simon Hewings, Peter Catchpole

Also: Vicky Davis (NAO), Guy Clifton (GT), Nicola Morton (LGA), Jo Pitt (CIPFA)

2. Welcome:

Peter Davy, West Lindsey District Council

3. Minutes of previous meetings:

The minutes of the previous meeting of 9th May 2025 were agreed and will be published on the website. All matters arising are either completed or considered elsewhere on the agenda.

David Stanley had issued an SDCT response to the governments consultation on Business Rates reform (on website)

4. Financial Issues Update

Nico Heslop (MHCLG) attended to give an update. The following issues were discussed:

- Local Government Funding Reform
Consultation Funding Reform 2.0 to be issued today. Will cover a number of areas. Will give a better understanding of where council sits comparatively but not exact figures.
8-week consultation period – response to be issued in September which will allow absolute clarity to model impact
Finance Settlement to cover three years and be issued late November/early December
Transitional arrangements include funding floor at flat level but some councils may have a negative funding floor of -5% or greater if they have ‘significantly’ benefitted from current arrangements. Includes several districts and these councils will get individual calls next week.
Looking to consolidate £9bn of funding into 6 themed pots probably outside of CSP
EPR funding to remain outside of CSP and with DEFRA
- Consultation of simplification of Council Tax administration also issued today with 12-week response time

5. Local Government Audit update

Phil Hyde and Mike Newbury (NAO) discussed:

- Will circulate a link regarding guidance for auditors
- Work on financial resilience issued
- Current work on Home to School Transport – due to be published in autumn

Andrew Chappell (PSAA) discussed:

- Discussion on fees and dependence on audit market and timing – having to set fees before previous audit complete

6. Upcoming Consultations:

- Funding Reform 2.0
- Simplification of Council Tax administration

7. External Advisor updates:

LGA (Andrew Burfitt):

- Spending Review – 2.6% increase lower than the sector has been receiving over last 3 years.
- Not a disaster but not in a significantly better position for funding reform
- Encouraged to respond to funding reform consultation and interested in hearing views

- Treasury consultation on Business Rates – expecting further stakeholder engagement
- Also expecting further consultation on anti-avoidance rules
- CIPFA reviewing Treasury Management and Prudential Code guidance – consultation likely in summer. Also looking at investment guidance

Grant Thornton (Paul Dossett and Sarah Ironmonger):

- Backstop – focus of audits is on 2024/25 and not opening balances – management judgement about how much work is undertaken on opening balances
- LGR – published a paper on the transfer of assets to town/parish councils in advance of LGR
- Training for new members where new administration in place and support for S151 officers in that position

LG Futures (Lee Geraghty):

- At CIPFA conference next week
- Colleagues working on briefing paper re consultation
- Districts with above £2m Business Rates growth likely to be the ones that see a negative funding floor – question is what is the % based on – does it include pooling gains?
- Assumed CT baseline growth will be taken into account
- New check/challenge data on Business Rates now shows change in taxbase which shows how much is being lost on appeals and allows comparison against 3.2% assumed by govt

MUFG:

- Providing support on LGR
- Providing training for new members, particularly where there are new administrations

CIPFA:

- Apologies from Jo Pitt – slides circulated

8. Any Other Business

None

9. DONM – 1st August 2025 (Virtual Public)

10. Private Executive Business:

- Clare Fletcher – attended call with DWP regarding merging of DHP and HAF but they are still looking at how it will work. Important that LGA are involved in this.
- IFS work – suggestion for some work on impact of consultation on district councils. David to pick up with Jon I.