**Society of District Council Treasurers**

**Minutes of the Executive Committee held on 5th December 2014**

**At the CIPFA Offices, Robert Street, London**

**In Attendance:**  Peter Stuart (President), Angela George (Secretary), Bob Palmer, Frank Wilson, Simone Donaghy, Norma Atlay, Alan Peach, Rob Bridge, Chris Brewer, William Jacob, Jo Wagstaffe, Jill Penn, Kevin Jaquest, Shirlene Adam, Nick Eveleigh.

**Also in attendance:** Nicola Morton (LGA), Cecilie Booth (Capita), Aileen Murphy (NAO), Sally Marshall (DCEN), Andy Perrin (CIPFA – item 6), Aidan Brady (Municipal Bonds Agency - item 7)

1. **Apologies / Introductions**

**Apologies** were received from – Sandra Cowley, Jason Vaughan, Dean Langton, Jane Kitchen, Steve Richardson, Sanjiv Kohli, (Martin Henry).

1. **Minutes of Previous Meeting and actions arising**

Minutes of the previous meeting of 24th October 2014 were agreed.

Frank advised he was still awaiting some signatory arrangements to enable the banking arrangements to be handed over. These were provided.

**Action – Frank Wilson / Martin Henry**

All other outstanding actions have been actioned or picked up elsewhere on the agenda.

1. **Financial Settlement 2015/16 onwards**
	1. Nicola Morton provided a summary of the LGA response on the Independent Commission on Local Government Finance. The final report is due in mid-February. The SDCT and DCEN had also submitted responses.
	2. An update was also provided on the anticipated 2015/16 settlement following the Autumn Statement. This would be appear to be as previously announced by the Government with no further cuts. From 2016/17 onwards there were anticipated to be cuts on the scale previously suffered by Local Government.

**Action – Sandra Cowley to continue to act as lead advisor on this work stream.**

1. **Housing Benefit Issues:**

**4.1 SFIS / Fraud and Error**

The transfers to the DWP are starting to take place shortly. An invite will be extended to the DWP to attend the SDCT General meeting on 9th January to discuss issues arising.

**4.2 Universal Credit**

The roll out of Universal Credit is still unclear with authorities seemingly liaising directly with their local DWP offices. The DWP have been invited to attend the SDCT General Meeting on 9th January to discuss authority concerns.

**4.3 DWP/ LAA Steering Group – 5th November 2014**

The notes of the meeting were discussed.

1. **Audit Update**

The Executive considered a note circulated by Bob Palmer (attached).

* 1. **National Audit Office**

Aileen Murphy gave an update on the NAO work programme.

* 1. **Audit Commission**

A letter had been issued regarding the NFI and discussions with the SFIS which threatens the effectiveness of the NFI to prevent and detect fraud. The issue is that there is no common agreement between local authorities and SFIS about their respective roles with regard to the review of NFI data matches.

**Action – Bob Palmer to continue to act as lead advisor on audit issues.**

1. **CIPFA**

Andy Perrin presented to the Executive on a number of CIPFA proposals (slides attached).

1. **Municipal Bonds Agency**

Aidan Brady presented to the Executive on the work of the MBA (slides attached)

1. **Advisor Reports**
	1. Nick Eveleigh raised the issue of Single Person Discount – Council Tax. It was noted that a number of authorities appear not to be charging the allowed rate for fraud detection.
	2. Nick Eveleigh raised the issue of relief on NI contributions on pensions and that these were reduced from April 2016. This would be an additional cost to LA’s.N

**9. Reports from External Bodies / Sponsors:**

**9.1 DCEN** –Sally Marshall gave an update on some of the key issues including:

* Economic Growth
* New ways of Working
* Quality of Life
* Planning
* Financial Independence Group

**9.2 LGA / SOFI / ALATS**

There were no meetings to report.

1. **Any Other Business:**

10.1 The final agenda for the General Meeting on 9th January was circulated.

**Action – Angela George to finalise arrangements for the meeting on 9th January.**

10.2 Thought Leadership (CIPFA)

Rob Whiteman had circulated proposals for a CFO summit to be held in the near future and requested feedback of the proposals. The proposal was generally supported.

**Peter Stuart – to provide feedback as discussed**

1. **Date of Next Meeting** - 9th January 2015 (General Meeting)
* 27th February 2015
1. **Part B – Private Executive Business**

12.1 **Vacancies**

 To be advertised shortly. Peter to mention at the General Meeting.

 **Action – Angela George to advertise.**

12.2 **Advisor Roles**

Following the resignation of Chris Mills, a vacancy existed for the Communications and Web Site role. A number of options were discussed and it was agreed that this would be reconsidered at the next meeting

**Action – SDCT Executive to consider the Communications role.**