**Society of District Council Treasurers**



**Minutes of the Executive Committee held on 16th May 2014**

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

**In Attendance:**  Peter Stuart (President), Angela George (Secretary), Bob Palmer, Frank Wilson, Simone Donaghy, Chris Brewer, Sandra Cowley, Norma Atlay, Jane Kitchen, Steve Richardson, Kevin Jaquest, Shirlene Adam, Chris Mills.

**Also in attendance:** Alan Finch (LGA), Cecilie Booth (Capita),Marcine Waterman (Audit Commission), Mike Suffield (NAO), Sally Marshall (DCEN)

1. **Apologies**

**Apologies** were received from – Alan Peach, Rob Bridge, Jill Penn, William Jacob, Jason Vaughan, Dean Langton, Peter Gillett, Jo Wagstaffe, Nick Eveleigh (Martin Henry).

**Goodbyes**

It was noted that Peter Gillet had been appointed to a new job in a Unitary authority and therefore would no longer be eligible to be on the SDCT Executive.

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

Minutes of the previous meeting of 4th April were agreed.

The SDCT Accounts will be presented to a future meeting.

**Action – Frank Wilson**

The agenda for the CIPFA Conference workshop was agreed.

Other outstanding actions have either been actioned or picked up elsewhere on the agenda.

1. **Business Rates Retention Scheme**

Alison Scott from CIPFA attended for this item. Steve Richardson provided a briefing note (attached)of the key issues and a number of the outstanding issues of concern were discussed. Practitioners and the Executive are generally concerned over the lack of clarity leading up to the 2013/14 close down and Audit process. The appeals situation is the issue causing the most concern for year-end estimation purposes and on-going financial projections.

The Business Rates Administrative Review would be underway shortly.

**Action – Action** **– Steve Richardson to attend the next meeting of the Business Rate Implementation Group and keep members informed of progress on outstanding issues.**

1. **Audit Update**
   1. **National Audit office**:

Mike Suffield provided a briefing note of the key studies being undertaken (attached).

* 1. **Audit Commission**

Marcine Waterman provided a presentation (attached) on the key transitional arrangements surrounding the demise of the Audit Commission. She also updated the Executive on the Housing Benefit certification work and the number of errors still being picked up. The Executive generally felt the Housing Benefit situation was as a result of the DWP requirement s being too onerous and that the level of materiality was very small (a point that has been made many times before).

1. **Advisor Reports**

5.1 Council Tax Partnership Forum (note attached from Dean Langton)

5.2 Capital Receipts from Asset sales (note attached from Chris Brewer)

5.3 VAT and sporting activities (note attached from Nick Eveleigh)

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

**6.1 DCEN –** Sally Marshall updated the Executive on the key issues arising from the DCN meeting.

**6.2 LGA** – Alan Finch gave an update on some of the key issues and in particular:

* Financial Sustainability/ Finance Commission
* Municipal Bonds Agency
* SFIS
* LGA Improvement offer
* Members Allowances

**6.3 Capita Update –** Cecilie Booth provided an update on current issues including the Capital and Revenue modelling work they are undertaking, salary sacrifice scheme, loans to third parties issues and the Custom and Self Build scheme. She requested feedback on the Customer and Self Build Scheme as soon as possible as there was a window of opportunity to develop a scheme that would be advantageous to authorities.

**Action - Executive to feedback comments to Cecilie**

1. **Any Other Business:**

7.1 Protection of Personal Information – a paper was discussed from Frank Wilson (attached). The LGA undertook to look at the issue

1. **Date of Next Meeting** – CIPFA Conference Workshop 2nd July 2014. 12th September 2014 (moved from 5th September).
2. **Part B – Private Executive Business**
   1. **SDCT Constitution**

The finalisation of the draft constitution is outstanding.

**Action – Angela George to finalise for agreement.**

* 1. **Vice President Elections**

It was noted that following the elections, that Norma Atlay was now appointed to the position of SDCT Vice President. The Executive passed on their congratulations to Norma.

* 1. **SDCT lunch arrangements –** this would be held at Boyds Brasserie immediately following this meeting.
  2. **Website SLA –**

**Action - Peter Stuart to finalise arrangements. NOTE: the website address will change in the near future.**