



# SOCIETY OF DISTRICT COUNCIL TREASURERS

Dear Colleague,

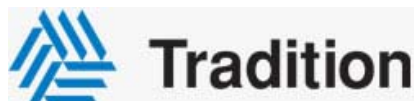
## SOCIETY OF DISTRICT COUNCIL TREASURERS (SDCT) - LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT JUNE 2010

The SDCT Executive Committee has recognised that it needs to do more to raise the profile of the Society with colleagues in district councils across the country. Therefore, this letter seeks to remind you about the purpose of the Society, its recent work and achievements. It is also an opportunity to set out the Society's plans for the next year or so, and to emphasise the benefits and support given to the district council family and to you all individually as CFOs. We are also seeking volunteers to join the Executive Committee and help us with our challenging agenda.

**History and purpose of the SDCT:** The Society of District Council Treasurers was formed in 1974 and represents the 201 district council finance functions in England. Each District Council's Section 151 Officer is eligible to become a member of the Society and the Executive Committee. Our principal aim is to represent the interests of district council finance on a national level. We do that through the activities of the Executive Committee, who act as advisors on various different areas. The Society is also represented on the Association of Local Authority Treasurers, which collectively represents the professional interests of treasurers in all types of local government. Further details can be found on the SDCT website [www.socdct.co.uk](http://www.socdct.co.uk)

**What does the Society do?** The Society has had a very busy time in recent years and its work falls into the following main areas;

- Advisors in each specialist subject who link with other organisations to keep us all up to date and point us to key developments and issues that affect us as district councils.
- Working with District Councils, District Councils Network, Chief Executives and Leaders Groups to assist those organisations in their work to represent district council's interests in our shared work with the LGA and government departments.
- Liaising with other Treasurers Societies to develop strong working relationships and both learn and contribute to the wider local government finance field, again ensuring that the concerns of district councils remain firmly on the table.
- Working directly with the LGA to support them in their work and to represent a district council finance viewpoint.



**President –Grahame Lucas, Head of Financial Services**  
Worcester City Council, Orchard House, Farrier Street, Worcester WR1 3BB

- Meeting with government departments, working groups and individuals to lobby for and promote the needs of district council's finances and consequential wider service implications.
- Working closely with the Audit Commission to promote District views and interests.
- Working in partnership with CIPFA on various projects such as 'Sharing the Gain' and 'IFRS' to assist in developing tools and guidance with a specific district council flavour.
- Working with our sponsors (Zurich and Tradition) to benefit us in our wider understanding and briefing on their subject matters.
- Holding two open meetings each year, one in December and one at the CIPFA Conference (Workshop) - an update and discussion forum on current issues facing District Councils.

**Recent work and achievements:** Some specific examples of our recent work are set out below, highlighting some important achievements.

- We commissioned Deloitte to work with us to research the impact of future funding levels on District Councils and the possible actions and solutions that could be implemented to bridge the gap. Our main aim is to find some practical and proactive ways forward.
- Concessionary Travel: we have held detailed discussions with key DfT officials which led to funding being distributed by specific grant rather than formula grant.
- Representation at the regular meetings with Treasury and CLG officials at the Settlement Working Group (SWG) to comment on government plans to make changes to the formulae in the Formula Grant system.
- The CIPFA publication and initiative 'Sharing the Gain' was completed in partnership with the Society, based on an initial vision from within the Society
- The CIPFA Development Academy with a specific District focus evolved out of an SDCT initiative
- Working with the LGA to put the case for EPCS block services within the government's spending review process.
- Waste Management: we are working with the LGA, in liaison with DEFRA policy leads, to develop the submission for waste services within the government's review of public spending. LGA will be submitting an overarching submission shortly. A final detailed submission containing case studies will be made in autumn 2010.
- Represent District interests at the capital programmes working party which comprises CLG, Treasury and other government departments. Recent work has been on the review of the capital finance regulations and updating Investment guidance and MRP.

**Our plans for the coming year:** It is without doubt that local government faces some very challenging times in the next few years. In addition to the work that we carry out regularly (see above), our work over the next year or so will focus on:-



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- Understanding the potential impact for district councils of future funding levels. This will follow on from the publication of our report 'District Councils Building New Horizons' and its presentation at the CIPFA Conference (in our workshop on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June)
- Working with partners (particularly the District Council's Network and the LGA) to lobby and influence government in issues affecting district councils, their services and their residents, including changes proposed to Concessionary Fares and the Housing Revenue Account.
- Chairing and contributing to the work of the Spending Review team (with the LGA) to establish a report to government on the issues and impact of the EPCS block of services (strong district focus)

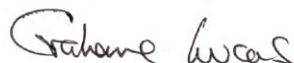
**How do we fund this work?** Our main source of income is from the membership fee (presently £200 per Council). We also have a modest income from sponsors. This provides us with the funds we need to carry out this valuable work in support of District Councils and their CFO. Without your support we would be without a District focussed voice at many important national debates with Government and other important national bodies. Please continue to support us.

**In conclusion:** we need your support to be able to continue to carry out this challenging programme of work and maintain a strong voice nationally for District Councils.

To do this we need your support. Please make sure your voice can be heard by advising us of any changes to the contact details for your Council.

Finally we acknowledge that we need to strengthen the way in which we communicate with you, and we plan to do this with more regular emails from our Secretary, Angela Brown and improvements to our Website. I hope that this letter also helps to strengthen the profile of the Society and interest in our work. If you would like to find out more about the work of the Society, please contact Angela or me.

Yours sincerely,



**Grahame Lucas**  
President

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