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To All Members of Lewes Town Council

A Meeting of **Lewes Town Council** will be held on **Thursday 12th December 2013**, in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lewes** at **7:30 pm** which you are requested to attend.

S Brigden, Town Clerk
5th December 2013

AGENDA

1. QUESTION TIME

To consider any questions received regarding items on the agenda for this meeting.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

To note any declarations of personal or prejudicial interest in items to be considered at this meeting.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To consider apologies tendered by Members unable to attend the meeting.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive any announcements from the Mayor.

5. MINUTES

To agree Minutes of the Council's meeting held on 7th November 2013.

(attached page 3)

6. WORKING PARTIES & OUTSIDE BODIES

To consider matters arising from working parties; members serving on outside bodies *etc.*

a) *Town Hall Repairs Working Party 12th Nov 2013*

(minutes attached page 9)

b) *Grants Panel; 20th November 2013*

(Report FC009/2013 attached page 12)

c) *Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group 26th November 2013*

(notes of meeting attached page 14)

d) *Traffic Issues Working party 28th November 2013*

(minutes attached page 17)

e) *Commemorations Working party 3rd December 2013*

(minutes attached page 20)

f) *Audit Panel 3rd December 2013*

(minutes attached page 23)

g) *Finance Working party 10th December 2013*

(oral report by Cllr Dr Turner/TC)

7. CONSULTATION "The Future of Local Audit"

(Documents attached page 24)

8. UPDATE ON MATTERS IN PROGRESS

(Oral report by Town Clerk)

9. NOTICE of ITEMS IN PROSPECT

(Oral report by Town Clerk)

For further information about items on this agenda please contact the Town Clerk at the above address

This agenda and supporting papers can be downloaded from www.lewes-tc.gov.uk



PUBLIC ATTENDANCE: Members of the public have the right, and are welcome, to attend meetings of the Council – questions regarding items on this agenda may be heard at the start of each meeting with the Chairman's consent, and subject to time available. Questions or requests to address the Council should, whenever possible, be submitted in writing to the Town Clerk at least 24 hours in advance. **PLEASE NOTE:** As space is limited we would appreciate advanced warning if you plan to attend in a group; perhaps with neighbours, or to bring a party of student observers. We may be able to arrange for the meeting to be held in an alternative room. General questions can be raised at our offices between 9am-5pm Mons- Thurs; 9am-4pm on Fridays – our staff will be pleased to assist.

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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

Of the meeting of **Lewes Town Council** held on
Thursday 7th November 2013, in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall**, Lewes at **7:30pm**.

NB if a record of voting was requested, this is shown in a table appended to these Minutes.

PRESENT:

Councillors E Allsobrook; S Catlin (Wischhusen); M Chartier; A Dean; I Eiloart; J Lamb; D Lamport; L F Li; J MacCleary; M Milner; R Murray; S Murray; R O’Keeffe (*Mayor*); A Price; R Rudkin; J Stockdale and M Turner (*Deputy Mayor*)

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); Mrs F Garth (*Asst. Town Clerk & Civic Officer*); L Symons (*Mace Bearer*); Ms E. Martin (*C’tee Administration*); Rev P Hamilton-Manon (*Council’s Chaplain*).

Observing: Ms J Dean (*Customer Services Officer*); Mrs V McLachlan (*Finance Administration Officer*) and Mr J Harrison (*Town Clerk of Hailsham*)

The Rev Hamilton-Manon delivered a short philosophical comment related to the potentially world-changing effect of relatively small events in life, and the need for careful thought and openness in the work of the Council.

The Mayor welcomed new Members Cllr Liz Allsobrook and Cllr John Lamb who had been elected to the Council, representing Bridge Ward, at the by-election held on 17th October 2013.

FC2013/61 QUESTION TIME: There were no questions. Two members of the public were present.

FC2013/62 MEMBERS’ DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were none.

FC2013/63 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:
Apologies were received from Cllr J Daly who was attending hospital for minor surgery.

FC2013/64 MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- a) Members were informed of the recent death of the wife of the Council’s Internal Auditor, Mark Mulberry. All present expressed their deepest sympathy for Mr Mulberry and his very young children, and asked that their condolences be forwarded.
- b) An email had been circulated to all Members from the South Downs National Park Authority inviting them to workshops to develop a “shared identity” for the Park. A number of venues and dates were available, and the latest information on the workshop planned at Cooksbridge (being the closest venue) suggested that up to twelve places still remained at each scheduled session. Members who wished to book a place were asked to register this with Mrs Garth before leaving.
- c) Sunday 10th November was Remembrance Sunday. Members were asked to arrive at the Town Hall for 2.15pm, allowing enough time to robe and assemble for the 2.30pm start.
- d) Monday 11th November was Armistice Day. Robes would not be worn on this occasion but any Member would be welcome to be present at the War Memorial for two minutes’ silence at 11.00am, which would be marked by the traditional “maroon”

Continues...

fired from the roof of the Town Hall by members of Cliffe Bonfire Society.

e) The Mayor would be holding a charity event on Sunday 1st December 2013 from 12noon – 3pm at the All Saints Centre in aid of Pippa's Group.

f) The Civic Carol Service would begin at 7.30pm on Tuesday 17th December 2013 at St Anne's Church.

g) The Mayor thanked all those who had supported recent civic events; Poppy collections, and the Bonfire street-cleaners' "Thank you!" breakfast. Those who had attended the "WT-Pur" twin towns events might be interested in reprints (available from Mrs Garth) from the *SudKurier*, Waldshut-Tiengen's local newspaper, which had devoted several pages to the event. It was remarked that Twinning colleagues had been delighted with the success of the weekend. The Mayor also expressed her thanks to Lewes Concert Orchestra for presenting a Mayor's Concert which raised around £900 for her charities, and briefly remarked upon the visit to Lewes of Her Majesty the Queen the previous week.

FC2013/65

MINUTES:

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 3rd October 2013 were received and signed as an accurate record. Cllr Dean apologized and noted that she had intended to send her apologies and reason for absence.

FC2013/66

WORKING PARTIES AND OUTSIDE BODIES:

NB Members are reminded that anyone who may have attended a meeting of any recognized outside body which had covered issues that deserved attention by the Council, should ensure that TC is aware of this before the meeting, and preferably before the agenda deadline. Brief written reports should be submitted wherever practical. Reports on all activities of the organization are not expected.

a) *Finance Working Party 28th October 2013:* Council considered the minutes (*copy in minute book*) of this meeting. Cllr Allsobrook declared an interest in that she is the Chairman of Malling Community Association, and closely-associated with the planned refurbishment of Malling Community Centre.

There was discussion as to the amount of detail to be contained in the recommended forward plan for the Council (*copy in minute book*), and its role in informing the budget-setting process. It was suggested that the Plan should identify stages of progress, and budget elements, to facilitate assessment of progress at key intervals. It was explained that the Plan as recommended described only salient major projects or initiatives, and that these were not all capable of structured analysis at this point in time – awaiting either definition of budget, or detailed planning of timetable. It was agreed that the description be amended to show that the Council's intention was to complete most of the items. Members were reminded that every Council agenda contained an item listed as "Update on matters in Progress". Some felt that the document should allow the public to gauge progress against budgets, or against targets, but it was generally accepted that at the present time the plan was intended simply to offer a prompt when budgets and/or financial reserves were assessed for the forthcoming year, and that it fulfilled the brief given to the Working Party. A refinement would be possible following the setting of budgets, and yet further detail could be added once detailed planning of building programmes or third-party contributions was clearer. This would be clarified in the introductory statement.

Consequently, **it was resolved that:**

FC2013/66.1. The draft Council Plan for 2014/15 recommended by the Finance Working Party and presented to Council at its meeting on 7th November 2013, be agreed, subject to clarification in the introduction on two points:

- The introduction to begin "*Lewes Town Council proposes to initiate, and complete (where possible and practical) the following major areas of work...*"
- Addition of a short statement to explain the status of the plan with regard to

presently-available details of budget and scheduling.

b) *Anti Domestic Abuse – “White Ribbon” initiative*: Councillor A Price reported that he had recently worked with *Crimestoppers* volunteers to supply local tea rooms, pubs and cafés with sachets of sugar carrying messages and information such as the telephone helpline number, to raise awareness and (hopefully) increase third party reporting of suspected abuse. He described the initiative to supply visitors at the Mumford & Sons *Gentlemen of the Road Stopover* event in July with similarly-branded bottles of water, which had been well-received.

After a discussion **it was resolved that:**

FC2013/66.2 Lewes Town Council notes Cllr Price’s report on the White Ribbon scheme; thanks him for all his efforts in the cause of reducing domestic abuse, and reaffirms its support for these initiatives.

c) *Devolution of Assets & Services lead group*: Council considered the notes (*copy in minute book*) of the meeting held between its negotiation lead group and Lewes District Council (LDC) on 31st October 2013. Since previous discussions LDC had introduced their intention to recover the costs of discretionary contracted grounds maintenance services for parks and open spaces, by means of direct “special expenses” charges to each parish, moving away from the convention of distributing them evenly across the District.

The implications of this were that the total cost of the contracted services across the District (currently £845,429) would be recharged to the parishes direct in proportion to the sites and activities within their parish. The individual effects based upon current costs and parish Band ‘D’ rates of Council Tax gave a nett *reduction* of around £25 per Band ‘D’ taxpayer in nearly all parishes, with a few saving slightly less, but two - Lewes and Newhaven – carrying an *additional* £56 and £27 respectively. This reflected the disposition of the recreation sites and open spaces within the District. Lewes town would bear a direct recharge of £465,588. In the case of Lewes areas, matters were further complicated by the existence of two charitable Trusts; one for the Stanley Turner ground and one for Convent Field.

It was generally agreed that if the taxpayers of Lewes were to be directly charged for parks and open spaces in any event, the Town Council could offer better local control over the sites if it accepted ownership through devolution, and transfer of the Trust responsibilities where relevant.

There were ramifications such as the the potential or likelihood of future dissolution of the District Parks Department and the position in which that would leave any parish that had assumed ownership. It was acknowledged that Lewes in particular would have sufficient additional responsibilities as to demand additional staff and infrastructure, and this led on to implications for accommodation, and the matter of the adjoining building at 2 Fisher Street which had been discussed previously, and other assets.

LDC lead Members had stated that transfers of ownership to parishes would necessarily include caveats that any future “profit” due to disposal or development would be shared with LDC. There had been lengthy discussion on the context and meaning of “profit”, and how it might arise. It was contended that local assets had transferred to LDC on its creation in 1974 with no such condition, and the principle was not sound. Conflicting viewpoints had been expressed, and the present circumstances were acknowledged to be different, although it was agreed that each asset would need careful scrutiny in this regard. It was generally agreed that a practical and acceptable criterion to trigger such an event would be any future application for change of use classification under the Planning regime, and that there should be tapering benefit clauses to prevent onerous liabilities extending beyond a reasonable duration. LTC Members stated that their intention was to maintain

existing use, and reminded LDC that the discussions had originally been initiated, three years earlier, to determine where assets or services might be transferred for the benefit of local communities. LTC had no plans to capitalize on assets and was seeking to protect the interest of its constituents, recognizing that local taxation was inevitable one way or another, and ensuring local control. The prospects for the District Council's finances in the foreseeable future were understood, having noted the government's published intentions with regard to reduction of exchequer support to 2018 and beyond. LDC's cabinet was shortly to receive a report detailing the effects, and noting a huge savings requirement in the next four years.

Lists of assets in Lewes had been distributed for discussion (*copy in minute book*), although it was explained that these included some assets which were believed to be administered under the District Council's Housing Revenue Account, which is ring-fenced by statute. Further research was being conducted on the history of these sites to clarify their status. Tables of costs showed contracted maintenance; direct and indirect overheads; other expenditure and Band D tax valuations.

LTC members were interested to discuss the transfer of other assets, such as off-street car parks, which had the potential to generate income to offset the cost impact. It was acknowledged that these were outside the scope of Special Expenses, but LTC was keen to explore the possibility and considered that there was ample justification for local ownership. The LDC representatives stated that they were not prepared to transfer ownership, but after wide-ranging discussion it was suggested that they would consider an agreement to share with LTC up to 50% of the surplus income from the town's car parks.

After further discussion of principles, LTC Members proposed that they were happy to seek ratification from the Town Council for the acceptance of ownership of a list of assets (*below*), subject to detailed agreement on each site and the phasing or programming of a timetable for the transfers. It was stated that LDC had estimated their own legal costs for such transfers as averaging approximately £1,000 per site, and TC confirmed that: in that knowledge LTC had already provided for appropriate reserved funds for the past two financial years.

The sites proposed are:

- All recreation areas and open spaces which the District Council retains within its General Fund, and including Southover Grange Gardens and the 50% of Landport Bottom (*incl* Highdown Allotments) owned by LDC
- Recreational areas which the District Council retains within its housing Revenue Account *eg* Landport Recreation Ground and Nevill Recreation Ground
- Stanley Turner Recreation Ground Trust
- Mountfield Pleasure Ground Trust
- Office building at 2 Fisher Street
- Market Tower
- Former Public convenience, Cliffe High St (leased to Nutty Wizard)
- Landport Youth Centre
- St Mary's Social Centre, Christie Road

It was agreed that, subject to both Councils' ratification, a Memorandum of Understanding would be drafted and signed, to allow a project plan for the transitions to be expedited and detailed work to begin. It was understood that the District contract for grounds maintenance was to be extended until 2015 if possible, which would allow revised structuring of any new contract to account for local ownership and the options for independent or sub-contracted works.

Members of the lead negotiating team offered various comments to elaborate upon the notes, and a number of viewpoints were expressed by other Councillors. There was some misunderstanding evident, as to the status of agreement between the

Councils, and this was corrected to clarify that no formal arrangements yet existed. The recommendation was that the two Councils proceeded to exchange a Memorandum of Understanding, to allow detailed site-by-site assessment to proceed. Only after that point would agreement for specific transfers be sought from Council. There were some questions as to the legal standing of such a memorandum, and the potential for penalties. This was explained by TC as being an expression of mutual intention: a precursor to (but not satisfying the fundamental requirements of) an enforceable contract. Reservations were expressed on grounds of the cost and increased financial responsibilities for the Council, although it was understood that local taxpayers were inevitably facing these charges under a Special Expenses regime. It was proposed that Cllr Chartier be formally mandated to act as spokesperson for the Council on the matter and chairman of the negotiating team. A question was asked regarding any potential for a conflict of interest to arise due to Cllr Chartier's current chairmanship of the District Council. This was considered to be not relevant, under the circumstances, and no fetter to Cllr Chartier's freedom to act in either capacity. The team was thanked for its diligent hard work thus far on behalf of the town, and the proposed agreement was described as a "key to further progress".

Following further discursive debate **it was resolved that:**

FC2013/66.3 The report of the meeting to discuss devolution, between the Council's lead negotiating team and Lewes District Council, on 31st October 2013 be noted.

FC2013/66.4 Cllr Chartier is appointed as Chairman of the group leading negotiations with Lewes District Council on devolution of assets and services, and spokesperson for the Council on these matters, and;

FC2013/66.5 Lewes Town Council agrees the drafting of a Memorandum of Understanding with Lewes District Council on the basis of the recommendations described in the notes of the meeting of 31st October 2013, discussing devolution of assets and services, which were considered by Council on 7th November 2013.

FC2013/67

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT 2007:

Members considered report FC008/2013 (*a copy of which is in the Minute Book*) which apprised members of the recent extension to parish councils of provisions of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007.

Following a short discussion **it was resolved that:**

FC2013/67.1 Report FC008/2013 (*a copy of which is in the Minute Book*) regarding provisions of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 be noted.

FC2013/68

INVITATION TO CANDIDATES:

Members considered report FC009/2013 (*a copy of which is in the Minute Book*) which apprised members of the opportunity to nominate a member for elections to serve on the National Association of Local Councils Larger Councils Committee.

Following a brief discussion **it was resolved that:**

FC2013/68.1 Lewes Town Council supports the candidacy of Cllr S Murray in elections to the National Association of Local Councils Larger Council Committee.

FC2013/69

UPDATE ON MATTERS IN PROGRESS:

a) The pedestrian crossing in Church Lane, Malling, funded by the Council, had finally been completed the previous week by East Sussex County Council. There was some discussion as to the opportunities for publicity photographs and an appropriate press release to be agreed with ESCC.

b) With regard to the proposed refurbishment of the Malling (Bridgeview) Community Centre, a very helpful meeting had been held recently with the Chairman of Malling Community Association and a funding specialist from East Sussex County

Council. Initial research into potential grants gave promising results. TC reminded Members that the availability of third-party funding would define whether or not the Council proceeded with a single-phase project using its own allocated Reserved fund, augmented from the General Fund, or pursued another course.

c) Pells urban realm group – Santon Group was coordinating discussions, to follow on from recent consultations with local residents. Availability of contributors was being established.

d) With regard to the current Employment Tribunal case in which the Council was Respondent; TC and the All Saints Centre Manager had attended a case management hearing held by the presiding Employment Judge, who had issued a series of detailed formal Orders regarding the clarity of the claim and the subsequent programme for action. The Town Council's insurers had been advised and had appointed Solicitors.

FC2013/70

NOTICE of ITEMS IN PROSPECT:

a) Town Hall Repairs Working Party would meet on 12th November at 11.00am.

b) A Traffic Working Party had been arranged for 28th November at 6.30pm. This meeting would develop ideas recently promoted regarding opportunities presented by planned works at the railway station and other anticipated major developments in the town. It was anticipated that Norman Baker MP would attend.

c) The inaugural Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting would be held on Tuesday 26th November at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber.

d) The deadline for Grant applications for the next cycle was Friday 8th November, with the Grants Panel meeting to assess these on 20th November.

e) The next Planning Committees would be on Tuesday 19th November and Tuesday 10th December, both at 7:00pm in the Yarrow Room.

f) Audit Panel would be held on Tuesday 3rd December at 3pm in the Yarrow Room.

g) The next Council Meeting was scheduled for Thursday 12th December at 7.30pm with the deadline for submissions to the Town Clerk of proposed items for the agenda being 12 noon on Monday 2nd December.

h) Meetings would take place before the next Council meeting of the Finance Working Party (budget) and the Working Party to discuss Pells play equipment.

i) TC announced that he had received the resignation of the Town Ranger; who would be leaving at Christmas after seven years with the Council, to take up a post with the War Graves Commission as a specialist inspector and repair agent. Councillors wished to place on record their recognition and appreciation of Mr Kemp's "outstanding" work and best wishes for success in the future

j) Members' attention was drawn to the imminent deadline for items to be submitted for inclusion in the next council Newsletter. Cllr Murray (S) would coordinate.

k) The next Councillors' "drop-in" Surgery was Saturday 7th December.

l) In answer to a question, it was stated that the All Saints Steering Group would next convene when there was a salient reason, and it was anticipated that there would shortly be development in the project to improve lighting and sound installations.

m) Another question arose regarding communications Working Party meetings (there was no meeting planned) and TC reminded Members that Working Parties were intended to be created as required to operate on a task-and-finish basis, and were not "standing committees".

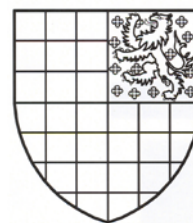
FC2013/71

There being no further business the Mayor declared the meeting closed, and invited those present to join her in the Parlour for refreshments.

The meeting ended at 8:45pm

Signed:

Date:



MINUTES

of the meeting of the **Working Party formed to oversee repairs to the Town Hall**, held on **Tuesday 12th November 2013**, in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lewes** at **11:00am**.

PRESENT Cllrs S Catlin (Wischhusen); M Chartier; J Daly (*Chairman*); R Murray; S Murray; R O’Keeffe; also (*not appointed to Working party*) L Allsobrook.

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); Mrs F Garth (*Civic Officer/ Asst TC*); L Symons (*Town Hall Manager*)

THRWP2013/01 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN: Cllr Daly was elected Chairman of the Working-party for the 2013/14 year.

THRWP2013/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies were received from Cllr Milner, who was working.

THRWP2013/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: there were none

THRWP2013/04 QUESTIONS: There were none. (No members of the public present.)

THRWP2013/05 REMIT of the WORKING PARTY:

Members noted the remit of the Working party, as set by Council at its meeting on 13th June 2013:

Minute extract:

FC2013/22.1 Lewes Town Council establishes a Working Party comprising Cllrs Catlin, Chartier, Daly, Milner, S Murray, R Murray and O’Keeffe to oversee the commencement of an integrated programme of repairs to the South elevation (High Street façade) of the Town Hall, as described in report FC003/2013, and funded initially by the established reserves shown in R1 and P6 in the Council’s accounts with any balance required to complete the work being drawn from the General Fund, and

FC2013.22.2 That the balance available for 2013/14 in project reserve P6 (labelled “Town Hall Access”) is appropriated to augment the repairs reserve R1 for this purpose.

THRWP2013/06 BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:

1 Members reviewed report FC003/2013 and the accompanying detailed report prepared by specialist surveyors (*copies in minute book*), which presented findings from a survey conducted at close-quarters with the aid of a mobile elevating work platform, which identified specific items of work needed and offered an assessment of urgency. These were classified as:

Category

1 *High risk or Immediate work:* Work necessary on health and safety grounds or where there is a high risk of damage to the building in the short term. Remedial action should be taken immediately. **No items**

2 *Priority work:* Work to prevent active deterioration such as water penetration or to gain compliance with relevant legislation. **47 items**

3 *Necessary work:* Work required to the standard appropriate for the building and its present or proposed use, including preventative maintenance. **16 items**

Subdivisions: Good housekeeping / rolling programme / major works.

4 *Desirable work:* Work recommended to enhance the use or appearance of the building or that is necessary for re-evaluation or adaptive use of the building. **1 item**

5 *Items to be further investigated and / or kept under observation:* eg The monitoring of movement evident in walls to check for progression or the regular checking of

elements that are nearing the end of their life expectancy.

16 items

The report identified other features, not specifically investigated, but observed to be showing significant and obvious deterioration. Notably these were timber window-frames (25 windows, each of unique dimensions) and flagpole fixings. All works identified were clearly evident from the survey. It was acknowledged that other areas of decay or variation might subsequently become evident and all items were subject to confirmation and specification once inspection from a fixed scaffold was possible; when prolonged/invasive investigations could be undertaken. It was further understood that problems clearly visible in certain areas may also exist but in latent/concealed state elsewhere - particularly the case with (for example) the problems of hidden ferrous metalwork. Even where inspected and currently deemed intact, defects or latent problems could cause failures without prior warning.

2 An estimate for the repair of items identified was provided; and for the cost of scaffolding and traffic-control measures which were required due to the location and duration of the work. Provisional informal estimates for works that could be readily identified, and informed allowances for additional discoveries and contingent events suggested a total budget of £150,000 was appropriate. There followed a lengthy discussion regarding the structure of the necessary works contract(s) and the appropriateness of contingency valuations. It was explained that the sums under discussion were initial estimates only, and that the quotations which would eventually be sought from contractors would include more refined estimates in this regard. An integrated schedule of works was desirable to limit the duration of disruption to the High Street and best absorb the cost of scaffolding and traffic control.

3 It was agreed that all works should be undertaken as a single contract, if possible, and that it was preferable to schedule the project in such a way that work commenced after June 2014 to avoid significant events planned for the town centre. TC would research the available options for specifying and obtaining the services, given the value and specialist nature of the core work; and report to the next meeting of the Working party.

4 Members went on to discuss other matters relevant to the repair and maintenance of the Town Hall. TC distributed copies of the repairs and renewals programme that had been agreed in 2005 and steadily worked-through since then. This was due for update, given that: although significant works had been completed since the last review, new requirements and priorities continually arose. It was noted that the building had been purchased from the District Council in 1999 with items of dilapidation and outstanding maintenance estimated to cost several hundred thousand pounds, and not all of these had yet been fully-addressed. TC was interested to gain Members' initial reactions to suggestions such as the restoration of wooden flooring rather than replacement of carpets, in some areas.

5 Members also discussed the matter of staff accommodation and reception/office areas where visitors were received. The possibility of the acquisition of nearby offices, currently owned by Lewes District Council, introduced new potential scenarios; but these did not override the case for refurbishment of the existing office areas. The office suite had been converted from retail premises in 1992, and some further modifications had followed in 2002. The disposition of space was not ideal for the current or foreseeable needs of the Council, and reception; WC; kitchenette, and common areas appeared shabby and unwelcoming. Some staff workstations were in areas with little or no natural light; no circulation of air, and tired décor. Whilst the available space offered limited opportunities for improvement, there were some modest alterations possible that were straightforward to implement and unlikely

to prove expensive, yet would greatly improve working conditions and the impression on visitors.

THRWP2013/07

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL:

Repair works to the High Street elevation were within the scope of the authority delegated to the Working party.

Further matters arising from the discussions were considered important and were supported by Members of the Working party. TC was asked to bring more detailed proposals to the next meeting, and Council would be asked to extend the remit of the Working-party to include these issues.

THRWP2013/08

There being no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed, and thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

The meeting closed at 12:50pm

Signed.....

Date

Draft

Agenda Item No: 6 b)

Report No: FC009/2013

Report Title: Grants panel recommendations – 20th November 2013

Report To: Full Council

Date: 12th December 2013

Report By: S Brigden, Town Clerk

Purpose of Report: To recommend payment of grants as suggested by the Grants Panel, following its meeting on 20th November 2013 (the *third* cycle of four for 2013/14)

Recommendation(s):

- 1 That the grant payments recommended in this report (as shown in column **G** of the appended table) be approved.

Information:

1 The Grants Panel met on 20th September 2013. 8 applications were considered, with requests for support totalling £9,668.

2 Members attending were: Cllrs Daly; Murray (S); and Dr Turner. Apologies were received from Cllr Eiloart. No message was received from Cllr Dean.

3 Using the system approved by Council, each panellist evaluated applications on their merits in five categories:

- 1 Closeness of match to Lewes Town Council's grant scheme policy
- 2 Overall "robustness" of the proposal – general likelihood of success/sustainability
- 3 Financial planning exhibited - adequacy/prudence/appropriateness *etc.*
- 4 Scope and sustainability of the proposal – beneficiaries; scale; thoroughness
- 5 A personal (subjective) assessment, based on any special insight or considerations.

Where recommended awards are below the amount requested by the applicant, the details of the proposal were carefully scrutinized as to the appropriateness of the sum requested in relation to the overall scheme or project budget, and alignment with the Council's published aims. Also considered were factors such as the balance or proportion of Council funding compared with other sources and the applicant's own funds, and other detail elements.

4 **The recommended grant awards for this cycle are shown at column G, below.**

Salient points, considered by panellists during their deliberation and influencing their final recommendations (noted/highlighted in column H below, where appropriate), fall into the areas of:

- ⊕ No other funding sought.
- ⊕ Sum requested disproportionate to own assets or contribution to scheme or project.
- ⊕ Sum requested from parish disproportionate to total cost of scheme or project.
- ⊕ Project or scheme mis-matched with parish council powers or LTC's scheme policy.
- ⊕ Sum recommended is considered to be an appropriate/proportionate parish contribution.

S Brigden

21st November 2013

FINANCIAL GRANTS PANEL - 20th November 2013				Cycle 3 - 2013/14								
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H					
line	Ref.	ORGANIZATION	Stated purpose of organization	Stated purpose of grant requested	£REQ'D	£ RECC'D	Salient comments (if any) by Panellists					
1	1	Cliffe Bonfire Society	Torchlight processions/ fireworks to mark national occasions and 5th Nov in Lewes	Contribution to costs of Xmas fair fundraising event.	400	£400						
2	2	DELTA Disability Social Group	A disability group for men and women who meet weekly.	Contribution to costs of buses (x2) to bring DELTA members door to door from Lewes for 12 months.	1,000	£500	small number of beneficiaries					
3	3	RELATE	Relationship and family counselling.	Contribution to costs of Lewes-based sessions: Counsellor costs, supervision, training and admin.	2,000	£1,000	proportionate to number of local beneficiaries					
4	4	Railway Land Wildlife Trust	Promote the study of climate and environmental concerns.	Contribution to costs of workshops within 2-month exhibition and environment festival.	1,000	£1,000						
5	5	Needlewriters	Provides a quarterly reading series (poetry and prose) in Lewes; mainly showcasing local writers.	Contribution to costs of print and online anthology.	1,742	£600	to be used specifically for web publishing element					
6	6	Seedy Saturday Lewes	Partnership of individuals and community groups which runs a one day community event.	Contribution to costs of 2014 event. Venue hire, advertisement, insurance, childrens' activities etc	970	£970						
7	7	Norwood Ravenswood	Supports children and adults with learning disabilities across London and the South East.	Contribution to costs of Lewes car-wash project, to train people with learning disabilities and allow them to access employment.	1,932	£750	proportionate to number of local beneficiaries					
8	8	Landport Travel Club	Provides Sunday outings for people who could not otherwise afford to go out, and are socially isolated.	Contribution to costs of hire of a bus and driver.	624	£624						
9		TOTALS			£9,668	£5,844						
10												
11				Miscellaneous Grants Budget		£35,000						
12				"Cycle 1" total grants awarded		£15,748						
13				LESS Wave Leisure		£5,000						
14				"Cycle 2" total grants awarded		£12,260						
15				"Cycle 3" total grants recommended		£5,844						
16				Total paid/recommended 2013/14		£28,852						
17				Budget balance 2013/14		£6,148						

NOTES OF MEETING

<i>Meeting of /between:</i>	LEWES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP	
<i>Venue:</i>	Council Chamber, Town Hall	
<i>Date:</i>	7:00pm Tuesday 26 th November 2013	
<i>Attending:</i>	<p>Cllr Merlin Milner Lewes Town Council lead for Environment & Tourism Cllr Roger Murray Lewes Town Council lead for Youth & Community matters Cllr Susan Murray Chairman, Lewes Town Council Planning Committee Cllr Ruth O’Keeffe Mayor of Lewes 2013/14 Cllr Dr Mike Turner Lewes Town Council lead for Policy & Finance matters Steve Brigden Town Clerk Chris Paterson South Downs National Park Strategy Lead Officer (Communities) Andrew Triggs South Downs National Park Planning Policy Officer</p> <p><i>Community organization representatives:</i></p> <p>Barons Down Housing Association Jim Etherington Cliffe Residents Association Bill Ball Cycle Lewes Matthew Bird Diversity Lewes Anthony Kalume Friends of Lewes Neil Merchant Grange Road Residents Association Penny Jones Lewes Chamber of Commerce Jackie Price Lewes Community Land Trust Pru Rowntree Lewes Local CIC Polly Senter Lewes Seniors Forum Richard Partridge Malling Tenants & Residents Association Brian French Nevill Residents Association Daphne Wyatt Transition Town Lewes Kirsten Firth</p>	
<i>Apologies:</i>	Cllr M Chartier Lewes Town Council, and Chairman Lewes District Council 2013/14 Cllr I Eiloart Lewes Town Council lead for Communications	

NOTES:

1 WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS:

Cllr Susan Murray welcomed everyone to the meeting, and briefly rehearsed the reasons for it:

The Town Council had announced earlier in the year year that it intends to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for Lewes, using the provisions of the Localism Act 2011. A series of open public meetings had been held to begin the process, and now the “real work” would start. There would be assistance from the local planning authority, the South Downs National Park Authority, and it may be appropriate to invite or co-opt other organizations to assist as the plan evolves. It was explained that the Council must agree and publish the Plan, but the actual definition of its policy scope and content would be drafted by the community Steering Group. This is seen as the best way of ensuring that the whole community has input to the plan, which must ultimately pass through a formal process: being submitted to an independent Planning Inspector and then needing to attract more than a 50% affirmative vote in a public referendum.

Cllr Murray outlined how more young people were being engaged with the process: The Town Council had been approached by Action in Rural Sussex and Brighton University to introduce their *Community 21: Digital Citizenship* project. It could be hard to engage young people in the planning of their local communities, even though it could make a real difference to their own lives, and the *Community 21* project aimed to change this by working with young people on the design, development and use of modern digital technology to encourage community participation. This had begun very well and was now developing several specific ‘strands’ of activity.

The Council had agreed a list of local organisations it felt should be represented on the Steering Group. The list was thought to represent a wide cross-section of the community. Seven Town Councillors

	<p>would also participate. This was not necessarily an exclusive group, and it was hoped that others would engage as the work progressed. The organisations had each been invited to nominate a representative to the steering group, which would make the important decisions on questions such as: How would the process operate? Was there a need to employ a consultant? What topics should be covered by a Lewes neighbourhood plan? This was the first meeting in a process that was likely to develop over eighteen months to two years. An indicative agenda for the meeting had been prepared, and it was hoped that the representatives would engage with this work and would have the time to commit to further meetings as the project developed.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>THE TASK AHEAD:</p> <p>Cllr Murray introduced Chris Paterson, Strategy Lead Officer (Communities) for the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), Andrew Triggs, Planning Policy Officer at the SDNPA, and the Town Clerk, who gave presentations on the background to developing a Neighbourhood Plan (N-Plan), and insights gained from experience elsewhere. Mr Paterson lived in Petersfield, and had been closely connected with the development of the N-Plan there, both as a resident and in his professional capacity. He explained the work of ‘front-runners’ – areas that had piloted the process; some of whom had now progressed to the adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan. Their experience of obstacles, pitfalls, and common issues would be invaluable to Lewes, and it was considered that it was beginning the process at an ideal time – given that it was the largest town in any National Park, and had so many unique attributes. The N-Plan must ‘fit’ with the planning authority’s Local Plan, and in Lewes that was currently a joint plan adopted by SDNPA and Lewes District Council. The SDNPA would evolve its own Local Plan for the park within the next few years. The need for solid evidence to support all elements of a N-Plan could not be overstated – many areas had found that they needed to engage independent consultants to fill ‘gaps’ in their Local Plan or to legitimize their community’s aspirations in areas where no evidence currently existed. Where a Local Plan had evolved as a result of thorough consultation and community-involvement, it had been argued that there was little need for a N-Plan, and this was recognized as a valid viewpoint. It was important to recognize what the N-Plan could, and could not, achieve – and what was <i>sensible</i> to include. Many areas were facing the prospect of large numbers of newly-built houses and had opted to make housing a major topical element of the N-Plan as they were keen to have influence on the disposition of those buildings within their neighbourhood. It was pointed-out that Lewes town was likely to face relatively low numbers of new homes as it was constrained by the Downs. An important point was made here: that the N-Plan could not influence any planning applications that were extant or agreed before its adoption, and therefore would not affect the anticipated (imminent) major redevelopment of the North Street Quarter.</p> <p>The vital importance of clear vision; appropriate evidence, and thorough communication was stressed throughout these presentations. Also; the need to recognize the volume of work involved and the real possibility of “volunteer exhaustion”. There was, it was demonstrated, a wealth of existing reference material available. Over 30 documents were listed by Lewes District Council alone, as the background documents for local planning policy and this included many in-depth studies with supporting data from surveys <i>etc.</i> Statistical profiles of Lewes were available from several sources, and a recent example offered was a 50-page document recently produced by Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE,) and others which used data brought together from many official sources, including the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Home Office, analysed by Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (OCSI). An example of one of the few ‘completed’ N-Plans was that of Exeter St James, for which a neighbourhood forum had been established, as there was no parish council. There was a comprehensive list of documents related to this plan on the Exeter City Council website.</p> <p>Some funding was available from the SDNPA, and from a government-sponsored grant fund administered by the national community network organization, ‘Locality’. There might also be contributions from Lewes District Council. The SDNPA, as planning authority for the area, would also offer practical support by officers. The Town Council had made financial provision for the process, although it was not yet possible to budget accurately. One of the early decisions that the Steering Group would need to take, it was advised, was on the matter of engaging a project manager with relevant experience in the N-Plan process. Several such consultants offered this service and help would be available in making any selection.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>FIRST STEPS:</p> <p>The meeting then moved on to discuss the scope of the plan; what it might include; and how best to</p>

	<p>address the work. It was recognized that the provisional timescale indicated March 2015 as the earliest likely time for completion of the programme. The first, fundamental, decision was on the area to be encompassed. The intended area must be registered with the planning authority, who must then allow a period for public consultation. There was discussion as to the relative apparent merits of a plan for the whole Parish, as against any geographical sub-division. The Parish boundary was indicated on a large map, and discussion briefly touched-upon the advantages of a plan for a wider area, which was possible by means of joint agreements with adjoining parishes. In the case of Lewes, it was decided, the most beneficial approach would be to produce a single plan for the Parish, and this was agreed.</p>																		
4	<p>There followed a general discussion on potential topical strands that could be covered by the N-Plan. It was obvious that the subject areas initially proposed would need careful thought before the structure of the plan could be defined, and that the meeting would not be able to fit this within the time available that evening. A further meeting had been provisionally scheduled for Monday 13th January 2014 and a choice was offered as to 3pm or 7pm start-times. The majority decision was for a 7pm meeting, at which the topic areas could be discussed, refined, and agreed. Work on individual ‘strands’ would ultimately be done by smaller groups, and with the assistance of additional co-optees if appropriate.</p>																		
5	<p>The initial thoughts of those present resulted in a list for further refinement (in no particular order):</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Land use – retail and other business</td> <td>Housing allocation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Business/economic mix</td> <td>Natural environment</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Leisure and cultural provision</td> <td>A “lifetime town”</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Climate - adaptation and resilience</td> <td>Education</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Built environment – sustainability</td> <td>Public realm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sustainable energy-use targets</td> <td>Health: food/fuel poverty</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transport and car-parking</td> <td>Sports facilities</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Youth employment</td> <td>Public Houses and other licensed premises</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Affordable housing (needs working definition)</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Land use – retail and other business	Housing allocation	Business/economic mix	Natural environment	Leisure and cultural provision	A “lifetime town”	Climate - adaptation and resilience	Education	Built environment – sustainability	Public realm	Sustainable energy-use targets	Health: food/fuel poverty	Transport and car-parking	Sports facilities	Youth employment	Public Houses and other licensed premises	Affordable housing (needs working definition)	
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Youth employment	Public Houses and other licensed premises																		
Affordable housing (needs working definition)																			
6	<p>Cllr Murray thanked everyone for attending, and expressed the hope that they had not been deterred from the task ahead!</p>																		

Meeting ended 9:50pm



MINUTES

of the meeting of the **Working Party** formed to address traffic-related issues in Lewes held on **Thursday 28th November 2013**, in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall**, Lewes at **6:30pm**.

PRESENT Cllrs S Catlin (Wischhusen); L F Li; M Milner (*Chairman*); S Murray; R O’Keeffe. Also present (*not nominated to serve on Working party*): Cllrs L Allsobrook, and R Murray.

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*);

TIWP2013/01

WELCOME: The Chairman warmly welcomed all those representatives of stakeholder bodies who were attending in response to his invitation to discuss opportunities offered by imminent projects, such as improvements to the road bridge at the Railway station; developments at North Street, Waitrose, the Bus station site, *etc.* Several others had offered apologies as they were unable to attend, but had noted their interest in any future discussions. Cllr Milner had presented the view that these issues would all have wide-ranging implications as they impact upon Rail; Road; Parking; Bus; Cycle; and Pedestrian needs for Lewes, and could benefit from a coordinated approach insofar as practicable.

Attending for this discussion were:

Lindsay Frost, *Director of Planning & Environmental Services, Lewes District Council (LDC)*;

Tal Kleiman, *Planning Policy Officer, Lewes District Council*;

Mark Valleley, *Team Manager - Infrastructure Design & Delivery, East Sussex County Council (ESCC)*;

Mike Best, *Operations Director, Brighton & Hove Bus Company (B&HB)*;

Simon Chapman, *Route Enhancement Manager, Network Rail (NR)*;

Miss Sam Bryant, *Development Officer, Sussex Community Rail Partnership (SCRIP)*;

Derek Barnett, *General Manager, Community Transport in the Lewes Area (CTLA)*;

Simon Giddey, *Chairman, Cycle Lewes (CL)*;

Kevin Moore, *Chairman, Lewes Living Streets (LLS)*;

Norman Baker MP

TIWP2013/02

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: There were none. No message had been received from Cllr A Dean.

TIWP2013/03

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were none

TIWP2013/04

MINUTES: The minutes of the meeting on 21st February 2013 were signed as an accurate record.

TIWP2013/05

PUBLIC QUESTIONS: There were none. (public present: One)

TIWP2013/06

BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:

20mph speed limit programme – Mr Valleley gave a short update on the status of this project, and noted that a detailed report was due to be considered at an ESCC Lead Member meeting in December. There were design proposals for schemes in six areas: Malling; Nevill; Landport; Houndean; Winterbourne, and Barons’ Down. A question was raised as to the likelihood of a single, town-wide, scheme being introduced and Mr Valleley stated that the area schemes were believed to be the best and most practical option. An argument was posed that the existing town-centre scheme was ineffective and the signage too unobtrusive. ESCC surveys had established that current average speeds on the arterial roads across town were too high to allow the imposition of a 20mph limit under current guidelines. There had

been clear demand identified in the residential areas, and these were straightforward to implement. Physical engineering features that would be necessary to allow a town-wide scheme would introduce complications, such as impediment to emergency vehicles. Lewes Living Streets contested this point, and promoted the use of an extension to the national guidelines that had been allowed recently. The matter of funding was raised, and it was accepted that “hard engineering” costs would be substantial and beyond the scope of ESCC’s present or foreseeable budget. LLS would continue to press for a single scheme, and their vision of five main gateways to Lewes where it could be made obvious to drivers that they were entering a 20mph area.

Potential expenditure items for recommendation to Council - Cllr O’Keeffe introduced three items that she considered could be acceptable for Town Council support. An additional pedestrian crossing on the Offham Road, near the junction with Prince Edwards Road had now been rated as desirable under ESCC’s safety assessment scheme. There was a requirement of around £40,000 to top-up available funds, and Members of the Working Party agreed that Council should be asked to consider supporting this. There was a demand and demonstrable need for a handrail to footway steps in Dorset Road, and also near to the junction of Prince Edwards Road and Ferrers Road. Cllr O’Keeffe had no information on the likely cost of these items and was asked to establish this, and the position of the responsible landowner or public authority, before support could be considered.

“Transport vision” – Cllr Milner introduced a discussion which, he hoped, might “lead to an integrated transport plan for the next twenty years”. Now that the Station Road railway bridge was to be repaired; developments in North Street were in sight, and developments at Waitrose and the current bus station site could be anticipated, it was an opportunity to collectively look at the County Town’s rail and bus provision, road, bicycle and pedestrian traffic routes and parking provision. The results of this and further meetings would provide valuable information for Lewes’ Neighbourhood Plan, being facilitated by the Town Council.

A long and detailed discussion ensued, touching upon topics such as the “shared space” concept and other public realm initiatives. Signage/urban way-finding needed improvement, it was said, and several comments referred to the need to reduce circulating traffic and the number of large vehicles within the town centre. The research carried-out by LDC during its clean air surveys was cited as potentially very useful in refinement of these views. Despite recognized problems with the availability of suitable land, the idea of outlying carparks and regular ‘park & ride’ shuttle services was thought worthy of further consideration.

It was recognized that the future disposition of car parking and retail space in the town would significantly affect demand for such facilities as a bus-station. The current bus station was a topic of particular interest, and there was extensive discussion as to how the environment and visitor experience might be improved in the short- medium-term. One view suggested that residents of surrounding villages, when they had a choice, were opting to travel in to Lewes by car as the bus station was so “inhospitable”. There was speculation as to the real possibility of maintaining a bus station facility on the present site once redevelopment of the adjacent workshops took place. It was acknowledged that the station was not owned by a transport operator, and that its history was not straightforward. Further speculation arose as to the possibility of buying the site with public funds, or identifying it as an asset of community value under provisions of the Localism Act 2011. The planned development in the North Street Quarter was known to include provision for additional parking, and the potential developments in the vicinity of Waitrose held the possibility of altered traffic flows in the immediate area. A statement that B&HB were to increase the frequency of service after 2pm on some key Lewes routes, from April 2014, was welcomed.

The “gateway experience” for visitors arriving in Lewes via the railway station was due to be enhanced alongside scheduled work to strengthen the road bridge. This was planned for September 2014, and it was important to adhere to plans as the funding required completion by March 2015. It was noted that the work did not include any changes to the junction system with Pinwell Road/Lansdown Place/Southover Road. With regard to the potential reintroduction of a Lewes-Uckfield rail link (LURL): the likelihood of this was said to be stronger than ever, with recent studies and other initiatives affecting the regional rail network. A special report on the link was shortly to be presented to the Transport Minister by Network Rail, and regional operators’ franchise renewals were imminent. It was known that funds were actively being sought to “unblock” problem issues in the area of Croydon. Some informed views suggested that a reinstated Lewes–Uckfield link was a preferable alternative to the more comprehensive (and environmentally-controversial) BML2 proposals and that priority for LURL would escalate in the next few years (up to 2020). There were outstanding issues such as long-overdue electrification of some lines, but there was a current government initiative to improve these aspects. Network rail were committed to improvements ‘beyond’ Uckfield, and it was accepted that any success in meeting capacity shortfalls could, conversely, damage the case for LURL.

There followed some discussion on the concepts of “smart travel”, and the options for management of demand, and it was acknowledged that it was essential to engage with major employers in this regard.

TIWP2013/07

As the discussion had drawn to a natural conclusion, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending what had proved to be a most useful meeting, and declared the meeting closed.

The meeting closed at 8:45pm

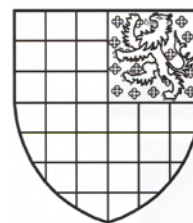
Signed: Date:

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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the meeting of the **Working Party** formed to consider commemoration of significant events, held on **Tuesday 3rd December 2013**, in the **Yarrow Room, Town Hall**, Lewes at **11:00am**.

PRESENT Cllrs S Catlin (Wischhusen); M Chartier (*Chairman*); R Murray; Dr M Turner, and (*not appointed to the Working Party*) L Allsobrook.

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); Mrs F Garth (*Civic Officer/ Asst TC*).

CmemsWP2013/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies were received from Cllr R O'Keeffe, who had a County Council duty.

CmemsWP2013/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were none.

CmemsWP2013/13 QUESTIONS: There were none. (No members of the public present.)

CmemsWP2013/14 MINUTES:

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th May 2013 were received and signed as an accurate record.

CmemsWP2013/15 BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:

1 *Battle of Lewes 750th anniversary:* Cllr Chartier reminded colleagues of his role with the town's Battle of Lewes Action Group (BLAG) and the work of the group in preparing for the celebrations. Work was progressing more slowly than anticipated on the commemorative tapestry, due to the serious illness of one of the volunteers, and completion was now expected by Christmas or shortly thereafter. The commissioned choral music was progressing well, and the composer, Helen Glavin, had reported that she had written most of the text and was currently busy setting the words to music. It was planned that the Everyman Ensemble would begin learning/rehearsing the work from January 2014, with an introductory session to some of the music before Christmas.

The play being written by Cllr Dr Turner would be performed on 17th May 2014 at three sites in the town: the Gun Garden at Lewes castle; Harvey's Brewery yard, and Lewes Priory. There was to be no charge to the audience.

There was to be a national focus upon democracy in 2015, in commemoration of Magna Carta, and encouragement from the government to seek opportunities for the involvement of young people. Sussex Archaeological Society (SAS) was known to be planning events along these lines.

Other ideas were coming forward: Sussex Downs College was involved in the programme of events, and it was likely that Bonfire Societies would parade.

Cllr Chartier, in his capacity as BLAG chairman, was to liaise with Viva Lewes to suggest a programme similar to that produced for the *Gentlemen of the Road Stopover* event in July 2013.

2 *100yrs since commencement of 1st World War:* Cllr Dr Turner was producing the play "My Boy Jack" at Lewes Little Theatre, and it was suggested that this could be repeated at the All Saints Centre. Lewes Operatic Society was understood to be planning a performance of "Oh! What a Lovely War!", and Sussex Archaeological Society were to hold an academic conference in the Town Hall. Given the value of such an event to the town, and the nature of the Council's working relationship with the SAS, it was agreed that Council should be asked to agree a 50% discount on the cost of the hire of Town Hall facilities

for this event. An idea that was generally welcomed was for a festival at the All Saints Centre, showing appropriate films (eg “*All quiet on the Western Front*”) interspersed with poetry readings featuring WW1 poets (perhaps by local school students) and interludes of period music (eg “salon” music). Lewes District Council was coordinating locally for a national project to commemorate local recipients of the Victoria Cross in paving stones. The town band, LGB Brass, had offered to present an appropriately-themed concert for the Mayor, and this had been accepted with thanks. A member of the Royal Sussex Regimental Association had written offering a collection of WW2 vehicles and equipment for any displays that might be organized. It was generally agreed that, whilst a kind and genuine offer, items representing a different era would distort the commemoration. A representative of the local British Legion branch had proposed 21 names for addition to the town War Memorial: this was a sensitive matter and would require considerable research into the implications before a decision could be taken. To be considered, among other things, were the contexts of appropriateness (eg individual circumstances; family wishes; and whether or not those named were already commemorated elsewhere); and practicality.

3 *Celebration of town Twinning anniversary:* 2014 would be the 40th year since the official Twinning with Waldshut-Tiengen, and the German twinning association and local Council had already issued invitations to the Mayor of Lewes and others to attend various events planned during the year. The major annual *Schnyzerstag* festival in Tiengen was to have England as its theme in 2014. It was considered appropriate to accept some of these invitations and engage with certain joint initiatives, eg the culmination of the *W-Tpur* project. Consequently, it was agreed that Council should be asked to approve the Working Party’s expenditure of up to £2,000 from the financial reserve earmarked for the purpose.

4 *150th anniversary of the Seaford – Lewes rail link:* The community rail partnership was organizing commemorative events in June 2014. There was to be a vintage transport display in Lewes station car park, including vehicles provided by Harveys Brewery. A steam locomotive would run from London to Lewes, and it was hoped that permission would be given for it to continue to Seaford, although the line was not currently technically-approved for the anticipated weight. Lewes’ Mayor had been invited to travel on this train and/or officiate at the welcome/departure. Southern Rail was working on an historic “timeline” display for the station and was seeking support from interested parties. These projects were all considered to be ideal for the purpose, and Members felt that the Council should engage with the commemoration. It was agreed that Council should be asked to authorize the Working party to decide appropriate involvement, and to expend a maximum of £1,500 to that end, drawn from the financial reserve earmarked for the purpose.

5 Cllr Allsobrook expressed her wish to join the Working Party; this was welcomed by Members and it was agreed that Council should be asked to formally appoint her.

CmemsWP2013/16

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL:

Council is to be asked to agree the following recommendations:

That a programme of events to commemorate the outbreak of the First World War be presented at the All Saints Centre in August 2014, as described above.

That the Sussex Archaeological Society booking of the Town Hall for an academic conference, as described above, be charged at 50% of the normal rate.

That the Working Party be authorized to expend up to £2,000, drawn from the financial reserve earmarked for the purpose, on the commemoration of 40 years

of Town Twinning with Waldshut-Tiengen, during 2014.

That the Working Party be authorized to expend up to £1,500, drawn from the financial reserve earmarked for the purpose, on the commemoration of 150 years of the Lewes – Seaford railway link, in June 2014.

That Cllr Allsobrook's request to be appointed to the Working Party be agreed.

CmemsWP2013/17

There being no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed, and thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

The meeting closed at 12:30pm

Signed.....

Date

Draft

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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the **Audit & Governance Panel** held on **Tuesday 3rd December 2013**, in the **Yarrow Room, Town Hall, Lewes** at **3:00pm**.

PRESENT Cllrs S Catlin; L F Li; M Milner (*Chairman*); A Price, and J Stockdale

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*)

AudPan2013/16 PUBLIC QUESTIONS: There were none.

AudPan2013/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: There were none.

AudPan2013/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were none.

AudPan2013/19 MINUTES: The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd August 2013 were received and signed as an accurate record.

AudPan2013/20 FINANCIAL MONITORING:

Members were furnished with detailed information (*copies in minute book*) following the end of the second quarter of the financial year 2013/14

Budget monitoring update – this showed actual expenditure and income values as posted to the Council's *Sage* accounting system and included all transactions processed to the end of the quarter. There was some discussion on salient points of detail. TC responded with reference to the identified sources. Variations were related to known events, such as specific payments in respect of works and purchases, or stock-taking adjustments. There were no items of concern.

Members asked that a copy of the analysis of film screenings at the All Saints Centre, prepared for the All Saints Steering Group, be brought their next meeting.

A question was asked as to the relationship between the Council and the Lewes Pound initiative. It was explained that the Town Hall reception desk offered a £Lewes:£Sterling exchange to the public using a lockable cash box and float provided, and accounted-for, by the Transition Town Lewes organization. The Council accepted no responsibility for the service; it simply offered the facility to assist the project.

AudPan2013/21 CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members considered information on the Council's financial status and management, and found no items of concern.

AudPan2013/22 There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed, and thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 4:10pm

Signed date

CONSULTATION

Announced 27th November 2013

HM Government's Department for Communities & Local Government

Future of Local Audit Consultation

As the Local Audit and Accountability Bill moves towards its third reading in Parliament, the Government has launched a consultation on draft regulations that would implement various parts of the Bill, if it is enacted. In particular, Section 2 of the consultation includes draft regulations for smaller bodies (including all parish and town councils, parish meetings and charter trustees in England) enabling the creation of a sector-led body to appoint auditors and also giving exemption from audit to most bodies under £25,000 turnover.

Section 5 of the consultation asks about possible changes to the existing Accounts and Audit Regulations. Contributions are sought from public bodies affected by these changes and any other interested parties, to help refine the draft regulations and policy statements.

The consultation can be found and comments can be made via the e-portal at: <http://localaudit.readandcomment.com/> The e-portal also has a dedicated message board, enabling interested parties to share their views. The consultation can also be found on GOV.UK. **Responses are invited by 20 December 2013.**

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT ATTACHED

Agenda note:

Draft Legislation distributed separately



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Future of Local Audit

Consultation on secondary legislation

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If you have any enquiries regarding this document/publication, email contactus@communities.gov.uk or write to us at:

Department for Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU
Telephone: 030 3444 0000

November 2013

ISBN: 978-1-4098-4073-2

About this Consultation

Topic of this consultation:	The consultation sets out draft regulations relating to the Local Audit and Accountability Bill currently before Parliament. The proposed regulations set out some further detail of how the new system will work.
Scope of this consultation:	This consultation seeks views on the draft regulations and asks some policy questions on developing further regulations.
Geographical scope:	England
Impact Assessment:	A comprehensive Impact Assessment (for the local audit provisions) was published alongside the Local Audit and Accountability Bill ¹ . This Impact Assessment will be updated once the Bill is enacted by Parliament.

Basic Information

To:	We would welcome comments from organisations affected by the changes to the audit of local public bodies, and any other bodies or individuals. This document is available on the .gov website (www.gov.uk) and we will be drawing it to the attention of public bodies currently audited by the Audit Commission, relevant professional bodies and those involved in regulating audit in England.
Body/bodies responsible for the consultation:	This consultation is being run by the Department for Communities and Local Government.
Duration:	This consultation will run for four weeks from 25 November until 20 December.
Enquiries:	Please contact foia@communities.gsi.gov.uk
How to respond:	The consultation document is interactive and we are keen that the majority of people respond using the comments section for debate or online form. Any email responses should be sent to: foia@communities.gsi.gov.uk Or by post to: Future of Local Audit Team Department for Communities and Local Government

¹ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-audit-and-accountability-bill-local-audit-impact-assessment>

	Zone 3/J5, Eland House Bressenden Place London, SW1E 5DU
Additional ways to become involved:	Should a particular group want to meet and discuss the proposed changes, this may be arranged by emailing the address above
After the consultation:	DCLG will analyse consultation responses and publish a summary of responses in 3 months from the close of the consultation.
Compliance with the Code of Practice on Consultation:	This consultation document and process adhere to the Government's consultation principles, that can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance

Contents

Section 1	Introduction	2
	Background	2
	What does the consultation cover?	3
	Who are we consulting?	4
	Timing and how to get involved	4
Section 2	Smaller authorities' regulations	6
	Draft regulations for a specified person to appoint auditors to smaller authorities	6
	Statement on exemption policy	10
	<i>Draft regulations – The Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2014</i>	12
Section 3	Independent auditor panels and the resignation and removal of auditors	19
	Auditor panel and auditor panel independence regulations	19
	Auditor resignation and removal	20
	<i>Draft regulations – The Local Audit (Auditor Panel) Regulations 2014</i>	22
	<i>Draft regulations – The Local Audit (Auditor Panel Independence) Regulations 2014</i>	25
	<i>Draft regulations – The Local Audit (Auditor Resignation and Removal) Regulations 2014</i>	27
Section 4	Eligibility and regulation of auditors	31
	Qualifications	31
	Major local audits	31
	Register of eligible persons	32
	Information to share with public	32
	Order to delegate functions of the Secretary of State to the Financial Reporting Council	33
	<i>Draft regulations – The Local Audit (Professional Qualifications and Major Local Audit) Regulations 2014</i>	34
Section 5	Conduct of local audit	41
	Consideration of Public Interest Reports or written recommendations by a relevant authority	41
	Accounts and audit regulations	42
Section 6	List of consultation questions	48

Section 1

1. Introduction

“The Audit Commission was born of good intentions, but in a different age. Local government has changed since the 1980s, in part due to the reforming legislation of that decade which helped stamp out corruption and jobs for the boys, but by the end of the century the Audit Commission was no longer the protector of the public purse under the new regime. It had become a top-down regulator of local government, micro-managing local services and imposing excessive and questionable red tape.”

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, 28 October 2013

Background

- 1.1** On 13 August 2010, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced the Government’s plans to disband the Audit Commission and re-focus local public audit - allowing local public bodies to appoint their own auditors from an open and competitive market, with appropriate safeguards to ensure the continuation of high standards of local public audit, whilst ensuring that local people will be able to hold local public bodies to account for local spending decisions.
- 1.2** Since the Secretary of State’s announcement in 2010, the Government has consulted widely and worked with a range of partners and bodies affected by these changes to develop and refine our proposals. Organisations involved in this process have included the Audit Commission, the National Audit Office, the Financial Reporting Council, accountancy professional bodies, local government, other local public bodies and Government departments with an interest, as well as interested members of the public.
- 1.3** Our reforms will achieve **£730 million** of savings over **five years** (2012-2017- the duration of the outsourced Audit Commission audit contracts) and an estimated **£1.2 billion**¹ over **10 years**. This is a result of ending top down inspection and assessment (Comprehensive Area Assessment); outsourcing the Commission’s in-house audit practice to the private sector (achieving a 40% reduction in audit fees) and cutting other costs, such as spend on consultants within the Commission, and abolishing the Audit Commission itself.

¹ Impact Assessment published alongside the Local Audit and Accountability Bill uses updated cost data and forecasts to 2019/2020; costs updated to reflect 2011/12 prices (increasing nominal savings) and represent a net present value figure. Savings from: ending routine assessment/inspections, reduction in running costs, reductions in direct audit costs from outsourcing the in-house practice and closure of the Audit Commission.

1.4 The Government introduced the Local Audit and Accountability Bill (the Bill) into Parliament on 9 May 2013. The Bill sets out our vision for the new local audit framework, and contains additional measures which are complementary to our existing initiatives to increase transparency and enable local scrutiny of public bodies. The Bill makes specific provisions for, and in connection with:

- the abolition of the Audit Commission and the existing audit regime for local public bodies;
- the transfer of the Audit Commission's residual functions to other bodies;
- the establishment of a new local audit framework, making provisions associated with the accounts of local public bodies and the arrangements for the auditing of those accounts;
- the processes involved in the appointment, functions and regulations of local public auditors, including their resignation or removal;
- aligning the regulatory framework for local public audit with that of private sector audits, with the Financial Reporting Council and accountancy professional bodies regulating and monitoring the quality of audit;
- the National Audit Office taking on the responsibility for preparing the code of audit practice and guidance, setting out what functions auditors need to undertake in relation to local public audit;
- economy, efficiency and effectiveness examinations by the Comptroller and Auditor General of groups of English local public bodies;
- the publication of information by smaller authorities;
- the transfer of the National Fraud Initiative, the Audit Commission's data matching powers and other counter fraud tools to another body;
- directions to comply with codes of practice on local authority publicity;
- council tax referendums; and
- other connected purposes.

1.5 The Bill successfully completed its passage through the House of Lords on 24 July 2013. The amended Bill was presented to the House of Commons on 29 August, where it is currently being considered.

1.6 More background on the policy and its development can be found in the papers that accompany the passage of the Local Audit and Accountability Bill at <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2013-14/localauditandaccountability.html> .

What does the consultation cover?

1.7 If the Local Audit and Accountability Bill is enacted (subject to the will of Parliament), to give effect to the new local audit arrangements many

of the provisions contained in the Bill will require secondary legislation. This document sets out our proposals for the regulations regarding:

- i) **Part 2:** Modification of the Act in relation to smaller authorities (Clause 5, Part 1),
- ii) **Part 3:** Appointment of Auditors
 - o Constitution of auditor panels (Schedule 4, Para 2(9));
 - o Constitution of auditor panels (Schedule 4 Para 4);
 - o Application of local authority enactments to auditor panels (Schedule 4 Para 5); and
 - o Functions of auditor panels (Clause 10(8));
- iii) **Part 4:** Eligibility and Regulations of Auditors;
 - o Appropriate qualifications (Schedule 5, Para 8);
 - o Definition of “major local audits” (Schedule 5).

1.8 Although regulations have not yet been drafted in connection to Part 5 of the Bill, this document also includes policy questions on Account and Audit regulations and regulations on the consideration of Public Interest Reports and written recommendations.

Who are we consulting?

1.9 This consultation document seeks the views of all organisations affected by these changes (those organisations are listed in Schedule 2 of the Bill) and other interested parties about the content of a large subset of the proposed regulations. Your contribution will help us to refine those regulations following the enactment of the Bill, should it be the will of Parliament.

1.10 We propose a further consultation in the summer of 2014 which will discuss the detail of the remaining regulations.

Timing and how to get involved

1.11 This consultation runs for a period of 4 weeks, with responses invited by 20 December 2013. Please use the on-line consultation portal at <http://localaudit.readandcomment.com/> . The on-line portal will allow interested parties to comment broadly on specific sections, questions or the actual draft regulations. Each section has a dedicated message board, which will enable interested parties to share their views and engage in an on-line dialogue should they wish. Alternatively, you can email your response to:- foia@communities.gsi.gov.uk

1.12 Or, send a written submission to:

The Future of Local Audit Team
The Department for Communities and Local Government
Zone 3/J5, Eland House
Bressenden Place
LONDON SW1E 5DU

- 1.13** Please use the title “Response to the future of local audit consultation – secondary legislation”. It would also be helpful if you could make clear in your response whether you represent an organisation or group, and in what capacity you are responding.
- 1.14** Following this period, we will consider the responses received and where necessary, make any appropriate changes to the final regulations, which we intend to lay before Parliament later in 2014. Before then, it is also our intention to publish a summary of the responses received.
- 1.15** We outline in the following sections the draft regulations and provide summary notes.

Section 2

2. Smaller Authorities' Regulations

- 2.1** **Clause 5** of the Bill enables the Secretary of State to make provision in regulations for the audit of smaller authorities, defined as those with an annual income and expenditure not exceeding £6.5 million.
- 2.2** Proposed regulations under these powers will:
- i) enable a person, specified by the Secretary of State, to appoint auditors to smaller authorities. This will facilitate the development of a sector-led body, as proposed by the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks; and
 - ii) enable the creation of a less onerous framework, mirroring the current “limited assurance” arrangements in line with the smaller amounts of public money these authorities control.
- 2.3** The draft regulations cover core provisions relating to the specification of a “person” to appoint auditors to smaller authorities. These are summarised below, together with the Government’s policy intentions for regulations to exempt smaller authorities with an income and expenditure below £25,000 from routine audit.

Draft regulations for a specified person to appoint auditors to smaller authorities

- 2.4** The draft regulations set out how the Secretary of State will confer duties on a specified person to appoint auditors and to set fees. These duties are required in order to create a legally-binding arrangement between the three parties: the specified person, the auditor firm and the smaller authority to whom the specified person appoints an auditor. The only contractual relationship that will exist will be between the specified person and the auditor firm.

Interpretation and opting for full code audit (regulations 2 and 3)

- 2.5** There are currently no smaller health service authorities. In the event that any should materialise, they would not be treated as smaller authorities under the regulations.
- 2.6** The specific person will not be required to appoint a local auditor to a smaller authority which opts to prepare accounts as a principal authority and undergo full code audit. The decision to account and undergo audit as a principal authority will be made in full council, and such authorities will be required to notify the specified person.

Specification procedure (regulations 4 and 5)

- 2.7 The Secretary of State may specify a “person” to appoint auditors to smaller authorities. The process will be in writing and the Secretary of State must publish the contact details for the specified person. The period of specification may be indefinite or subject to an expiry date.

Procedure for determining role of specified person in auditor appointment (regulation 6)

- 2.8 The specified person will be under a duty to appoint auditors to opted-in authorities. It must write to smaller authorities to ask them if they wish to use the specified person to appoint a local auditor, setting out fee scales, the proposed length of the contract of appointment for local auditors and a deadline for a response. The specified person must allow a minimum of eight weeks for a response from the smaller authority. It will write to smaller authorities once in relation to each contract period only. Smaller authorities are deemed to be opted-in at the point the offer is made.

Procedures for opting-out and opting-in (regulations 7 and 8)

- 2.9 An authority’s decision to opt-in or opt-out will apply to the whole of the proposed contract period. This will enable the specified person to set out contracts for audit service. It will give sufficient clarity to auditor firms regarding the size and composition of contracts to enable them to price their bids competitively. It will also ensure a predictable income to the specified person for the duration of any given contract so that they may manage those contracts effectively.
- 2.10 Authorities which do not opt-out in writing by the deadline will be automatically opted-in. An authority’s decision to opt-out must be made in full council. This provision safeguards against the situation where a smaller authority fails to make the necessary arrangements. Without such provision, the specified person would be unable to act on their behalf.
- 2.11 An authority which opts-out will be able to request in writing to opt-in during a contract period. The specified person must consider such a request and give its reasons for any decision to refuse in writing. The default presumption will be that the specified person would accept the authority’s request unless there were reasonable grounds for not doing so. The specified person would appoint an auditor to the authority for the remaining contract period on the fee scale applicable to opted-in authorities. The specified person may recover reasonable administrative costs from the authority.

- Q1. The Government does not intend to provide for smaller authorities to opt-out during a contract period, for the reasons given above. However, we would welcome comments on any circumstances under which a smaller authority should be able to opt-out of the specified person's regime once the deadline for opting-out of a contract period has expired.**
- Q2. We would like to understand if there are any circumstances in which the specified person should be able to forcibly opt-out a smaller authority. If this is allowed in any circumstances, what safeguards should there be to ensure that the authority is treated fairly and has sufficient time to appoint its own auditor in compliance with the law?**

Authorities ceasing to qualify as a smaller authority (regulation 9)

- 2.12** Authorities which become aware that they will exceed the £6.5 million threshold for qualification as a smaller authority for a third consecutive year must notify the specified person as soon as practicable. In the event that such an authority fails to notify the specified person, the authority is liable for any costs incurred by the auditor appointed to it by the specified person.

Functions of specified person, fees and payments of fees (regulations 10-12)

- 2.13** The specified person will:
- i) appoint auditors to all opted-in authorities, set fee scales, and keep a record of authorities which are opted-in and opted-out;
 - ii) consult each authority on its proposed auditor in order to ensure that there is no issue regarding the auditor's independence from the authority;
 - iii) be required to have appropriate systems in place to set performance standards and monitor contract compliance; and
 - iv) have a duty to consult representative bodies of smaller authorities and accountancy representative bodies before setting fee scales. Fees will be set in relation to the whole period of a proposed contract of appointment for auditors. Fees may take account of relevant auditor expenses, the functions conferred on the specified person and incidental, and supplementary and related functions, such as supporting the production of guidance.

2.14 Opted-in authorities must:

- i) provide information to the auditor / specified person to ensure that the specified person may determine fees payable; and
- ii) pay the determined fees to the specified person. The specified person will be able to vary fees, on the basis of evidence supplied by the auditor, if the audit work is significantly greater or less than envisaged in the relevant fee scale.

Q3. Should the specified person be required to publish the record of the names of opted-in and opted-out authorities, and, for opted-in authorities, to publish the names of the appointed auditors?

Ending specification and consequences of this (regulations 13 and 14)

2.15 The Secretary of State may end the specified person's specification and the specified person may request de-specification. Before de-specifying the specified person, the Secretary of State must consult opted-in authorities and relevant representative bodies. The Secretary of State must notify the specified person in writing of de-specification, setting out his reasons for de-specification and a date for the specification to end, and must publish a notice of de-specification. The Secretary of State must make arrangements for notifying opted-in authorities, and can require the specified person to do so.

2.16 In the event of de-specification, the Secretary of State will be able to exercise any functions of the specified person in the meantime and to transfer the specified person's rights and liabilities to the Secretary of State or to another specified person. This will ensure that any outstanding contracts continue to operate effectively on behalf of smaller authorities. This regulation is required because there would be no means of enforcing any contract novation on a third party (the auditor firms) in the absence of such provision.

2.17 In the event of a decision to de-specify, the specified person will be under a duty to disclose all relevant rights and liabilities and to co-operate with the Secretary of State and any other specified person to ensure that the audits are not adversely affected.

Functions of auditor panels in relation to opted-out authorities (regulation 15)

2.18 Smaller authorities which opt-in to the specified person's auditor appointment regime will not be required to appoint an auditor panel. The regulations will clarify that an auditor panel will have no functions in relation to an auditor appointed by the specified person after an authority has opted-in. This situation may arise where an authority

opts-out of the specified person's auditor appointment regime for one contract period and therefore appoints an auditor panel, and then opts-in for a subsequent contract period.

***Modification of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014
(regulation 16 and Schedule 1)***

- 2.19** The Schedule modifies and disapplies various provisions in the Bill for opted-in authorities. It currently covers modifications to the first 11 clauses and Schedule 3 to the Bill only. A consultation in May 2014 will look at the rest of the Bill based on comments on this consultation.

Q4. In the event that a smaller authority opts-out of the specified person's appointment regime but then fails to appoint an auditor, should the Secretary of State be able to order that the authority is opted-in and require the specified person to appoint an auditor?

Q5. Do you have any observations on the draft regulations for smaller authorities?

Statement on exemption policy

- 2.20** Clause 5(6) allows regulations to make provision to exempt specified smaller authorities from specified audit requirements, and to set out where the exemption will not apply.
- 2.21** The policy intention is to specify exempt authorities by reference to the higher of the authority's gross income and gross expenditure in a given year. The threshold will be £25,000. The threshold will apply in a given year, i.e. the three-year smoothing provision for the £6.5 million threshold set out in clause 6(1) will not be applied to this threshold. The smaller authority will be responsible for correctly classifying itself.
- 2.22** The exemption will apply to the ("limited assurance") form of audit that will be set out in the Code of Audit Practice that the Comptroller and Auditor General will prepare in relation to smaller authorities.
- 2.23** The Government will take a risk-based approach to the proposed exemption to ensure that the circumstances which trigger audit are appropriate and proportionate to risk. The exemption will not apply where:
- i) a smaller authority is newly established, for the first three years;
 - ii) a public interest report has been made in the previous year; or
 - iii) an item in the accounts has been declared unlawful in the previous year.

- 2.24** Smaller authorities which would otherwise qualify for the exemption may choose to have an audit.
- 2.25** All smaller authorities, including those which are exempt, will be required to appoint a local auditor (or have an auditor appointed on their behalf by the specified person). This is to ensure that local government electors will be able to ask questions of the auditor, raise an objection to an item of account, etc.
- 2.26** The regulations may also set out the process that will underpin the exemption. This is likely to place a duty on the:
- i) smaller authority to apply in writing to its appointed local auditor for the exemption;
 - ii) smaller authority to supply its appointed local auditor with the necessary information for the local auditor to determine whether or not the authority qualifies for the exemption;
 - iii) appointed local auditor to certify in writing that the authority qualifies for the exemption (or not), subject to the supply of appropriate information from the smaller authority; and
 - iv) smaller authority to display the certificate publicly with the notice setting out arrangements for electors to inspect documents.

Q6. Are these the right criteria for suspension and the right process for exemption?

AGENDA NOTE:

DRAFT LEGISLATION DISTRIBUTED INDEPENDENTLY