

## Lifting the Lid on Local Government Finance

June 2020

Local Government is going through a period of significant change, especially with austerity and devolution. Localisation of business rates is ongoing and revenue support grant is being phased out. There is uncertainty about local government finance because of the Fair Funding Review and 'Brexit'. This is changing local government and how its finances are managed.

In the current climate of financial challenges and uncertainty, a working knowledge of local authority finance will put you and your colleagues in a position of advantage. However, what you really want to know is not only how local government finance is supposed to work but also how it REALLY WORKS in practice. This will not be about theory but about behaviour and managing that behaviour to allow you to get the most out of your budget.



**Council head offices in Nottingham, Lambeth and Cumbria.**

This seminar is presented by the ex- Leader of a City Council and local government finance officer, and a former Finance Director and Strategic Director of a Borough Council.

Whether you are in a London Borough, Metropolitan, Unitary, County or District Council or otherwise involved in local government; whether you are an Elected Member, Non-Financial Manager, or even a member of the Finance Team, you will benefit from **"Lifting the Lid on Local Government Finance"**.

### What the Session Covers:

The aim of the sessions is to provide you with the knowledge to be able to ask the right questions and better manage your budget and those who are managing it for you. The session will address the following issues:

- How do Local Government Finances really work? 'Tricks of the trade' including getting beneath what is really happening with reserves, capital programme underspends / overspends, where the money is hidden, and S106 management.
- How to get the financial processes right to get maximum consensus amongst members. How to get the most out of your budget and balance the books and explain the budget to the council taxpayer.
- What reforms of Local Government Finance are happening and can be expected?

The session is accompanied by a very useful book that is designed for reference after the session entitled: **"Lifting the Lid on Local Government Finance"**

### Venues and Dates:

- **London:** Novotel Hotel, Waterloo – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020
- **North:** Novotel Hotel, Leeds – 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020

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## **The Programme**

- 10.00      How do Local Government Finances Work? – Expenditure and Income; Revenue Support Grant; Business Rates; Council Tax; Specific Grants; Pressure on Budgets; Financial Management; why councils are sometimes risk averse; Incremental budgeting, budget padding, revised estimates, earmarked reserves and ‘creative accounting’; why budgets are sometimes divorced from reality; can money sometimes be hidden? Why do some councils ‘cut’ too much while others don’t ‘cut’ enough? Capital Programmes and why they are often under-spent; Prudential Borrowing; Treasury Management.
- 11.15      BREAK
- 11.30      How to get the financial processes right – Introduction; Basic Principles; Setting a Budget; Getting the process right; Setting the political priorities; What you are prepared to see reduced; What you wish to preserve; Technical Principles; Establishing the gap; Getting the decision-making sequence right; Departmental Targets; Themed Reductions (big tickets); Category Approach; Specific issues in the Housing Revenue Account.
- 12.30      LUNCH
- 13.30      How to follow the money and balance the books – Reserves, provisions and the previous year’s out-turn; Adult Care and Children’s services; Pensions; Insurance; Below the radar activity; Carry-forwards; Contingencies; One-off items; Council Tax, Business Rate and other fraud; Capital; Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy; Trading Accounts, Companies & Partnerships; Commercialism; Leadership; Structure & Support; Marketing; Accounting & Finance; Property; Risks; Human Resources; Priorities & Alternatives; Presentation & Delivery; Getting the message right; Monitoring delivery; Questions that councillors should ask when they receive financial reports.
- 14.45      BREAK
- 15.00      What reforms of Local Government Finance are happening and can be expected? - Spending Reviews; Localism Act; Public Health and Pooling Health Budgets; Localisation of Business Rates; Business Rate reliefs and appeals; Devolution and Combined Authorities; Revenue Support Grant settlement 2020/21; Fair Funding Review; the impact of ‘Brexit’; Outlook for Local Government Finance.
- 16.00      CLOSE

This seminar is designed for people who want to achieve a better understanding of how local government finance works in practice, including councillors, non-financial managers, financial managers and anyone with an interest in local government finance.

This seminar is also available in-house. For further information about in-house courses, please contact Adrian Waite on 017683-51498 or [adrian.waite@awics.co.uk](mailto:adrian.waite@awics.co.uk).



**Adrian Waite (Independent Consultancy Services) Limited**

**Our speakers **Adrian Waite** and **Graham Chapman** are well known for their in-depth knowledge of this subject and for their ability to present information clearly.**



**Adrian Waite** is Managing Director of 'Adrian Waite (Independent Consultancy Services) Limited'. He is a qualified member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), an Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Housing and a Fellow of the Institute of Leadership & Management. Adrian is a former member of the CIPFA National Council and the Housing Panel.

He has recently advised local authorities on financial management and accounting matters, developed and delivered training courses, advised on the evaluation of business cases and value for money and acted as an expert financial witness in judicial reviews of local government budgets. He provides financial advice and diagnostic reports to support the Local Government Association's Peer Review programme and has acted as an associate member of a Peer Review team. He has assisted the Local Government Association with the development of their Fair Funding Review modelling tools. He has advised a Combined Authority on future grant funding arrangements. Prior to founding 'AWICS' Adrian worked for five different local authorities including as Finance Director and Strategic Director.



**Graham Chapman** is ex Leader and Deputy Leader of Nottingham City Council. Graham is currently a board member of Local Partnerships, Chair of the Greater Nottingham NHS Lift Board and of Nottingham City Transport, the most successful bus company in the U.K. He is also a Local Government consultant for the Local Government Association having carried out reviews of around 15 Councils and mentored over 20 leaders or Deputy leaders.

He was also part of the teams involved in supporting Doncaster, Rotherham and more recently Birmingham. Graham has also served as the Deputy Chair, East Midlands Development Agency, with responsibility for Urban Areas and was deputy Chair of CABE Space. He has also been Portfolio holder for Children's Services and Housing and Chaired the Nottinghamshire Leaders' Group bidding for Combined Authority and City Deal status for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Prior to this, Graham has been a language teacher, political agent, researcher, publicity officer, Head of Policy and accountant. Graham graduated as an Accountant (CIPFA). He has a Joint Honours in French and Italian, an MA in European Studies and a PhD in Regional Development.

## **About 'AWICS'**

'AWICS' is a management consultancy and training company. We specialise in providing support in finance and management to clients in local government and housing. We are well known for our ability to analyse and explain complex financial and management issues clearly. Our mission statement is 'Independence, Integrity, Value'. We therefore provide training from an independent standpoint that is designed to help the client to achieve their objectives. We are passionate about working with the utmost integrity. We believe that we offer the best value for money that is available today! We are big enough to make a difference – but are small enough to care!

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### How to reserve your place

- **On line:** You can book online at: <https://awics.co.uk/lifting-the-lid-on-local-government-finance>
- **On line:** You can download this form from <http://awics.co.uk/lifting-the-lid-on-local-government-finance>
- fill it in electronically and forward it to: [orders@awics.co.uk](mailto:orders@awics.co.uk)
- **By post:** Complete this form and send it to: AWICS Ltd, PO Box 17, Appleby in Westmorland, Cumbria. CA16 6YL.

**Payment:** It is possible to pay online at the time of booking. In the case of customers with an existing account, public bodies and housing associations we are happy to confirm your booking and send an invoice.

**Delegate fees:** The cost of this seminar in London is £260 plus VAT making a total of £312. The cost of this seminar in Leeds is £210 plus VAT making a total of £252. **However, there is a £20 discount for people who book a month or more in advance** making the cost £240 in London and £190 in Leeds. The fee includes lunch and book – 'Lifting the Lid on Local Government Finance'.

\* Please let us know if you have any special dietary requirements.

Delegate Name                      Position and Organisation

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Please state which venue and date you require \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person booking \_\_\_\_\_ Tel.No. \_\_\_\_\_

Dept and Organisation \_\_\_\_\_ Order No. \_\_\_\_\_

Full Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Post Code \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please let us know if your delegate has any particular needs.

### Booking conditions:

- **Cancellations and substitutions:** A full refund will be given up to 28 days before the seminar. There after a 50% refund up to 14 days before the seminar. We regret that no refund can be given 14 days or less before the seminar. Cancellations must be made in writing or by email and be acknowledged by AWICS.
- **Refunds:** No refund will be given for non-attendance, but delegates may substitute another delegate at any time.

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