



ROYAL HOUSEHOLD

Framework Agreement

relating to the

Sovereign Grant

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FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT RELATING TO THE SOVEREIGN GRANT

Purpose of the Sovereign Grant

1. The purpose of the Sovereign Grant for a financial year is to provide resources for use by the Royal Household in support of Her Majesty's official duties, including the maintenance of the Occupied Royal Palaces, thereby enabling Her Majesty to perform Her duties as Sovereign effectively, efficiently and with appropriate dignity.
2. Income and expenditure pertaining to the Privy Purse and to the Royal Collection are outside the scope of this framework agreement.

Legislative authority

3. The statutory authority that governs the Sovereign Grant is the *Sovereign Grant Act 2011*.
4. Treasury Ministers are responsible to Parliament for the Sovereign Grant.
5. This Memorandum should be reviewed at the end of each review period, normally 5 years beginning with the end of the preceding review period, the first review ending 31 March 2016, and modified, if required, in the interim in the light of changing circumstances.
6. This memorandum is published on the Royal Household's website.

Governance and Accountability

7. The Royal Household's objectives in managing the Sovereign Grant are as follows:
 - to give excellent support to The Queen to enable Her Majesty to serve the nation as Head of State, while ensuring that value for money is achieved;
 - to maintain the Occupied Royal Palaces as buildings of State to a standard consistent with the Household's operational requirements and with the royal, architectural and historic status of the buildings in a manner which ensures value for money; and
 - to seek to contract in the most economical and efficient manner for the supply of all services, consistent with the appropriate safety and security requirements.

Ministerial responsibility and relationship with the Treasury

8. The Permanent Secretary to the Treasury is accountable to Parliament for the payment of the Sovereign Grant. These responsibilities include:
 - providing information about the Sovereign Grant to Parliament as required; and
 - laying of the Annual Report and Accounts before Parliament.
9. The Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, as Principal Accounting Officer, is responsible for the propriety and regularity of expenditure against the Treasury's Vote, and for securing prudent and economic administration of the available resources. These responsibilities include:
 - ensuring that the financial and other management controls applied by the Treasury are appropriate and sufficient to safeguard public funds and for ensuring the Royal Household's compliance with those controls; and
 - ensuring that the internal control systems applied by the Royal Household conform to the requirements of regularity, propriety and good financial management.
10. The Treasury Officer of Accounts is the primary source of advice to the Permanent Secretary for the Treasury on the discharge of the Treasury's responsibilities in respect of the Sovereign Grant and the primary point of contact for the Royal Household itself within the Treasury. The main functions of the Treasury Officer of Accounts are:

- to communicate and maintain an effective relationship with the Royal Household and to ensure timely consultation about policy, resources and other relevant matters;
 - to communicate relevant Government policy to the Royal Household and advise on the interpretation of that policy and to provide specific advice as necessary;
 - to monitor and review the Royal Household's performance against targets and against its resources and to take action where appropriate; and
 - to advise Treasury ministers about the statutory reviews of the Sovereign Grant and about associated matters.
11. The timing and phasing of payments in respect of each Sovereign Grant yearly sum are agreed annually between the Treasury and the Royal Household following the confirmation of the amount payable for that year as determined by the Royal Trustees. The Royal Trustees are the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Keeper of the Privy Purse.

The Keeper of the Privy Purse's Sovereign Grant role and responsibilities

12. The Keeper of the Privy Purse as Accounting Officer of the Royal Household is responsible for:

- safeguarding the public funds for which he has charge;
- ensuring propriety and regularity in the handling of those funds; and
- the day-to-day operations and management of The Sovereign Grant.

He should ensure that the Sovereign Grant is managed on the basis of the standards, in terms of governance, decision-making and financial management that are set out in Chapter 3 of *Managing Public Money*.

13. The responsibilities for accounting to Parliament include:

- signing the accounts and ensuring that proper records are kept relating to the accounts and that the accounts are properly prepared and presented in accordance with any directions issued by the Treasury;
- signing a Statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities, for inclusion in the annual report and accounts;
- signing a Governance Statement regarding the governance of the Sovereign Grant and its system of internal control, for inclusion in the annual report and accounts;
- acting in accordance with the terms of this document, *Managing Public Money* and other instructions and guidance issued from time to time by the Treasury;

14. The Keeper of the Privy Purse will assist the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury and the Treasury Officer of Accounts in respect of Sovereign Grant matters that arise before the Public Accounts Committee or other Parliamentary Committees.

Reporting Arrangements

15. As soon as practicable after the end of a financial year, the Keeper of the Privy Purse must:

- a. prepare a statement of accounts relating to the use of the Sovereign Grant for that year, and
- b. give a copy of the statement to the Comptroller and Auditor General.

16. The statement of accounts must:

- a. state the amount of net relevant expenditure for the financial year;
- b. outline main activities and performance during the previous financial year and set out in summary form forward plans;

- c. comply with the Accounts Direction given by the Treasury to the Keeper of the Privy Purse.
17. The Accounts Direction may include directions as to:
- a. the information to be contained in the statement and how it is to be presented,
 - b. the methods and principles in accordance with which the statement is to be prepared; and
 - c. any additional information that is to accompany the statement.
18. 16. The amount of net relevant expenditure for a financial year is:
- a. the amount of resources used for that year by the Royal Household in support of Her Majesty's official duties, minus
 - b. the amount of income of the Royal Household insofar as it relates to the support of Her Majesty's official duties for that year (excluding the Sovereign Grant).

Risk Management

19. The Royal Household ensures that the risks that it faces are dealt with in an appropriate manner, in accordance with relevant aspects of best practice in corporate governance, and operates a risk management strategy. It adopts and implements policies and practices to safeguard itself against fraud and theft.
20. The Royal Household:
- a. has an audit committee, which is a sub-committee of the Lord Chamberlain's Committee, with an independent non-executive chair;
 - b. maintains arrangements for internal audit in accordance with the Treasury's *Government Internal Audit Standards (GLAS)*;
 - c. reports annually to the Audit Committee on fraud and theft in the area of expenditure supported by the Sovereign Grant and notifies the Audit Committee of any unusual or major incidents as soon as possible.

External audit

21. The Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG) audits the Sovereign Grant annual accounts and lays them before Parliament, together with his report.
22. The C&AG:
- a. has a statutory right of access to relevant documents, including by virtue of section 25(8) of the *Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000*, held by another party in receipt of payments or grants from the Sovereign Grant;
 - b. shares with the Treasury information identified during the audit process and the audit report (together with any other outputs) at the end of the audit, in particular on issues impacting on the Treasury's responsibilities in relation to financial systems within the Sovereign Grant;
 - c. where asked, provide the Treasury and other relevant bodies with Regulatory Compliance Reports and other similar reports which the Treasury may request at the commencement of the audit and which are compatible with the independent auditor's role.
23. The C&AG may also carry out examinations into the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which the Sovereign Grant has used its resources in discharging its functions. For the purpose of these examinations the C&AG has statutory access to documents as provided for under section 8 of the National Audit Act 1983.
24. In addition, the Royal Household uses its best endeavours to secure access for the C&AG to any other documents required by the C&AG which are held by other bodies.

Management and Financial responsibilities

25. Unless agreed by the Treasury, the Royal Household shall follow the principles, rules, guidance and advice in *Managing Public Money*, referring any difficulties or potential bids for exceptions to the Treasury Officer of Accounts in the Treasury in the first instance.
26. Once the budget has been approved by the Treasury, the Royal Household shall have authority to incur expenditure approved in the budget without further reference to the Treasury, on the following conditions:
 - a. the Royal Household shall comply with the delegations set out in Appendix A;
 - b. these delegations shall not be altered without the prior agreement of the Treasury;
 - c. approval of the budget shall not remove the need to seek formal approval by the Treasury where any proposed expenditure is outside the delegated limits;
 - d. the Royal Household shall provide the Treasury with such information about its operations, performance of individual projects or other expenditure funded from the Sovereign Grant as the Treasury may reasonably require; and
 - e. any novel or contentious expenditure is cleared with the Treasury before it is undertaken.

Corporate and business plans

27. The Royal Household will submit the annual budget for the forthcoming year for the Sovereign Grant and the plan for the next three years to the Treasury.
28. The following key matters should be included in the plans:
 - a. key objectives and associated key performance targets for the forward years, and the strategy for achieving those objectives;
 - b. a review of performance in the preceding financial year, together with
 - c. an estimate of performance in the current year;
 - d. an assessment of the risk factors that may significantly affect the execution of the plan but that cannot be accurately forecast; and
 - e. other matters as agreed between the Treasury and the Royal Household.

Reporting performance to the Treasury

29. The Royal Household operates management, information and accounting systems that enable it to review in a timely and effective manner the Sovereign Grant's financial and non-financial performance against the budgets and targets set out in the corporate and business plans.
30. The Royal Household provides the Treasury with the following:
 - a. monthly management accounts including explanations of major variances against budget; and
 - b. cashflow information supporting the monthly sovereign grant requirement.

Delegated Authorities

31. The delegated authorities for the Sovereign Grant are set out in Appendix A. The Royal Household obtains the Treasury's prior written approval before:
 - a. entering into any undertaking to incur any expenditure that falls outside the delegations; or
 - b. carrying out policies that go against the principles, rules, guidance and advice in *Managing Public Money*.

Personnel matters

32. Staff in the Royal Household provided for from the Sovereign Grant are members of The Queen's Household and not civil servants. Their terms and conditions of employment are a matter for the Royal Household.
33. The Royal Household will have responsibility for the recruitment, retention and motivation of its staff.
34. The broad responsibilities toward its staff are to ensure that:
 - a. the rules for recruitment and management of staff create an inclusive culture in which diversity is fully valued and there is no discrimination on grounds of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, disability, community background or age;
 - b. appointment and advancement is based on merit;
 - c. the level and structure of its staffing, including grading and staff numbers, are appropriate to its functions and the requirements of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
 - d. the performance of its staff at all levels is satisfactorily appraised and the Household's performance measurement systems are reviewed from time to time;
 - e. its staff are encouraged to acquire the appropriate professional, management and other expertise necessary to achieve the Household objectives;
 - f. proper consultation with staff takes place on key issues affecting them;
 - g. adequate grievance and disciplinary procedures are in place;
 - h. whistle-blowing procedures consistent with the Public Interest Disclosure Act are in place; and
 - i. a code of conduct for staff is in place.

Housekeeping issues

35. It is the Royal Household's policy to retain primary accounting documents for at least 10 years.

Sovereign Reserve

36. The unused funds held by the Royal Trustees as the Sovereign Reserve held in an account with the Government Banking Service.
37. Withdrawals of funds from the Sovereign Reserve for spending in advance of the audited annual accounts are subject to prior Treasury approval.

THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD'S INCOME

The Sovereign Grant

38. The Sovereign Grant for the year to 31 March 2013 is set at £31 million.
39. Thereafter, the amount of the Sovereign Grant for a financial year is determined by the Royal Trustees and will normally be equal to a prescribed percentage – initially 15% - of the Crown Estate's profit in the financial year two years prior.
40. To ensure that the Grant remains at an appropriate level, the amount will be subject to the following adjustment mechanisms.
 - A capped Sovereign Reserve fund managed by the Royal Trustees. If the Sovereign Grant proves greater than required in a given year, the surplus will be paid into the Reserve, which may be drawn down in future years as required. The Royal Trustees must not allow the Reserve to exceed about half of the Sovereign Grant in that year. If the Reserve is approaching this level, the Royal Trustees may specify a lower grant amount than would otherwise have been implied by the formula.
 - A cash terms floor. The grant amount will not fall in cash terms on the amount in the previous year unless the Royal Trustees have specified a lesser amount to manage the Reserve in the way described above.
 - Regular reviews by the Royal Trustees. The Royal Trustees will be bound to consider the suitability of the percentage at regular intervals and to propose a new percentage where necessary. The first review will take place within 4 years of 1 April 2012 and thereafter within every 5 years beginning after a review period. The Treasury would present an order to implement a change in the percentage and an affirmative resolution would be required for an increase in the percentage.
41. Prior to the start of each financial year and as soon as is practicable, the Royal Household shall provide the Treasury with a profile of the expenditure of the Sovereign Grant in the year ahead. The Sovereign Grant, as calculated by the prescribed formula, will be paid to the Royal Household in monthly instalments based on this profile.
42. The Royal Household's annual profile of expected expenditure should be signed by the Keeper of the Privy Purse, the Deputy Treasurer to The Queen or by a person previously notified by the Keeper to the Treasury as authorised to sign on the Keeper's behalf.
43. The annual profile of expected expenditure and draw-down submitted to the Treasury must be updated if it becomes clear that spending or draw-down patterns will be significantly different from the forecast.
44. Recharges to other entities operating at the Occupied Royal Palaces are used to offset Sovereign Grant expenditure. They aim to recover only the actual costs incurred in providing the goods and/or services, including administrative costs.

Other Income

45. The Royal Household should seek to optimise income from non-Treasury sources where this is consistent with the main functions of the Sovereign Grant.

Fees and Charges

46. Fees and charges for services supplied by the Royal Household will be determined in accordance with Chapter 6 of *Managing Public Money*.

EXPENDITURE - GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Value for Money

47. The Keeper of the Privy Purse has a responsibility to ensure good value for money, which is the optimum combination of whole life cost and quality to meet the user's requirement – it is not the lowest price alone. Therefore activities should be benchmarked, periodically and where practicable, against best practice elsewhere. They should be contracted out where the conclusion is reached that this would provide better value for money. Procurement of works, equipment, goods and services (including consultant's fees) should be based on value for money. Appropriate option appraisal procedures should be carried out before procurement decisions are taken.

Procurement

48. The Royal Household will wherever possible observe best practice on public procurement in line with guidance issued from the Office of Government Commerce and the Treasury.
49. All high risk procurement projects and large IT procurement projects should follow a recognised method of project control such as Prince II.
50. Before entering into any operating lease (e.g. for equipment hire) the Royal Household must establish that it offers better value for money than purchase.
51. The Keeper of the Privy Purse has authority to let or vary contracts and may delegate such authority to other members of the Household.

Competition

52. Contracts should always be placed on a competitive basis, unless there are convincing reasons to the contrary. Tenders should be accepted from suppliers who provide best value for money overall.
53. However, the Treasury recognises that in certain circumstances, for example, decisions on the destination or mode of travel or security considerations may often limit the potential choice of suppliers. In these cases, the Household will ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to ensure that all alternatives are fully considered before decisions are made.

Prudence

54. The Royal Household shall take all reasonable steps to appraise the financial standing of any firm or other body with which it intends to enter into a contract.

Timeliness in Paying Bills

55. The Royal Household should aim to collect receipts and pay all matured and properly authorised invoices in accordance with the terms of contracts or within 30 days of receipt of an approved invoice.

STAFF COSTS

Pay and conditions of service

56. Staff in the Royal Household whose salaries are met from the Sovereign Grant are employees of The Queen's Household and are not Civil Servants. Their terms and conditions of employment will be a matter for the Royal Household.
57. Subject to its delegated authorities, the Royal Household shall ensure that the creation of any additional posts does not incur forward commitments that will exceed its ability to pay for them.
58. Staff terms and conditions are set out in an Employee Handbook.

Pensions, redundancy and compensation

59. Until 31 March 2002, all full-time permanent employees were entitled to be members of:
 - a. a scheme managed by the Government analogous to the Civil Service pension scheme (the Royal Household Pension Scheme); or
 - b. a scheme managed by trustees on behalf of the Royal Household (the Royal Households Group Pension Scheme).
60. Both pension schemes provide similar pension benefits based on final pay and are non-contributory for employees (except in respect of widows'/widowers' benefits for the Government managed scheme). Full-time permanent employees joining from 1 April 2002 are entitled to be members of the Royal Household Defined Contribution (Stakeholder) Pension Scheme.

EXPENDITURE OTHER THAN ON STAFF

Capital Expenditure

61. Capital expenditure is defined as expenditure on new construction, land, extensions of, and alterations to, existing buildings and the purchase of any other fixed assets (e.g. machinery, plant, and vehicles) with an expected working life of more than one year.
62. The Royal Household's delegated limit for capital expenditure is shown in Appendix A. Above that level, prior approval must be obtained from the Treasury before expenditure (excluding that financed by non-Sovereign Grant funds) is incurred.

Disposal of Assets

63. The Keeper of the Privy Purse shall ensure that in accordance with the *Crown Lands Act 1702*, property which is vested in The Queen by right of the Crown will not be sold nor leased for a period exceeding the greater of thirty one years or three lifetimes. The Treasury should be notified in writing of proposed changes to the categorisation of properties.
64. Disposals of items financed from the Sovereign Grant are at market value unless the Treasury agrees to another course. Disposal proceeds are retained by the Household for re-use.

Borrowing, Lending, Guarantees, Indemnities and Contingent Liabilities (including Letters of Comfort)

65. The Royal Household shall not borrow, lend money, charge any asset or security purchased with the Sovereign Grant. Similarly, subject to any agreed delegated authorities it should not, without prior approval give guarantees or indemnities or letters of comfort, or incur any other contingent liability (as defined in Section 5.6 of *Managing Public Money*), whether or not in a legally binding form.

Losses and Special Payments

66. Subject to any delegation, the Royal Household should only write off losses or make special payments when satisfied that there is no feasible alternative. A record of losses should be maintained.

BANKING AND CASH MANAGEMENT

67. The Keeper of the Privy Purse as Accounting Officer is responsible for ensuring that the Sovereign Grant's banking arrangements safeguard public funds and are carried out efficiently, economically and effectively.

68. The Royal Household may hold up to £1 million in bank accounts outside the Exchequer. Otherwise any funds drawn down and not used, including funds in the Sovereign Reserve, will be held with the Exchequer,

Compliance With Instructions And Guidance

69. The Royal Household shall comply with the following documents or their successors:

- This Framework Agreement;
- *Managing Public Money*;
- *Government Internal Audit Standards*; issued by the Treasury;
- *Finance Reporting Manual (FreM)*, issued by the Treasury;
- Relevant *Dear Accounting Officer* letters;
- Other relevant instructions and guidance issued the Treasury;
- Recommendations made by the Public Accounts Committee or other Parliamentary authority which have been accepted by the Government and which are relevant to the Royal Household.

APPENDIX A: DELEGATED FINANCIAL LIMITS

All delegations are subject to the requirement that spending proposals falling within *Managing Public Money* Section A4.10.3 should be referred to the Treasury.

Description	Delegation
1. Capital Expenditure (paras 60- 63)	
Expenditure on new construction, land, extensions of, and alterations to, existing buildings and the purchase of any other fixed assets (e.g. machinery, plant, and vehicles) with an expected working life of more than one year. Also includes exchanges of fixed assets.	£6,000,000
Excess expenditure on new works and maintenance projects over £250,000 excluding fees.	£50,000 and 10% whichever is greater related to the let tender amount.
2. Gifts	
In a financial year, any one gift or total of gifts to one person/organisation.	£100,000
Gifts received by the Royal Household.	Unlimited
Gifts to staff are subject to <i>DAO (Gen) 13/01</i> .	
3. Non-Statutory Contingent Liabilities	£100,000
4. Losses And Special Payments (Para. 65)	
The write-off of losses or approval of special payments should only be carried out by staff authorised to do so by and on behalf of the Keeper of the Privy Purse. Classification of losses and special payments:	
A. Losses	
i. Cash losses.	
Physical losses of cash and equivalents (e.g. banknotes, postal orders, stamps) by any cause.	Unlimited
ii. Book keeping losses	
Because of unvouched or incompletely vouched payments, including cases where vouchers are missing.	Unlimited
Because of changes to estimates or other accounts to clear inexplicable or erroneous balances.	Unlimited
iii. Exchange rate fluctuations. (Losses due to fluctuations)	Unlimited
iv. Losses of pay allowances and superannuation benefits:	
Overpayments due to miscalculation, misinterpretation of Acts, Regulations or scheme rules or the full facts not being known.	Unlimited

Unauthorised issues, e.g. payments not admissible under the Acts, Regulations or scheme rules.	Unlimited
Losses arising from other causes, e.g. non-disclosure of full facts by the beneficiary, short of proven fraud.	Unlimited
v. Losses arising from overpayments of grants, etc. arising from miscalculation, misinterpretation of Acts Regulations or scheme rules, or the full facts not being known.	Unlimited
vi. Losses arising from failure to make adequate charges for the use of public property or services.	Unlimited
B. Losses of accountable stores:	
i. Because of fraud, whether or not it has been possible to charge anyone with an offence, or proven or suspected theft, arson or sabotage, or any other deliberate act (including repairable damage caused maliciously to buildings, stores; etc. which is not the subject of an identifiable legal claim against some person); wherever possible recovery must be effected and prosecution mounted.	Unlimited
ii. Losses arising from other causes.	Unlimited
C. Fruitless payments and constructive losses	£50,000
D. Claims waived or abandoned	£50,000
E. Special payments:	
i. extra-contractual and ex gratia payments to contractors;	£50,000
ii. other ex gratia payments;	£50,000
iii. compensation payments;	£50,000
iv. extra- statutory and extra-regulatory payments.	£50,000
5. Contracts (Paras. 47- 50)	
i. Single Tender Action (supplies and services)	£200,000
ii. Information technology and telecommunications	£6,000,000
iii. Single Tender Action (works)	£4,000,000
6. Disposal Of Assets (Paras. 62- 63)	£1,000,000