EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

THE GRANTS TO THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST ORDER 2015

2015 No. xxx

1. This explanatory memorandum has been prepared by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and is laid before the House of Commons by Command of Her Majesty.

This memorandum contains information for the Select Committee on Statutory Instruments.

2. Purpose of the instrument

2.1 This Order provides the statutory basis for the Government's financial support of the Churches Conservation Trust. The Trust was established in 1968 as the Redundant Churches Fund and is now called the Churches Conservation Trust. The Trust cares for Church of England churches of historic or architectural interest no longer required for regular worship and for which no suitable alternative use can be found. The Government currently provides 66% of the Trust's statutory funding, the remaining 34% being provided by the Church Commissioners.

3. Matters of special interest to the Select Committee on Statutory Instruments

3.1 None

4. Legislative Context

4.1 Section 1(1) and (2) of the Redundant Churches and other Religious Buildings Act 1969[1] ("the 1969 Act") provides that the Secretary of State may, with the approval of the Treasury, make grants to the Redundant Churches Fund (now known as the Churches Conservation Trust) during such period and not exceeding such aggregate amount as specified by Order. A draft of the Order is being laid for approval by the House of Commons in pursuance of section 1(4) of the 1969 Act.

4.2 Since the 1969 Act was passed, the Government has provided statutory funding to the Trust in line with its policies towards preserving and maximising access to the historic built environment. The Trust's main objective is the conservation of the churches in its care and those newly vested by the Church Commissioners. The Trust will also investigate and facilitate

[1] 1969 c.22.

appropriate uses of the church buildings where appropriate.

4.3 A new Funding Order is required from 1 April 2015 as the previous Order[2] only covers the period for grants up until the end of 31 March 2015.

5. Territorial Extent and Application

5.1 This instrument applies to England and Wales.

6. European Convention on Human Rights

Ed Vaizey, the Minister for Culture and the Digital Economy, has made the following statement regarding Human Rights:

In my view the provisions of The Grants to the Churches Conservation Trust Order 2015 are compatible with the Convention rights.

7. Policy background

- ***What is being done and why***

7.1 The Government's policy is to financially support the work of the Churches Conservation Trust, in line with its general objectives concerning the conservation of the historic built environment. Churches represent a large proportion of the listed buildings in England and Wales. Due to demographic changes and other factors, an average of about 20 Anglican churches per year become redundant, following due process undertaken by the Church Commissioners. While a larger proportion of the churches becoming redundant are either found a new use or are demolished, those considered most architecturally or historically significant are vested in the Trust by the Commissioners.

7.2 While the primary objective of the Trust is conservation of the churches in its care, alternative uses are sought where appropriate. It is an aim of the Trust that such alternative use would not only reduce the dependence of buildings on the Trust, thus releasing funding for other projects, but would also produce benefits in line with the aims and objectives of other Departments in terms of the provision of community facilities, capacity building and support for volunteering, community cohesion and regeneration.

7.3 Government funding for heritage church buildings continues to be a priority. Funding for the Trust is part of a wider suite of funding for ecclesiastical heritage buildings which includes the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme and funding made available by English Heritage.

7.4 In July 2011, the General Synod approved the Church of England's contribution to the Trust for the period 2012/13 to 2014/15, and in July 2014 it

[2] S.I. 2011/968.

approved the Church's contribution from 2015/16 to 2017/18. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has a funding agreement with the Trust which outlines the Department's requirements for the Trust for the funding period, including how the Trust is expected to contribute to the Department's Strategic Objectives. Agreements are made jointly with the Church Commissioners, and encompass the Commissioners' targets for the Trust.

7.5 This instrument provides the authority for funding for a one year period because this is the duration of current Government spending plans as determined during the 2013 Spending Round. Previous instruments have covered three year and four year periods.

- ***Consolidation***

7.6 The instrument revokes the Grants to the Churches Conservation Trust Order 2011[3].

8. Consultation Outcome

8.1 No consultation has been undertaken given the nature of the instrument.

9. Guidance

9.1 No guidance is required to accompany this instrument given its sole purpose in providing the statutory authority for Government grants to the Churches Conservation Trust.

10. Impact

10.1 The impact on business, charities or voluntary bodies is considered to be nil.

10.2. The impact on the public sector is considered to be nil.

10.3 An Impact Assessment has not been prepared for this instrument.

11. Regulating small business

11.1 The legislation does not apply to small business.

12. Monitoring & review

12.1 DCMS and the Churches Conservation Trust have a joint Management Agreement which sets out the priorities for both DCMS and the Church Commissioners, the indicators which will be used to measure performance and

[3] Ibid

the way the organisations work together. The Department also has bi-annual funding meetings with both the Church Commissioners and the Churches Conservation Trust.

13. Contact

Gill Graham at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport Tel: 020 7211 2319 or e-mail: gill.graham@culture.gov.uk can answer any queries regarding the instrument.