

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Corporate Governance Committee – 4th December 2017

External Audit – Progress Report and Update

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Richard Parrish

Report Author: (Jo Nacey, Financial Services Manager)

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 To provide Corporate Governance Committee with a report on the progress in delivering the responsibilities of being Taunton Deane Borough Council's external auditors.
- 1.2 To provide Corporate Governance Committee with an update in relation to Technical and Sector specific matters.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members are requested to note the report.

3 Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
The details of any specific risks are contained within the body of the External Auditors report.			

Risk Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Impact							

Likelihood of risk occurring	Indicator	Description (chance of occurrence)
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Slight	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at same time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily / weekly / monthly)	> 75%

4 Background and Full details of the Report

4.1 The Council's external audit function is undertaken by Grant Thornton. This report provides Members with an update on the progress as at December 2017 in delivering their responsibilities as the Council's external auditors as well as providing an update on Technical and Sector specific matters.

5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

5.1 None in relation to this report.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

6.1 None in relation to this report.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 None in respect of this report.

8 Environmental Impact Implications

8.1 None in respect of this report.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

9.1 None in respect of this report.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

10.1 None in respect of this report.

11 Social Value Implications

11.1 None in respect of this report.

12 Partnership Implications

12.1 None in respect of this report.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications

13.1 None in respect of this report.

14 Asset Management Implications

14.1 None in respect of this report.

15 Consultation Implications

15.1 None in respect of this report.

Democratic Path:

- **Corporate Governance Committee – Yes**
- **Full Council – No**

Reporting Frequency: Once only

Contact Officers

Name	Jo Nacey
Direct Dial	01823 219490
Email	j.nacey@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Corporate Governance Committee Update Taunton Deane Borough Council Progress Report and Update

December 2017

Peter Barber

Engagement Lead

T 0117 305 7897

E peter.a.barber@uk.gt.com

Rebecca Usher

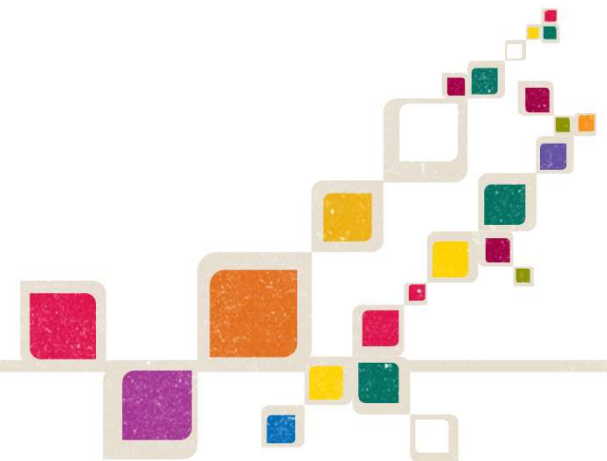
Manager

T 0117 305 7662

E rebecca.usher@uk.gt.com



The contents of this report relate only to the matters which have come to our attention, which we believe need to be reported to you as part of our audit process. It is not a comprehensive record of all the relevant matters, which may be subject to change, and in particular we cannot be held responsible to you for reporting all of the risks which may affect your business or any weaknesses in your internal controls. This report has been prepared solely for your benefit and should not be quoted in whole or in part without our prior written consent. We do not accept any responsibility for any loss occasioned to any third party acting, or refraining from acting on the basis of the content of this report, as this report was not prepared for, nor intended for, any other purpose.



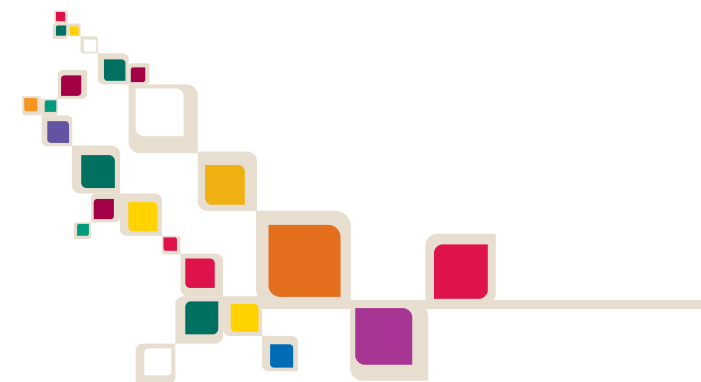
Introduction

This paper provides the Corporate Governance Committee with a report on progress in delivering our responsibilities as your external auditors.

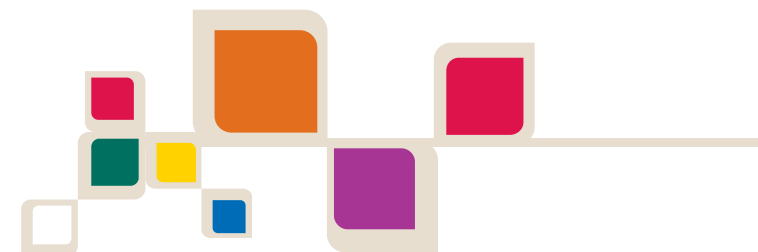
Members of the Corporate Governance Committee can find further useful material on our website www.grant-thornton.co.uk, where we have a section dedicated to our work in the public sector. Here you can download copies of our publications and articles, including the reports mentioned in this update along with other items:

- Income generation is an increasingly essential part of providing sustainable local services ; <http://www.grantthornton.co.uk/en/insights/the-income-generation-report-local-leaders-are-ready-to-be-more-commercial/>
- Social enterprises are becoming increasingly common vehicles for delivering services that are not an ‘essential’ service for an authority but still important to the local community; <http://www.grantthornton.co.uk/en/insights/a-guide-to-setting-up-a-social-enterprise/>
- Fraud risk, 'adequate procedures', and local authorities; <http://www.grantthornton.co.uk/en/insights/fraud-risk-adequate-procedures-and-local-authorities/>
- Brexit and local government; <http://www.grantthornton.co.uk/en/insights/a-global-britain-needs-more-local-government-not-less/> and <http://www.grantthornton.co.uk/en/insights/brexit-local-government--transitioning-successfully/>

If you would like further information on any items in this briefing, or would like to register with Grant Thornton to receive regular email updates on issues that are of interest to you, please contact either your Engagement Lead or Engagement Manager.

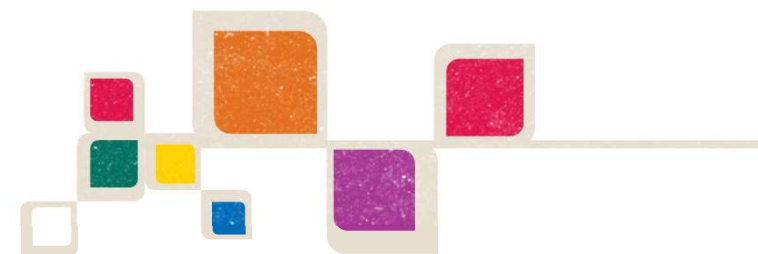


Progress at December 2017



2016/17			
	Planned Date	Complete?	Comments
<p>Annual Audit letter The Annual Audit letter is included in the committee papers.</p>	October 2017	Y	
<p>Grant claims and certification. The work on the Housing benefits work is ongoing at the time of writing this update report but is expected to be completed by the deadline of 30 November. We will provide a verbal update at the 4th December committee and we will formally report our findings in the certification report in January.</p>	30 November 2017		
2017/18			
	Planned Date	Complete?	Comments
<p>Fee Letter We were required to issue a 'Planned fee letter for 2017/18 by the end of April 2017. This is the final audit year under the current contract. PSAA has awarded contracts to audit suppliers and is currently consulting on local appointments. Your audit supplier from 2018/19 will be confirmed by the end of December 2017.</p>	April 2017	yes	Presented to Corporate Governance Committee on 20 th March 2017.
<p>Accounts Audit Plan We will issue a detailed accounts audit plan to the Council setting out our proposed approach the audit of the Council's 2017/18 financial statements. This will be issued upon completion of our audit planning. The statutory deadline for the issued of the 2017/18 opinion is brought forward by two months to 31 July 2018.</p>	February 2018		<p>We are discussing with your officers our plan and timetable to ensure that we complete our work by this earlier deadline, however, with management's cooperation we were able to deliver the 2016/17 audit to the earlier 31 July deadline.</p> <p>We may also need to discuss and agree with you arrangements for the issue of the draft Audit Findings Report, in view of the time available to complete our work and your committee report deadlines.</p>

Progress at December 2017



2017/18	Planned Date	Complete?	Comments
<p>Interim accounts audit</p> <p>Our interim fieldwork visit plan will reflect the need to complete as much as possible earlier in the audit cycle. Our work will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review of the Council's control environment • Updating our understanding of financial systems • review of Internal Audit reports on core financial systems • early work on emerging accounting issues • early substantive testing • Value for Money conclusion risk assessment. 	February 2018		Final dates to be agreed with management
<p>Final accounts audit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proposed opinion on the Council's accounts • proposed Value for Money conclusion • review of the Council's disclosures in the consolidated accounts against the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2017/18 	June - July 2018		Final dates to be agreed with management
<p>Value for Money (VfM) conclusion</p> <p>The scope of our work is unchanged to last year and is set out in the final guidance issued by the National Audit Office in November 2015. The Code requires auditors to satisfy themselves that; "the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources".</p> <p>The guidance confirmed the overall criterion as; "in all significant respects, the audited body had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people".</p> <p>The three sub criteria for assessment to be able to give a conclusion overall are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed decision making • Sustainable resource deployment • Working with partners and other third parties 	June - July 2018		Final dates to be agreed with management

Grant Thornton publications



Setting up a successful social enterprise

Local government continues to innovate as it reacts to ongoing austerity. An important strand of this response has been the development of alternative delivery models, including local authority trading companies, joint ventures and social enterprises.

This report focuses on social enterprises in local government; those organisations that trade with a social purpose or carry out activities for community benefit rather than private advantage. Social enterprises come in a variety of shapes and sizes as they do not have a single legal structure or ownership rule and can adopt any corporate form as long as it has a social purpose.

In this report we explore what social enterprises look like, the requirements for setting one up, how they should be managed to achieve success and how they can be ended.

We have complemented this with a range of case studies providing inspiring ideas from those that have been successful and some lessons learned to take into consideration.

Key findings from the report:

- Austerity continues to be a key driver for change: social enterprises are a clear choice where there is an opportunity to enhance the culture of community involvement by transferring these services into a standalone entity at its centre
- The social enterprise model tends to lend itself more to community services such as libraries, heritage management and leisure, but not exclusively so
- Social enterprises can open up new routes of funding including the ability to be flexible on pricing and access to pro bono or subsidised advice
- Some local authorities have converted existing models into social enterprises; for example where a greater focus on social outcomes has been identified

Striking a balance between financial and social returns

If you are a local authority looking to transition a public service to a social enterprise model certain factors will be key to your success including: leadership, continuing the culture, branding, staff reward and secure income stream.

Download our guide to explore how to handle these factors to ensure success, the requirements for setting up a social enterprise; and how social enterprise can be ended. The guide also showcases a number of compelling case studies from local authorities around England, featuring inspiring ideas from those social enterprises that have been a success; and lessons learned from those that have encountered challenges.

Grant Thornton publications



<http://www.grantthornton.co.uk/en/insights/a-guide-to-setting-up-a-social-enterprise/>

A Manifesto for a Vibrant Economy

Developing infrastructure to enable local growth

Cities and shire areas need the powers and frameworks to collaborate on strategic issues and be able to raise finance to invest in infrastructure priorities. Devolution needs to continue in England across all places, with governance models not being a “one-size-fits all”. Priorities include broadband, airport capacity in the North and east-west transport links.

Addressing the housing shortage, particularly in London and the Southeast, is a vital part of this. There simply is not enough available land on which to build, and green belt legislation, though designed to allow people living in cities space to breath, has become restrictive and is in need of modernisation. Without further provision to free up more land to build on, the young people that we need to protect the future of our economy will not be able to afford housing, and council spending on housing the homeless will continue to rise.

Business rates are also ripe for review – a property-based tax is no longer an accurate basis for taxing the activity and value of local business, in particular as this source of funding becomes increasingly important to the provision of local authority services with the phasing out of the Government’s block grant.

Demographic and funding pressures mean that the NHS no longer remains sustainable, and the integration of health and social care – recognised as critical by all key decision makers – remains more aspiration than reality.

There is an opportunity for communities to take a more holistic approach to health, for example creating healthier spaces and workplaces and tackling air quality, and to use technology to provide more accessible, cheaper diagnosis and treatment for many routine issues

Finding a better way to measure the vibrancy of places

When applied to a place we can see that traditional indicators of prosperity such as GVA, do not tell the full story. To address this we have developed a [Vibrant Economy Index](#) to measure the current and future vibrancy of places. The Index uses the geography of local authority areas and identifies six broad objectives for society: prosperity, dynamism and opportunity, inclusion and equality, health wellbeing and happiness, resilience and sustainability, and community trust and belonging.

The city of Manchester, for example, is associated with dynamic economic success. While our Index confirms this, it also identifies that the Greater Manchester area overall has exceptionally poor health outcomes, generations of low education attainment and deep-rooted joblessness. These factors threaten future prosperity, as success depends on people’s productive participation in the wider local economy, rather than in concentrated pockets.

Every place has its own challenges and opportunities. Understanding what these are, and the dynamic between them, will help unlock everybody’s ability to thrive. Over the coming months we will continue to develop the Vibrant Economy Index through discussions with businesses, citizens and government at a national and local level.

Guy Clifton – Head of Local Government Advisory

Grant Thornton publications



<http://www.grantthornton.co.uk/globalassets/1.-member-firms/united-kingdom/pdf/documents/creating-manifesto-vibrant-economy-draft-recommendations.pdf>

International Consortium on Governmental Financial Management

Introduction

Grant Thornton and the International Consortium on Governmental Financial Management (ICGFM) partner every other year to perform an international survey of Public Financial Leaders.

In 2015 the theme was innovation in public financial management. This year's survey has been designed to identify and describe emerging issues around transparency and citizen engagement – building on the themes highlighted in the 2015 report.

The insights will be published in a report later in 2017 and we would be delighted if you were able to spend some time completing the brief on-line questionnaire which can be found [here](#). Your Audit Manager will be able to provide you with a link to the survey if required.

Please note that the ICGFM and Grant Thornton will not identify, or attribute thoughts and quotations to, individual survey respondents in the final 2017 report. This preserves your anonymity, so please respond freely, honestly and openly.

We have again partnered with the ICGFM to survey Financial Leaders



Innovation in public financial management

in an increasingly complex and uncertain global environment

Global financial management leaders survey 2015



Technical Matters



Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2017/18 and forthcoming provisions for IFRS 9 and IFRS 15

Technical Matters

Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2017/18

CIPFA/LASAAC has issued the Local Authority Accounting Code for 2017/18. The main changes to the Code include:

- amendments to section 2.2 (Business Improvement District Schemes (England, Wales and Scotland), Business Rate Supplements (England), and Community Infrastructure Levy (England and Wales)) for the Community Infrastructure Levy to clarify the treatment of revenue costs and any charges received before the commencement date
- amendment to section 3.1 (Narrative Reporting) to introduce key reporting principles for the Narrative Report
- updates to section 3.4 (Presentation of Financial Statements) to clarify the reporting requirements for accounting policies and going concern reporting
- changes to section 3.5 (Housing Revenue Account) to reflect the Housing Revenue Account (Accounting Practices) Directions 2016 disclosure requirements for English authorities
- following the amendments in the Update to the 2016/17 Code, changes to sections 4.2 (Lease and Lease Type Arrangements), 4.3 (Service Concession Arrangements: Local Authority as Grantor), 7.4 (Financial Instruments – Disclosure and Presentation Requirements)

- amendments to section 6.5 (Accounting and Reporting by Pension Funds) to require a new disclosure of investment management transaction costs and clarification on the approach to investment concentration disclosure.

Forthcoming provisions for IFRS 9 and IFRS 15

CIPFA/LASAAC has issued 'Forthcoming provisions for IFRS 9 Financial Instruments and IFRS 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018'. It sets out the changes to the 2018/19 Code in respect of IFRS 9 Financial Instruments and IFRS 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers. It has been issued in advance of the 2018/19 Code to provide local authorities with time to prepare for the changes required under these new standards.

IFRS 9 replaces IAS 39 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement. IFRS 9 includes a single classification approach for financial assets, a forward looking 'expected loss' model for impairment (rather than the 'incurred loss' model under IAS 39) and some fundamental changes to requirements around hedge accounting.

IFRS 15 replaces IAS 18 Revenue and IAS 11 Construction Contracts. IFRS 15 changes the basis for deciding whether revenue is recognised at a point in time or over a period of time and introduces five steps for revenue recognition.

It should be noted that the publication does not have the authority of the Code and early adoption of the two standards is not permitted by the 2017/18 Code.

Sector issues



Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety

Sector Issues

The Government has published the terms of reference for the independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, commissioned following the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy.

The DCLG press release states:

“This Review will urgently assess the effectiveness of current building and fire safety regulations and related compliance and enforcement issues, with a focus on multi occupancy high rise residential buildings. This will include addressing whether the government’s large-scale cladding system testing programme identified any potential systemic failures.

The Review’s 2 key priorities are to develop a more robust regulatory system for the future and provide further assurance to residents that the buildings they live in are safe and remain safe. While the Review will cover the regulatory system for all buildings, it will have a specific focus on multi occupancy high rise residential buildings.

Dame Judith Hackitt, a qualified engineer with strong regulatory background, is leading the Review and will draw on the experience of local government, industry, the fire sector, international experts and MPs. She will also engage with residents of multi occupancy residential buildings.

The Review will report jointly to Communities Secretary Sajid Javid and Home Secretary Amber Rudd. An interim report will be submitted in autumn 2017 and a final report submitted in spring 2018. The Review will co-operate fully with the Public Inquiry, and Dame Judith Hackitt will review her recommendations in the light of the findings of the Inquiry.”

The terms of reference state that the review will:

- map the current regulatory system (i.e. the regulations, guidance and processes) as it applies to new and existing buildings through planning, design, construction, maintenance, refurbishment and change management;
- consider the competencies, duties and balance of responsibilities of key individuals within the system in ensuring that fire safety standards are adhered to;
- assess the theoretical coherence of the current regulatory system and how it operates in practice
- compare this with other international regulatory systems for buildings and regulatory systems in other sectors with similar safety risks;
- make recommendations that ensure the regulatory system is fit for purpose with a particular focus on multi-occupancy high-rise residential buildings.

The full terms of reference are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-building-regulations-and-fire-safety-terms-of-reference>

Procurement of external audit services



Public Sector
Audit Appointments

Procurement outcome

As a result of the highly successful procurement of auditor services, opted-in Local government and police bodies throughout England will collectively benefit from reduced fees for audit services in 2018/19 compared to 2016/17. Aggregate savings are expected to exceed £6 million per annum, equivalent to a reduction of approximately 18% in the scale fees payable by local bodies.

The results of the process announced on 20 June 2017 involve the award of the following contracts:

- Lot 1 of approx. £14.6 million per audit year was awarded to Grant Thornton LLP;
- Lot 2 of approx. £10.9 million per audit year was awarded to EY LLP;
- Lot 3 of approx. £6.6 million per audit year to awarded to Mazars LLP;
- Lot 4 of approx. £2.2 million per audit year to awarded to BDO LLP;
- Lot 5 of approx. £2.2 million per audit year to awarded to Deloitte LLP; and
- Lot 6 with no guaranteed value of work to awarded to a consortium of Moore Stephens LLP and Scott-Moncrieff LLP.

Contracts were awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tender with 50% of the available score awarded to price and 50% awarded to quality.

The procurement strategy, agreed by the PSAA Board in December 2016, sets out the basis on which the procurement of audit services was carried out.

Having concluded the procurement, PSAA will commence the process of appointing auditors to opted-in bodies. For more information on the auditor appointment process [click here](#).

Sector Issues

Finalising and confirming appointments

The PSAA Board will approve all proposed appointments from 2018/19, following consultation with audited bodies, at its meeting in mid-December. The Board's decision on the appointment of auditors is final. Following Board consideration, we will write to each audited body to confirm their appointment. We plan to send all confirmations on 18 December..



Housing Benefit (Subsidy) Assurance Process 2018/19: Module 1 Special Purpose Framework Instruction:

This Circular sets out the arrangements for the audit of the housing benefits subsidy for 2018/19. It is for the LA to appoint a reporting accountant to undertake this work and notify the DWP of this. A standard letter of notification for the LA use is set out in Appendix 1. This letter of notification must be issued to the DWP by the LA no later than the 1st March 2018.

Local Authority 2016/17 Revenue Expenditure and Financing

Sector Issues

DCLG has produced a summary of Local Authorities' 2016/17 provisional revenue spending and financing. It notes that Local government expenditure accounts for almost a quarter of all government spending and the majority of this is through local authority revenue expenditure. The summary is compiled from the Revenue Outturn (RO) returns submitted by all local authorities in England. Coverage is not limited to local councils in England and includes other authority types such as Police and Crime Commissioners and Fire authorities.

The headline messages include:

- Local authority revenue expenditure totalled £93.5 billion for all local authorities in England in 2016-17. This was 1.1% lower than £94.5 billion spent over 2015-16.
- Expenditure on Adult Social Care increased to £14.9 billion in 2016-17. This was £0.5 billion (3.6%) higher than in 2015-16. 2016-17 was first year local authorities were able to raise additional funding for Adult Social Care through the council tax precept.
- The largest decrease in local authority expenditure was on Education services. This was £0.8 billion (2.4%) lower in 2016-17 than in 2015-16. The majority of this decrease is due to local authority funded schools converting to academies.
- Local authorities are financing more of their expenditure from locally retained income. 40.4% of revenue expenditure was funded through council tax and retained business rates and 57.5% from central Government grants. The remaining 2.1% was funded by reserves and collection fund surpluses. These percentages were 38.7%, 60.4% and 0.9% respectively in 2015-16.
- Local authorities used £1.5 billion (6.2%) of the £24.6 billion reserves balance held at the start of the 2016-17.
- Local authorities' use of reserves was £1.1 billion higher in 2016-17 than in 2015-16. Due to changes in their capital programme, £0.5 billion of this increase is due to the Greater London Authority.

The full report is available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/639755/Revenue_Expenditure_and_Financing_2016-17_Provisional_Outturn.pdf

Did you know....

This data set and many others are included in CFO Insights.

CFO Insights is the Grant Thornton and CIPFA online analysis tool. It gives those aspiring to improve the financial position of their organisation instant access to insight on the financial performance, socio-economic context and service outcomes of theirs and every other council in England, Scotland and Wales.

More information is available at:

<http://www.cfoinsights.co.uk/>



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