

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Corporate Governance Committee – 22 June 2015

### External Audit Fees 2015/16

#### Report of the Assistant Director - Corporate Services (Richard Sealy)

(This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council, Councillor John Williams)

#### 1. Executive Summary

The report details the fee position for external audit services for 2015/16.
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#### 2. Background

- 2.1 The external audit function for Taunton Deane transferred from the Audit Commission to Grant Thornton during 2012. This change was part of a national programme of “outsourcing” the external audit work and has resulted in significant savings for local authorities.
- 2.2 The attached letter provides details of the fees set by the Audit Commission for 2015/16.
- 2.3 The letter also sets out details of the process and timetable for completing the external audit work in respect of the 2014/15 financial year together with details of the team who will lead the work.
- 2.4 Any additional audit work, outside of the planned audit and grant certification work, will be billed separately and in addition to the fee quoted.

#### 3. Finance Comments

- 3.1 The total indicative audit fee is £61,594. This amount is split between the fee for the main audit of £50,629 (which represents a reduction of £16,876 from the previous year) and the grant certification work of £10,965 (which represents a small increase of £575 from the previous year).
- 3.2 The fee is within the Council’s budget allocation for 2015/16.

#### 4. Legal Comments

- 4.1 There are no legal implications from this report.

**5. Links to Corporate Aims**

5.1 There are no direct implications.

**6. Environmental Implications**

6.1 There are no direct implications.

**7. Community Safety Implications**

7.1 There are no direct implications.

**8. Equalities Impact**

8.1 There are no implications arising from this fee reduction.

**9. Risk Management**

9.1 No specific risks have been identified in relation to the fee reduction.

**10. Partnership Implications**

10.1 There are no implications.

**11. Recommendations**

11.1 Members are requested to note the Grant Thornton Audit Fee letter for 2015/16

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# Grant Thornton

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17 April 2015

Dear Penny

## **Planned audit fee for 2015/16 – Taunton Deane Borough Council**

Before it closed on 31 March 2015, the Audit Commission was asked to set the scale fees for audits for 2015/16. The Commission published its work programme and scales of fees for 2015/16 at the end of March 2015. In this letter we set out details of the audit fee for the Council along with the scope and timing of our work and details of our team.

### **Scale fee**

The Audit Commission defines the scale audit fee as “the fee required by auditors to carry out the work necessary to meet their statutory responsibilities in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice. It represents the best estimate of the fee required to complete an audit where the audited body has no significant audit risks and it has in place a sound control environment that ensures the auditor is provided with complete and materially accurate financial statements with supporting working papers within agreed timeframes.”

The Council's scale fee for 2015/16 has been set by the Audit Commission at £50,629, which compares to the audit fee of £67,505 for 2014/15. The reduction in fees has been enabled by the procurement exercises run by the Commission across both the Local Government and Health sectors.

After the Commission's closure, the 2015/16 work programme and fees will be accessible from the archived Audit Commission website from the National Archives [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/\\*/http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/*/http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/) and on the Public Sector Audit Appointments PSAA website [psaa.co.uk](http://psaa.co.uk).

The audit planning process for 2015/16, including the risk assessment, will continue as the year progresses and fees will be reviewed and updated as necessary as our work progresses.

### **Scope of the audit fee**

The scale fee covers:

- our audit of your financial statements
- our work to reach a conclusion on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources (the value for money conclusion)
- our work on your whole of government accounts return.

#### **Chartered Accountants**

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### **Value for Money conclusion**

Under the Audit Commission Act, we must be satisfied that the Council has adequate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, focusing on the arrangements for:

- securing financial resilience
- prioritising resources within tighter budgets.

We undertake a risk assessment to identify any significant risks which we will need to address before reaching our value for money conclusion. We will assess the Council's financial resilience as part of our work on the VfM conclusion and provide feedback in our Audit Findings Report.

### **Certification of grant claims and returns**

The Council's indicative grant certification fee has been set by the Audit Commission at £10,965.

### **Billing schedule**

Fees will be billed as follows:

<b>Main Audit fee</b>	<b>£</b>
September 2015	12,658
December 2015	12,657
March 2016	12,657
June 2016	12,657
	50,629
<b>Grant Certification</b>	
December 2016	10,965
<b>Total</b>	<b>61,594</b>

### **Outline audit timetable**

We will undertake our audit planning and interim audit procedures between December 2015 and March 2016. Upon completion of this phase of our work we will issue a detailed audit plan setting out our findings and details of our audit approach. Our final accounts audit and work on the VfM conclusion will be completed in September 2016 and work on the whole of government accounts return in September 2016.

<b>Phase of work</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Audit planning and interim audit	December 2015- March 2016	Audit plan	The plan summarises the findings of our audit planning and our approach to the audit of the Council's accounts and VfM.
Final accounts audit	June to September 2016	Audit Findings (Report to those charged with governance)	This report sets out the findings of our accounts audit and VfM work for the consideration of those charged with governance.
VfM conclusion	January to Sept 2016	Audit Findings (Report to those charged with governance)	As above
Whole of government accounts	September 2016	Opinion on the WGA return	This work will be completed alongside the accounts audit.
Annual audit letter	October 2016	Annual audit letter to the Council	The letter will summarise the findings of all aspects of our work.
Grant certification	June to December 2016	Grant certification report	A report summarising the findings of our grant certification work.

### **Our team**

The key members of the audit team for 2015/16 are:

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
Engagement Lead	Peter Barber	0117 305 7897 07880 456122	peter.a.barber@uk.gt.com
Engagement Manager	Ashley Allen	0117 305 7629 07775 705341	ashley.j.allen@uk.gt.com
In Charge Auditor	Sarah Crouch	0117 305 7881	sarah.crouch@uk.gt.com

### **Additional work**

The scale fee excludes any work requested by the Council that we may agree to undertake outside of our Code audit. Each additional piece of work will be separately agreed and a detailed project specification and fee agreed with the Council.

**Quality assurance**

We are committed to providing you with a high quality service. If you are in any way dissatisfied, or would like to discuss how we can improve our service, please contact me in the first instance. Alternatively you may wish to contact John Golding our Public Sector Assurance regional lead partner [john.golding@uk.gt.com](mailto:john.golding@uk.gt.com).

Yours sincerely



Peter Barber  
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For Grant Thornton UK LLP

cc Shirlene Adam, Director of Operations