

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Corporate Governance Committee - 10 December 2012

External Audit Fees 2012/2013

Report of the Strategic Director (Shirlene Adam)

This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council, Cllr John Williams

Executive Summary

This report shares the fee position for external audit services for 2012/2013.

1. Background

- 1.1 The external audit function for Taunton Deane transferred from the Audit Commission to Grant Thornton recently. This change was part of a national programme of “outsourcing” the external audit work – and has resulted in significant savings for all local authorities.
- 1.2 The attached letter provides details of the final agreed fee, and sets out the team that will be leading on the Taunton Deane work and the timescales for their reporting.

2. Financial Issues / Comments

- 2.1 The indicative audit fee shows a reduction of 40% (approx £45k) on current year which is welcomed. This has been reflected in the Councils draft budget position for 2013/14.

3. Legal Comments

- 3.1 There are no legal implications from this report.

4. Links to Corporate Aims

- 4.1 No direct implications.

5. Environmental and Community Safety Implications

- 5.1 No direct implications.

6. Equalities Impact

- 6.1 There are no implications arising from this fee reduction.

7. Risk Management

- 7.1 Any risks identified will feed in to the corporate risk management process.

8. Partnership Implications

- 8.1 No implications.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 Members are requested to note the Grant Thornton Audit Fee Letter for 2012/13.

Contact Officers:

Shirlene Adam Strategic Director 01823 356310 s.adam@tauntondeane.gov.uk	Maggie Hammond Strategic Finance Officer 01823 358698 m.hammond@tauntondeane.gov.uk
---	--

Penny James
Chief Executive
Taunton Deane Borough Council
The Deane House
Belvedere Road
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 1HE

Grant Thornton UK LLP
Hartwell House
55-61 Victoria Street
Bristol BS1 6FT

T +44 (0)1173 0576000

www.grant-thornton.co.uk

14 November 2012

Dear Penny

Planned audit fee for 2012/13

We are delighted to have been appointed by the Audit Commission as auditors to the Council and look forward to providing you with a high quality external audit service for at least the next five years. We look forward to developing our relationship with you over the coming months, ensuring that you receive the quality of external audit you expect and have access to a broad range of specialist skills where you would like our support.

The Audit Commission has set its proposed work programme and scales of fees for 2012/13. 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.”

For 2012/13, the Commission has independently set the scale fee for all bodies. The Council's scale fee for 2012/13 is £66,605, which compares with the audit fee of £111,008 for 2011/12, a reduction of 40%.

Further details of the work programme and individual scale fees for all audited bodies are set out on the Audit Commission's website at: www.audit-commission.gov.uk/scaleoffees1213.

The audit planning process for 2012/13, 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

Our fee is based on the risk based approach to audit planning as set out in the Code of Audit

Practice and work mandated by the Audit Commission for 2012/13. It 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.

Value for money (VFM) 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; and
- 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 a separate report of our findings will be provided.

Our planning to date has not identified any additional work which we are required to undertake to support our VFM conclusion. We will continue to assess the Council's arrangements and discuss any additional work required during the year.

Certification of grant claims and returns

The Audit Commission has replaced the previous schedule of hourly rates for certification work with a composite indicative fee. This composite fee, which is set by the Audit Commission, is based on actual 2010/11 fees adjusted to reflect a reduction in the number of schemes which require auditor certification and incorporating a 40% fee reduction. The composite indicative fee grant certification for the Council is £13,650.

Billing schedule

Our fees are billed quarterly in advance. Given the timing of our appointment we will raise a bill for two quarters in December 2012 with normal quarterly billing thereafter. Our fees will be billed as follows:

Main Audit fee	£
December 2012	33,303 ✓
January 2013	16,651
March 2013	16,651
Scale fee	66,605
Grant Certification	
June 2013	13,650
Total	80,255

Outline audit timetable

We will undertake our audit planning and interim audit procedures in December, January and February. Upon completion of this phase of our work we will issue our 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 June, July and August 2012 and work on the whole of government accounts return in September 2013.

Phase of work	Timing	Outputs	Comments
Audit planning and interim audit	December 2012 to February 2013	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 Sept 2013	Report to those charged with governance	This report will set out the findings of our accounts audit and VFM work for the consideration of those charged with governance.
VFM conclusion	Jan to Sept 2013	Report to those charged with governance	As above
Financial resilience	Jan to Sept 2013	Financial resilience report	Report summarising the outcome of our work.
Whole of government accounts	September 2013	Opinion on the WGA return	This work will be completed alongside the accounts audit.
Annual audit letter	October 2013	Annual audit letter to the Council	The letter will summarise the findings of all aspects of our work.
Grant certification	June to November 2013	Grant certification report	A report summarising the findings of our grant certification work

Our team

The key members of the audit team for 2012/13 are:

	Name	Phone Number	E-mail
Engagement Lead	Stephen Malyn	0117 305 7862	steve.g.malyn@uk.gt.com
Engagement Manager	Peter Lappin	0117 305 7865	peter.lappin@uk.gt.com
Audit Executive	Rachel Bishop	0117 305 7891	rachel.a.bishop@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).

Yours sincerely

Stephen Malyn
Director
For Grant Thornton UK LLP