

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Corporate Governance Committee 19 June 2018

### External Audit Fees 2018/19

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

Report Author: Andy Stark, Interim Finance Manager (Deputy S151 Officer)

#### **1 Purpose of the Report**

1.1 This report details the fee forecast for external audit services in 2018/19.

#### **2 Recommendations**

2.1 Members are requested to note the Report.

#### **3 Background and Full details of the Report**

3.1 Each year our external auditors, Grant Thornton, provide details of the forecast fees to be charged for the main audit and the grant certification work relating to the current year.

3.2 The attached letter provides details of the fees and the schedule of payments. Grant Thornton have also provided an outline audit timetable to show the phasing of their work.

3.3 Any additional audit work, outside of the planned audit and grant certification work will be billed separately and will be an addition to the fee quoted.

#### **4 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities**

4.1 There are no direct implications.

#### **5 Finance / Resource Implications**

5.1 The main audit fee is £38,984 (compared to £50,629 for 2017/18, a reduction of 23%). This does not include the fee for the grant certification work which has yet to be set. The fee for this last year was £10,390.

#### **6 Legal Implications**

6.1 There are no legal implications from this report.

## **7 Environmental Impact Implications**

7.1 There are no direct implications.

## **8 Community Safety Implications**

8.1 There are no direct implications.

## **9 Equality and Diversity Implications**

9.1 There are no direct implications.

## **10 Social Value Implications**

10.1 There are no direct implications.

## **11 Partnership Implications**

11.1 There are no direct implications.

## **12 Health and Wellbeing Implications**

12.1 There are no direct implications.

## **13 Asset Management Implications**

13.1 There are no direct implications.

## **14 Consultation Implications**

14.1 There are no direct implications.

### **Democratic Path:**

- **Audit Committee – Yes**
- **Cabinet – No**
- **Full Council – No**

### **List of Appendices**

<b>Appendix A</b>	Grant Thornton – Audit Fee Letter for 2018/19 dated 11 April 2018
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### **Contact Officers**

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11 April 2018

Dear Paul

### **Planned audit fee for 2018/19 -Taunton Deane Borough Council**

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act) provides the framework for local public audit. Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) has been specified as an appointing person under the Act and the Local Authority (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 and has the power to make auditor appointments for audits of opted- in local government bodies from 2018/19.

For opted- in bodies PSAA's responsibilities include setting fees, appointing auditors and monitoring the quality of auditors' work. Further information on PSAA and its responsibilities are available on the [PSAA website](#).

From 2018/19 all grant work, including housing benefit certification, now falls outside the PSAA contract, as PSAA no longer has the power to make appointments for assurance on grant claims and returns. Any assurance engagements will therefore be subject to separate engagements agreed between the grant-paying body, the Council and ourselves and separate fees agreed with the Council.

### **Scale fee**

PSAA published the 2018/19 scale fees for opted-in bodies in March 2018, following a consultation process. Individual scale fees have been reduced by 23 percent from the fees applicable for 2017/18. Further details are set out on the [PSAA website](#). The Council's scale fee for 2018/19 has been set by PSAA at £38,984.

PSAA prescribes that 'scale fees are based on the expectation that audited bodies are able to provide the auditor with complete and materially accurate financial statements, with supporting working papers, within agreed timeframes'.

The audit planning process for 2018/19, 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**

There are no changes to the overall work programme for audits of local government audited bodies for 2018/19. Under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the National Audit Office (NAO) is responsible for publishing the statutory Code of Audit Practice and guidance for auditors. Audits of the accounts for 2018/19 will be undertaken under this Code. Further information on the NAO Code and guidance is available on the [NAO website](#).

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); and
- our work on your whole of government accounts return (if applicable).

PSAA will agree fees for considering objections from the point at which auditors accept an objection as valid, or any special investigations, as a variation to the scale fee.

### **Value for Money conclusion**

The Code requires us to consider whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. This is known as the Value for Money (VfM) conclusion.

The NAO issued its latest guidance for auditors on value for money work in November 2017. The guidance states that for local government bodies, auditors are required to give a conclusion on whether the Council has put proper arrangements in place.

The NAO guidance identifies one single criterion for auditors to evaluate:

*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.*

### **Billing schedule**

Fees will be billed as follows:

<b>Main Audit fee</b>	<b>£</b>
September 2018	9,746
December 2018	9,746
March 2019	9,746
June 2019	9,746
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,984</b>

**Outline audit timetable**

We will undertake our audit planning and interim audit procedures in November to February. 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 work on the VfM conclusion will be completed in April, and final accounts audit and work on the whole of government accounts return in July 2019.

<b>Phase of work</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Audit planning and interim audit	November to January- planning  January to February - interim	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 July	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 April	Audit Findings (Report to those charged with governance)	As above
Whole of government accounts	July	Opinion on the WGA return	This work will be completed alongside the accounts audit.
Annual audit letter	September	Annual audit letter to the Council	The letter will summarise the findings of all aspects of our work.

**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 Jon Roberts, our Public Sector Assurance regional lead partner, via [jon.roberts@uk.gt.com](mailto:jon.roberts@uk.gt.com).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Barber', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Peter Barber

Engagement Lead

For Grant Thornton UK LLP