



Sheila Collins
Interim S151 Officer
Somerset County Council
County Hall
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 4DY

Grant Thornton UK LLP
2Glass Wharf
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS2 0EL
T +44 (0)117 305 7600
F +44 (0)117 955 4934

9 April 2019

Dear Sheila

Planned audit fee for 2019/20

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 had the power to make auditor appointments for audits of opted- in local government bodies from 2018/19.

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

All grant work, including housing benefit certification, 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 2019/20 scale fees for opted-in bodies at the end of March 2019, following a consultation process. Individual scale fees have been maintained at the same level as in 2018/19, unless there were specific circumstances which required otherwise. Further details are set out on the [PSAA website](#). The Council's scale fee for 2019/20 has been set by PSAA at £76,902 which is the same as in 2018/19.

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 2019/20, 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 2019/20. 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 2019/20 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.

Pension Fund audit [if applicable]

PSAA has also established a scale of fees for pension fund audits. The scale fee for the audit of the pension fund is £18,371, which is also the same as last year. Our work on the pension fund will be undertaken by our specialist pension fund audit team, led by Peter Barber

Billing schedule

Fees will be billed as follows:

Main Audit fee	£
September 2019	19,225.50
December 2019	19,225.50
March 2020	19,225.50
June 2020	19,225.50
Total	76,902.00
Pension Fund audit	
March 2020	18,371.00

Outline audit timetable

We will undertake our audit planning and interim audit procedures in January to March 2020. 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 March 2020 and work on the whole of government accounts return in August.

Phase of work	Timing	Outputs	Comments
Audit planning and interim audit	January to March 2020	Audit plan	The plan summarises the findings of our audit planning and our approach to the audit of

Phase of work	Timing	Outputs	Comments
			the Council's accounts and VfM.
Final accounts audit	June to July 2020	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	July 2020	Audit Findings (Report to those charged with governance)	As above
Whole of government accounts	August 2020	Opinion on the WGA return	This work will be completed alongside the accounts audit.
Annual audit letter	November 2020	Annual audit letter to the Council	The letter will summarise the findings of all aspects of our work.

Our team

The key members of the audit team for the Council and the Pension Fund for 2019/20 are:

	Name	Phone Number	E-mail
Engagement Lead	Peter Barber	0117 305 7897	Peter.a.barber@uk.gt.com
Engagement Manager	David Johnson	0117 305 7727	David.a.johnson@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 Jon Roberts, our Public Sector Assurance regional lead partner, via jon.roberts@uk.gt.com.

Yours sincerely

Peter Barber
Engagement Lead
Grant Thornton UK LLP