

# **Somerset West and Taunton Council**

## **Audit Governance and Standards Committee – 13 January 2020**

### **Taunton Deane Borough Council Annual Audit Letter 2018/19**

**This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Henley**

**Report Author: Paul Fitzgerald, Strategic Finance Advisor and S151 Officer**

#### **1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This brief cover report introduces the Annual Audit Letter from Grant Thornton, which summarises the key findings arising from their work carried out for Taunton Deane Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2019.

#### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee considers and notes the contents of the Annual Audit Letter.

#### **3 Background**

- 3.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council's external audit function is undertaken by Grant Thornton. The external auditor, as part of their work, provide an Annual Audit Letter which summarises their findings and updates regarding the actual audit fees. This relates to the final year of operation for the Council with its functions and responsibilities transferring to Somerset West and Taunton Council on 1 April 2019.
- 3.2 The Annual Audit Letter is intended to provide a commentary on the results of the auditor's work to the Council and external stakeholders, and to highlight issues that they wish to draw to the attention of the public. Further to the final Audit Findings Report, presented to this Committee on 11 November 2019, the Annual Audit Letter confirms that the Grant Thornton have issued an unqualified opinion in respect of Taunton Deane Borough Council's accounts for 2018/19 and in respect of the Council's arrangements for ensuring economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

#### **4 Finance / Resource Implications**

- 4.1 The main audit fees proposed to be charged for 2018/19 total £43,484. This is £4,500 higher than initially set, with Grant Thornton proposing to include additional fees due to changes in scope of work. This is summarised on page 14 of their Letter, and is subject to agreement by Public Sector Auditor Appointments (PSAA) – the body that procured the audit services for the Council.

4.2 The auditor has yet to provide a conclusion to the objection to the accounts raised by a member of the public. Further fees, not yet quantified, will be charged by Grant Thornton in respect of the additional work undertaken assessing the objection. This will be reported to the Committee when known.

## **5 Legal Implications**

5.1 The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 sets out the framework for audit of local authorities.

### **Reporting Frequency: Annual**

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