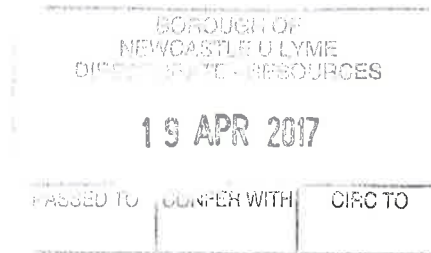




# Grant Thornton

Kelvin Turner  
Newcastle Borough Council  
Civic Offices,  
Merrial Street,  
Newcastle-under-Lyme,  
Staffordshire  
ST5 2AG



**Grant Thornton UK LLP**  
The Colmore Building  
20 Colmore Circus  
Birmingham B4 6AT  
T +44 (0)121 212 4000  
F +44 (0)121 212 4014  
DX 13174 Birmingham  
grantthornton.co.uk

18 April 2017

Dear Kelvin

## **Planned audit fee for 2017/18**

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 provides the framework for local public audit. Under these provisions the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government delegated some statutory functions from the Audit Commission Act 1998 to Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA) on a transitional basis.

PSAA will oversee the Audit Commission's audit contracts for local government bodies until they end in 2018, following the announcement by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) that it will extend transitional arrangements until 2017/18. 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 PSAA has been specified by the Secretary of State as an appointing person for principal local government and police bodies, and will make auditor appointments and set fees for bodies that have opted into the national auditor appointment scheme it is developing.

## **Scale fee**

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 timescales'.

There are no changes to the overall work programme for local government audited bodies for 2017/18, following the recent CIPFA/LASAAC announcement that their planned introduction of the Highways Network Asset Code into the financial reporting requirements for local authorities in 2017/18 will no longer proceed. PSAA have therefore set the 2017/18 scale audit fees at the same level as the scale fees applicable for 2016/17. The Council's scale fee for 2017/18 has been set by PSAA at £55,002.

The audit planning process for 2017/18, including the risk assessment, will continue as the year progresses and fees will be reviewed and updated as necessary as our work progresses.

### **Chartered Accountants**

Grant Thornton UK LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales: No. OC307742. Registered office: Grant Thornton House, Melton Street, Euston Square, London NW1 2EP. A list of members is available from our registered office. Grant Thornton UK LLP is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Grant Thornton UK LLP is a member firm of Grant Thornton International Ltd (GTIL). GTIL and the member firms are not a worldwide partnership. Services are delivered by the member firms. GTIL and its member firms are not agents of, and do not obligate, one another and are not liable for one another's acts or omissions. Please see [grantthornton.co.uk](http://grantthornton.co.uk) for further details.



### Scope of the audit fee

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 from April 2015. Audits of the accounts for 2017/18 will be undertaken under this Code, on the basis of the 2017/18 work-programme and scales of fees set out on the PSAA website. 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 guidance for auditors on value for money work in November 2016. 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.*

### Certification of grant claims and returns

At the request of the Department for Work and Pensions, auditors appointed by PSAA will continue to certify local authority claims for housing benefit subsidy for 2017/18.

The Council's indicative fee for this certification work has yet to be set by PSAA. We will write to you to confirm the fee when this has been confirmed.

Assurance engagements for other schemes will be subject to separate arrangements and fees agreed between the grant-paying body, the Council and ourselves.

### Billing schedule

Fees will be billed as follows:

Main Audit fee	£
September 2017	13,750
December 2017	13,750
March 2018	13,750
June 2018	13,752
<b>Total</b>	<b>55,002</b>
<b>Housing Benefit Certification</b>	
March 2018	TBC

### Outline audit timetable

We will undertake our audit planning and interim audit procedures in December 2017 to March 2018. 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 2018 and work on the whole of government accounts return in July 2018.

Phase of work	Timing	Outputs	Comments
Audit planning and interim audit	December 2017 – March 2018	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 2018 – July 2018	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	March 2018 – July 2018	Audit Findings (Report to those charged with governance)	As above
Whole of government accounts	July 2018	Opinion on the WGA return	This work will be completed alongside the accounts audit.
Annual audit letter	September 2018	Annual audit letter to the Council	The letter will summarise the findings of all aspects of our work.
Grant certification	November 2018	Grant certification report	A report summarising the findings of our housing benefit certification work

### Our team

The key members of the audit team for 2017/18 are:

	Name	Phone Number	E-mail
Engagement Lead	John Gregory	0121 212 5333	john.gregory@uk.gt.com
Engagement Manager	Paul Harvey	0121 212 5329	paul.m.harvey@uk.gt.com
In Charge Auditor	Matthew Berrisford	0121 232 5352	matthew.j.berrisford@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 Mark Stocks, our Public Sector Assurance regional lead partner, via [mark.c.stocks@uk.gt.com](mailto:mark.c.stocks@uk.gt.com).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Gregory', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

John Gregory

Engagement Lead

For Grant Thornton UK LLP

