

Audit Committee – 4 January 2015

Grant Thornton: Certification Work 2014/15

1. Summary of report

- 1.1 This report presents Grant Thornton's certification work for the financial year 2014/15 covering the Housing Benefits Subsidy claim and Teachers Pensions return.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Audit Committee is requested to note the report.



James Walsh, Chief Finance Officer
10 December 2015

3. Governance

- 3.1 The Council is required to have an external audit and sign off of its Housing Benefit Subsidy claim and Teachers Pension return. Outcomes from this work will assist the council in maintaining strong governance arrangements.

4. Resource, Legal, Performance and Risk Management considerations

- 4.1 Certification work for 2014/15 covers the external audit of the Housing Benefit Subsidy claim and Teachers Pensions return.

5. Equality implications

- 5.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The certifications report has been prepared following audit of the work within housing benefits and also in relation to teacher pensions.

7. Background papers

Various report and working papers, statutory and other guidance.

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10 December 2015

Dear James

Certification work for Walsall Council for year ended 31 March 2015

We are required to certify certain claims and returns submitted by Walsall Council ('the Council'). This certification typically takes place six to nine months after the claim period and represents a final but important part of the process to confirm the Council's entitlement to funding.

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 gave the Secretary of State power to transfer Audit Commission responsibilities to other bodies. Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) have taken on the transitional responsibilities for HB COUNT issued by the Audit Commission in February 2015.

The total amount Certified for HB COUNT is £117m. In addition to the housing benefit subsidy claim we have also certified the Teachers' Pension return for the financial year 2014/15, with a total value of £12.5 million. Further details are set out in Appendix A.

No significant matters were raised for either of these returns. We are satisfied that the Council has appropriate arrangements to compile and complete, accurate and timely claims/returns for audit certification.

The indicative fee for 2014/15 for the Council is based on the final 2012/13 certification fees, reflecting the amount of work required by the auditor to certify the claims and returns in that year. Fees for schemes no longer requiring certification under the Audit Commission regime (such as the national non-domestic rates return, teachers pensions return and pooling housing capital receipts return) have been removed and the indicative fee adjusted accordingly. The indicative scale fee set by the Audit Commission for the Council for 2014/15 is £19,210 and reflects the fee for the housing subsidy claim only.

Chartered Accountants

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In addition, certification of grant claims outside of the Audit Commission regime, for which assurance is still required, has been commissioned directly by the Council. The fee charged for the Teacher's Pension return totals £4,200.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Roberts', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jon Roberts
Partner
For Grant Thornton UK LLP

Details of claims and returns certified for 2014/15

Claim or return	Value(£)	Amended?	Amendment (£)	Qualified?	Comments
Housing benefits subsidy claim	116,905,474	Yes	£211	No	Unqualified opinion
Teachers Pensions	12,545,509	No	N/A	No	Unqualified opinion

Fees for 2014/15 certification work:

Audit Commission:

Claim or return	2012/13 fee (£)	2014/15 indicative fee (£)	2014/15 actual fee (£)	Variance (2012/13 to 2014/15) (£)	Explanation for variances
Housing benefits subsidy claim (BEN01)	£23,175	£19,210	£19,210	£nil	The fee for the Housing Benefits Subsidy is based on the 2012/13 fee, reduced by 12.5% to reflect the removal of council tax benefit subsidy.

Other:

Claim or return	2014/15 actual fee (£)	
Teacher's pension	£4,200	Fee charged is based on the time spent on the return.