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Ref: FeeLetter201819

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Dear Richard,

Annual Audit 2018/19

We are writing to confirm the audit work that we propose to undertake for the 2018/19 financial year at Southampton City Council.

From 2018/19, new arrangements for local auditor appointment set out in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 apply for principal local government and police bodies. These audited bodies are responsible for making their own arrangements for the audit of their accounts and certification of their housing benefit subsidy claim. Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) has appointed auditors for bodies that have opted into the national scheme. Appointments were made for the duration of the five-year appointing period, covering the audits of the accounts for 2018/19 to 2022/23. Appointments for all bodies that had opted into the appointing person scheme before 9 March 2017 were confirmed, following consultation, in December 2017.

Indicative audit fee

For the 2018/19 financial year, PSAA has set the scale fee for each audited body that has opted into its national auditor appointment scheme. Following consultation on its Work Programme and Scale of Fees, PSAA has reduced the 2018/19 scale audit fee for all opted-in bodies by 23 per cent from the fees applicable for 2017/18.

The fee reflects the risk-based approach to audit planning set out in the National Audit Office's Code of Audit Practice for the audit of local public bodies.

The audit fee covers the:

- audit of the financial statements;
- value for money conclusion; and
- Whole of Government accounts.

For Southampton City Council our indicative fee is set at the scale fee level. This indicative fee is based on certain assumptions, including:

- there is an effective control environment;



- the overall level of risk in relation to the audit of the financial statements is not significantly different from that of the prior year (this includes the assumption that no group financial statements are required);
- officers meeting the agreed timetable of deliverables;
- we can rely on the work of internal audit if planned;
- appropriate quality of documentation is provided by Southampton City Council;
- prompt responses are provided to our draft reports; and
- our accounts opinion and value for money conclusion being unqualified.

Meeting these assumptions will help ensure the delivery of our audit at the indicative audit fee which is set out in the table below.

As we have not yet completed our audit for 2017/18, our audit planning process for 2018/19 will continue as the year progresses. Fees will be reviewed and updated as necessary, within the parameters of our contract.

Summary of fees

	Indicative fee 2018/19 £	Planned fee 2017/18 £	Actual fee 2016/17 £
Total Code audit fee	109,891	142,715	147,101
Certification of housing benefit subsidy claim	N/A	19,524	15,204

The appointment of an auditor to certify the Council's 2018/19 housing benefit subsidy claim is not covered by the PSAA appointment, hence is shown as not applicable here.

Any additional work that we may agree to undertake (outside of the Code of Audit Practice) will be separately negotiated and agreed with you in advance.

Billing

The indicative audit fee will be billed in 4 quarterly instalments of £27,473.

Audit plan

Our plan is expected to be issued by February 2019. This will communicate any significant financial statement risks identified, planned audit procedures to respond to those risks and any changes in fee. It will also set out the significant risks identified in relation to the value for money conclusion. Should we need to make any significant amendments to the audit fee during the course of the audit, we will discuss this in the first instance with the Service Director Finance & Commercialisation (S151) and, if necessary, prepare a report outlining the reasons for the fee change for discussion with the Governance Committee.



We are committed to providing you with a high quality service. If at any time you would like to discuss with us how our service to you could be improved, or if you are dissatisfied with the service you are receiving, please contact me as your Engagement Lead. If you prefer an alternative route, please contact Steve Varley, our Managing Partner, 1 More London Place, London, SE1 2AF. We undertake to look into any complaint carefully and promptly and to do all we can to explain the position to you. Should you remain dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, you may of course take matters up with our professional institute.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen Thompson', written in a cursive style.

Helen Thompson
Associate Partner
For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP

cc. Mel Creighton, Service Director Finance & Commercialisation (S151)
Councillor Stephen Barnes-Andrews, Chair of the Governance Committee
Councillor Eamonn Keogh, Vice-Chair of the Governance Committee