

Dave Yates
Chief Executive
New Forest District Council
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SO43 7PA

27 April 2015

Ref: NFDC Fee Ltr 2015-16

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Dear Dave

Annual Audit and Certification Fees 2015-16

We are writing to confirm the audit and certification work that we propose to undertake for the 2015-16 financial year at New Forest District Council.

Our 2015-16 audit is the first that we will undertake following the closure of the Audit Commission on 31 March 2015. Our contract will now be overseen by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA), an independent company set up by the Local Government Association, until it ends in 2017 (or 2020 if extended by the Department of Communities and Local Government).

The responsibility for publishing the statutory Code of Audit Practice, under which we will conduct our audit work, has transferred to the National Audit Office.

Indicative audit fee

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, applying from 2015-16 audits.

The audit fee covers the:

- ▶ audit of the financial statements;
- ▶ value for money conclusion; and
- ▶ whole of government accounts.

For the 2015-16 financial year the Audit Commission has set the scale fee for each audited body prior to its closure. The scale fee is based on the fee initially set in the Audit Commission's 2012 procurement exercise, reduced by 25% following the further tendering of contracts in March 2014. It is not liable to increase during the remainder of our contract without a change in the scope of our audit responsibilities.

The 2015-16 scale fee is based on certain assumptions, including:

- ▶ the overall level of risk in relation to the audit of the financial statements is not significantly different from that of the prior year;

- ▶ we are able to place reliance on the work of internal audit to the maximum extent possible under auditing standards;
- ▶ the financial statements will be available to us in line with the agreed timetable;
- ▶ working papers and records provided to us in support of the financial statements are of a good quality and are provided in line with our agreed timetable; and
- ▶ prompt responses are provided to our draft reports.

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

We have set the Council's planned fee at the scale fee level as the overall level of audit risk is not significantly different from that of the prior year.

As we have not yet completed our audit for 2014-15, our audit planning process for 2015-16 will continue as the year progresses. Fees will be reviewed and updated as necessary, within the parameters of our contract.

Certification fee

The Audit Commission has set an indicative certification fee for housing benefit subsidy claim certification work for each audited benefits authority. The indicative fee is based on the actual 2013-14 benefit certification fee and incorporating a 25 per cent reduction.

The indicative certification fee is based on the expectation that an audited body is able to provide the auditor with complete and materially accurate housing benefit subsidy claim with supporting working papers, within agreed timeframes.

The indicative certification fee for 2015-16 relates to work on the housing benefit subsidy claim for the year ended 31 March 2016. We have set the certification fee at the indicative fee level. We will update our risk assessment after we complete 2014-15 benefit certification work, and to reflect any further changes in the certification arrangements.

Summary of fees

	Indicative fee 2015-16 £	Planned fee 2014-15 £
Total Code audit fee	55,482	73,976
Certification of housing benefit subsidy claim	5,492	5,671
Total	60,974	79,647

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 £15,243.50.

Audit plan

We aim to issue our 2015-16 audit plan early in 2016. 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 Executive Director (Finance) and, if necessary, prepare a report outlining the reasons for the fee change for discussion with the Audit Committee.

Audit team

The key members of the audit team for the 2015-16 financial year are:

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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. 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 faithfully

Helen Thompson
Director
For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP
United Kingdom

cc Bob Jackson Executive Director (Finance)
Cllr Alan O'Sullivan Chairman of the Audit Committee