



# Grant Thornton

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Dear Jenny

**Certification work for Cotswold District Council for year ended 31 March 2015**

We are required to certify certain claims and returns submitted by Cotswold District 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

We have certified one return for the financial year 2014/15 relating to Housing Benefit Subsidy claimed of £20.3 million. Further details of the claim certified are set out in Appendix A.

There were a small number of issues arising from our certification work which we wish to highlight for your attention. We are satisfied that the Council has appropriate arrangements to compile 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. The indicative scale fee set by the Audit Commission for the Council for 2014/15 is £5,870. Further details are set out in Appendix B.

Yours sincerely

Grant Thornton UK LLP

Appendix A - Details of claims and returns certified for 2014/15

Claim or return	Value	Amended?	Amendment (£)	Qualified?	Comments
BEN01 - Housing benefits subsidy claim	£20,332,383	No	N/A	Yes	<p><b>Module 2 – Parameters uprating</b> - Our completion of the annual parameters uprating checklist has identified that the polygamous marriages parameters are not included on the housing system for selection. The Authority has stated that these rates are not applicable to their caseload population. However, they were not able to provide us with any evidence to confirm this statement. We have agreed to work with the Council so that this evidence can be provided in 2015-16.</p> <p><b>Module 3 - Testing of our initial sample of 20 rent allowance cases</b> identified one case where earnings data had been incorrectly entered, leading to an underpayment. Another case was also noted where benefit entitlement was supported by a file note recording the details of a meeting between the claimant and a benefit officer where information was taken from earnings documentation held by the claimant. However, the earnings records themselves were not retained by the Council.</p> <p>Therefore an additional random sample of 40 earner-related cases were checked for both accuracy of income data entry and the presence of supporting documentation. Further errors were identified in six cases.</p>

**Appendix B: Fees for 2014/15 certification work**

<b>Claim or return</b>	<b>2013/14 fee (£)</b>	<b>2014/15 indicative fee (£)</b>	<b>2014/15 actual fee (£)</b>	<b>Variance (£)</b>	<b>Explanation for variances</b>
Housing benefits subsidy claim (BEN01)	6,600	5,870	5,870	-	Actual fee is in line with indicative fee.
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,600</b>	<b>5,870</b>	<b>5,870</b>	<b>-</b>	