

# Audit and Governance Committee Update for Tamworth Borough Council Progress Report and Update Year ended 31 March 2017

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**John Gregory**

Engagement Lead

T 0121 232 5333

E [john.gregory@uk.gt.com](mailto:john.gregory@uk.gt.com)

**Joan Barnett**

Audit Manager

T 0121 232 5399

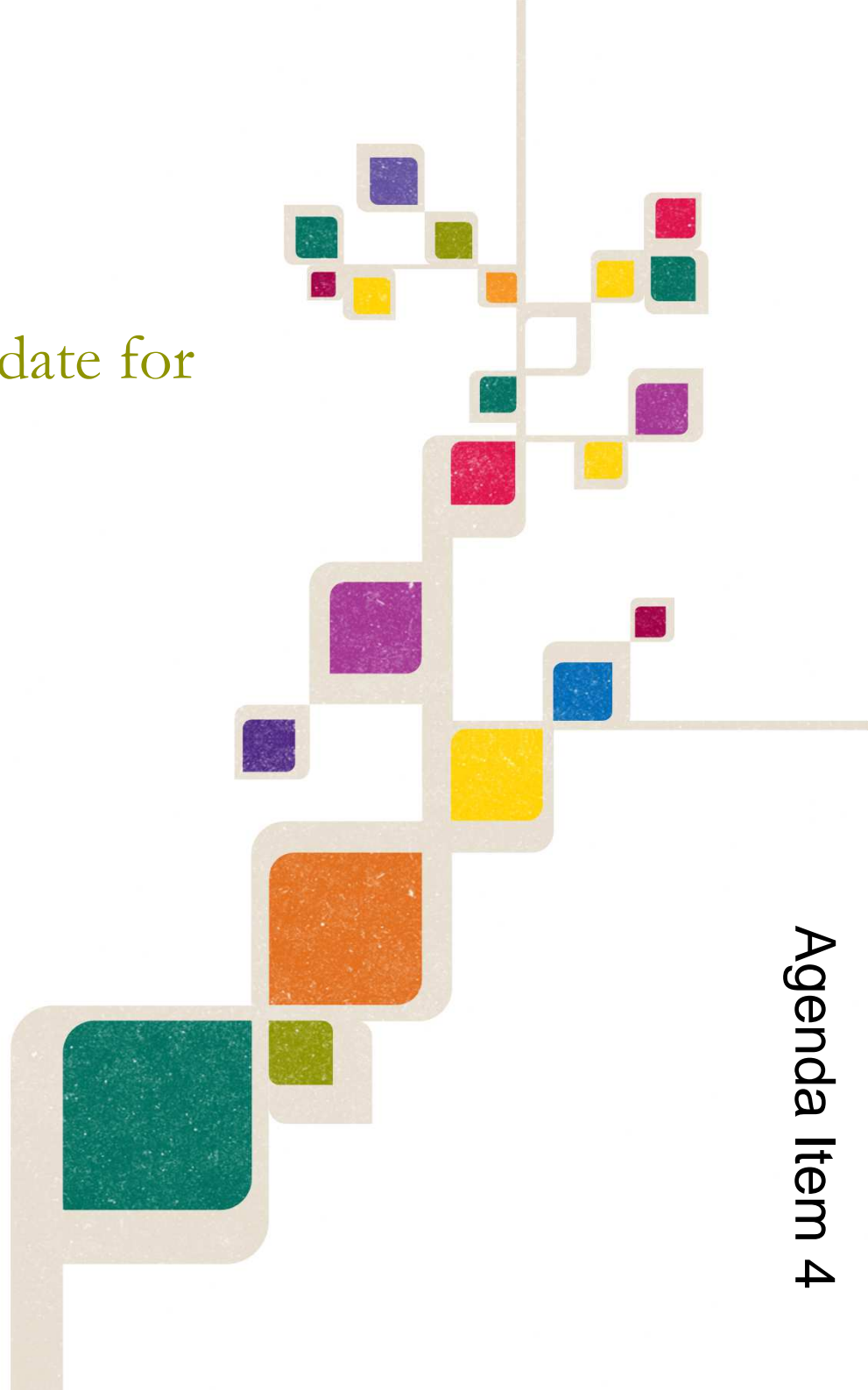
E [joan.m.barnett@uk.gt.com](mailto:joan.m.barnett@uk.gt.com)

**Denise Mills**

In Charge Auditor

T 0121 232 5306

E [denise.f.mills@uk.gt.com](mailto:denise.f.mills@uk.gt.com)



# Introduction

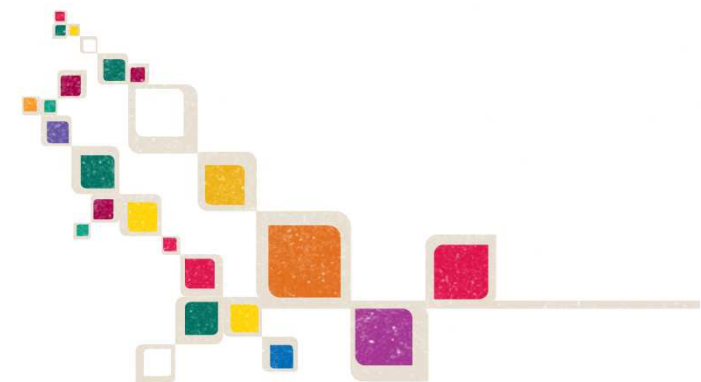
This paper provides the Audit and Governance Committee with a report on progress in delivering our responsibilities as your external auditors.

Members of the Audit and Governance Committee can find further useful material on our website [www.grantthornton.co.uk](http://www.grantthornton.co.uk), where we have a section dedicated to our work in the public sector. Here you can download copies of our publications:

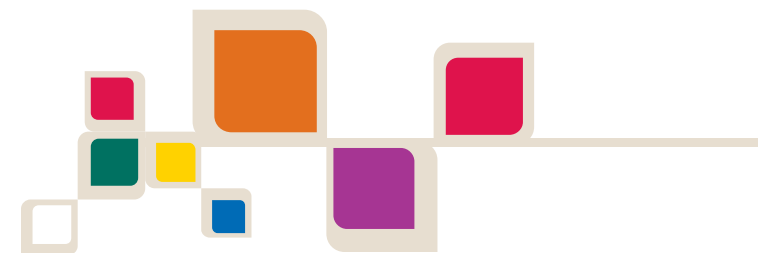
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- New laws to prevent fraud may affect the public sector (November 2016); <http://www.grantthornton.co.uk/en/insights/new-laws-to-prevent-fraud-may-affect-the-public-sector/>
  - CFO Insights – reviewing council's 2015/16 spend (December 2016); <http://www.grantthornton.co.uk/en/insights/cfo-insights-reviewing-councils-201516-spend/>
  - Fraud risk, 'adequate procedures', and local authorities (December 2016); <http://www.grantthornton.co.uk/en/insights/fraud-risk-adequate-procedures-and-local-authorities/>
  - Brexit: local government – transitioning successfully (December 2016) <http://www.grantthornton.co.uk/en/insights/brexit-local-government--transitioning-successfully/>

If you would like further information on any items in this briefing, or would like to register with Grant Thornton to receive regular email updates on issues that are of interest to you, please contact either your Engagement Lead or Engagement Manager.

The contents of this report relate only to the matters which have come to our attention, which we believe need to be reported to you as part of our audit process. It is not a comprehensive record of all the relevant matters, which may be subject to change, and in particular we cannot be held responsible to you for reporting all of the risks which may affect your business or any weaknesses in your internal controls. This report has been prepared solely for your benefit and should not be quoted in whole or in part without our prior written consent. We do not accept any responsibility for any loss occasioned to any third party acting, or refraining from acting on the basis of the content of this report, as this report was not prepared for, nor intended for, any other purpose.

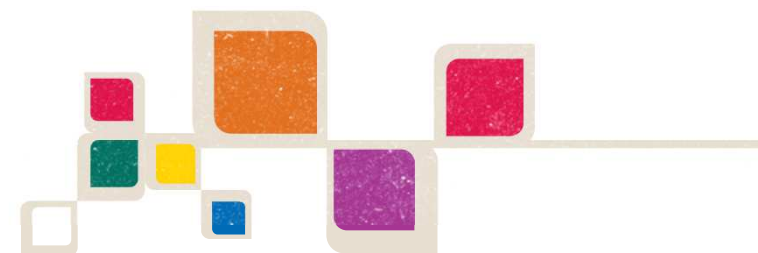


# Progress at 9 February 2017



2015/16 work			
	Planned Date	Complete?	Comments
<p><b>Grant Claims Audit</b>                      We were required to certify your Housing Benefits Grant Claim by 30 November 2016. We are presenting a certification letter, confirming the outcome of our work and the fees charged to today's Committee meeting.                      We have also certified the Pooling of Housing Capital Receipts return. The certification of this claim does not fall under the PSAA Ltd remit and therefore the PSAA fee.</p>	By 30 November 2016	Yes	<p>Our Housing Benefits certification letter is being presented to today's meeting. The claim presented for audit was of a high standard.</p> <p>Our audit of the Pooling of Housing Capital Receipts return did not identify any errors. No amendments or qualification of the return was required. The fee for this work is £2,000.00 excluding VAT.</p>
2016/17 work			
	Planned Date	Complete?	Comments
<p><b>Fee Letter</b>                      We are required to issue a 'Planned fee letter for 2016/17' by the end of April 2016</p>	By 30 April 2016	yes	Our fee letter was presented to the Audit and Governance Committee meeting held on 9 June 2016.
<p><b>Accounts Audit Plan</b>                      We are required to issue a detailed accounts audit plan to the Council setting out our proposed approach in order to give an opinion on the Council's 2016-17 financial statements.</p>	March 2017	Planning is in progress	We shall present our plan at the Audit and Governance Committee meeting being held on 30 March 2017.
<p><b>Interim accounts audit</b>                      Our interim fieldwork visit plan will include but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• updated review of the Council's control environment</li> <li>• updated understanding of financial systems</li> <li>• review of Internal Audit reports on core financial systems</li> <li>• early work on emerging accounting issues</li> <li>• early substantive testing</li> <li>• Value for Money conclusion risk assessment.</li> </ul>	The two weeks commencing 23 January 2017	In progress at the time of writing this report	We will report on any matters arising from our interim visit within our Accounts Audit Plan to be presented on 30 March 2017.

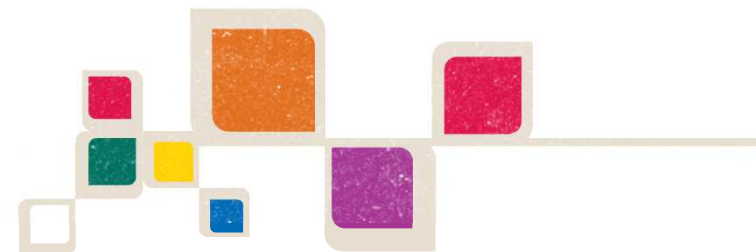
# Progress at 9 February 2017



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2016/17 work	Planned Date	Complete?	Comments
<p><b>Final accounts audit</b></p> <p>Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• audit of the 2016/17 financial statements</li> <li>• proposed opinion on the Council's accounts</li> <li>• proposed Value for Money conclusion</li> <li>• review of the Council's disclosures in the consolidated accounts against the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2016/17</li> </ul>	June 2017	Not yet commenced	<p>Our final accounts audit commences on 12 June 2017 with site work ending on 7 July 2017.</p> <p>We are planning to complete our audit in time to present our Audit Findings Report to an Audit and Governance Committee meeting towards the end of July 2017 (subject to the municipal calendar to be set for 2017/18) as part of the transition to the earlier closedown and audit cycle that is required from 2018.</p> <p>To help the Council prepare appropriate evidence to support the financial statements, we shall provide a schedule of the working papers that we expect and will be discussing the implications of emerging accounting matters with finance staff. We will also be attending a series of planning meetings with officers to help a smooth audit process.</p>
<p><b>Value for Money (VfM) conclusion</b></p> <p>The scope of our work is unchanged to 2015/16 and is set out in the final guidance issued by the National Audit Office in November 2015. The Code requires auditors to satisfy themselves that; "the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources".</p> <p>The guidance confirmed the overall criterion as; "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".</p> <p>The three sub criteria for assessment to be able to give a conclusion overall are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informed decision making</li> <li>• Sustainable resource deployment</li> <li>• Working with partners and other third parties</li> </ul>	January to July 2017	In progress	<p>We have commenced planning our VfM work, and will set out the result of our risk assessment and the proposed focus of our work in our Audit Plan presented to be presented to you on 30 March 2017.</p> <p>The results of our VfM audit work and the key messages arising will be reported in our Audit Findings Report to be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee being held at the end of the audit process.</p>

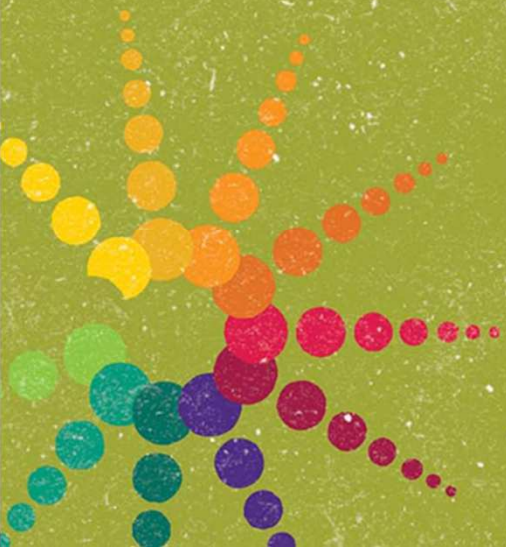
# Progress at 9 February 2017



2016/17 work	Planned Date	Complete?	Comments
<p><b>Other activities</b> We provide a range of workshops, along with network events for members and publications to support the Council.</p>	Ongoing through the year	Ongoing through the year	<p>We are providing a local workshop covering changes to accounting standards and the Code of Practice, and emerging issues and future developments, to support officers involved in the preparation of the Financial Statements. Officers are attending the workshop being held on 13 February 2017.</p> <p>Further details of the publications that may be of interest to the Council are set out from page 12.</p>

# Technical Matters

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# Telling the story – Changes in 2016/17 CIPFA Code

CIPFA has been working on the 'Telling the Story' project, which aims to streamline the financial statements and improve accessibility to the user. This has resulted in changes to CIPFA's 2016/17 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom ('the Code').

The main changes affect the presentation of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement ('CIES'), the Movement in Reserves Statement ('MIRS') and segmental reporting disclosures. A new Expenditure and Funding Analysis has been introduced.

The key changes are:

- the cost of services in the CIES is to be reported on basis of the local authority's organisational structure rather than the Service Reporting Code of Practice (SERCOP) headings
- an 'Expenditure & Funding Analysis' note to the financial statements provides a reconciliation between the way local authorities are funded and the accounting measures of financial performance in the CIES
- the changes will remove some of the complexities of the current segmental note
- other changes to streamline the current MIRS providing options to report Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure (previously shown as Surplus and Deficit on the Provision of Services and Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure lines) and removal of earmarked reserves columns.

Other amendments have been made to the Code:

- changes to reporting by pension funds in relation to the format and fair value disclosure requirements to reflect changes to the Pensions SORP
- other amendments and clarifications to reflect changes in the accounting standards.

# Delivering Good Governance

In April, CIPFA and SOLACE published 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016)' and this applies to annual governance statements prepared for the 2016/17 financial year.

The key focus of the framework is on sustainability – economic, social and environmental – and the need to focus on the longer term and the impact actions may have on future generations.

Local authorities should be:

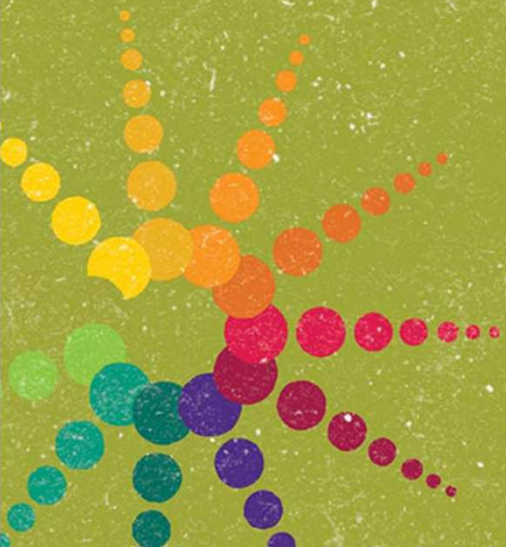
- reviewing existing governance arrangements against the principles set out in the Framework
- developing and maintaining an up-to-date local code of governance, including arrangements for ensuring on-going effectiveness
- reporting publicly on compliance with their own code on an annual basis and on how they have monitored the effectiveness of their governance arrangements in the year and on planned changes.

The framework applies to all parts of local government and its partnerships and should be applied using the spirit and ethos of the Framework rather than just rules and procedures.



# Sector issues and developments

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# National Audit Office:

Below is a selection of reports issued during 2016 which may be of interest to Audit Committee members. Please see the NAO website for all reports issued by the NAO.



## Financial sustainability of local authorities: capital expenditure and resourcing

Local authorities have kept up levels of capital spending but face pressure to meet debt costs and maintain investment in existing assets.

Sector(s): [Community and society](#), [Local services](#)

Performance Improvement area(s): [Financial and service sustainability](#), [Local service delivery](#)

Published:  
15 Jun 2016

<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/financial-sustainability-of-local-authorities-capital-expenditure-and-resourcing/>

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## The Troubled Families programme: update

This report is a factual update to support the Committee of Public Accounts' evidence session on the government's Troubled Families programme on 19 October 2016. It is based primarily on published sources, information supplied by the Department for Communities and Local Government and previous reports published by the National Audit Office.

Sector(s): [Community and society](#), [Local services](#)

Published:  
18 Oct 2016

<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/the-troubled-families-programme-update/>



## Overview: Local government

This Overview looks at the local government landscape during the last financial year and summarises both matters of likely interest to Parliament as well as our work with local authorities. The NAO prepares statutory guidance on how local auditors should meet their responsibilities.

Sector(s): [Local services](#)

Performance Improvement area(s): [Departmental Overviews](#), [Local service delivery](#)

Published:  
9 Nov 2016

<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/overview-local-government/>

# Grant Thornton



# Integrated Reporting

## Looking beyond the report

The move away from reporting based on historic financial information is beginning to gain momentum and Integrated Reporting is now mandatory in some countries.

In the UK, CIPFA proposed in their consultation document that the narrative report from 2017/18 reflects elements of the International Integrated Reporting Council's framework whilst the Treasury is encouraging public sector organisations to adopt Integrated Reporting.

*Integrated reporting: Looking beyond the report* was produced by our global Integrated Reporting team, based in the UK, New Zealand and South Africa, to help organisations obtain the benefits of Integrated Reporting.

The International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC) describes Integrated Reporting as "*enhancing the way organisations think, plan and report the story of their business.*"

At Grant Thornton, we fully agree with this and, in our view, the key word is 'enhancing' because a lot of the elements to support effective Integrated Reporting are likely to be in place already.

But anyone focussing purely on the production of the report itself will not reap the full benefits that effective Integrated Reporting can offer.

Instead, think of Integrated Reporting as demonstrating "integrated thinking" across your entire organisation, with the actual report being an essential element of it.

Our methodology is based on six modules which are designed to be independent of each other.

1. **Secure support** – effective Integrated Reporting needs leadership from the top.
2. **Identify stakeholders** – who are they and how can you engage with them?
3. **Identify the capitals for your organisation** – what resources do you use to create value?
4. **What do you have – and what do you need?** – do you have the data you need and is it accurate?
5. **Set limits and create boundaries** – make sure your report is focussed.
6. **Review and improve** – Integrated Reporting is a continuous learning process.

Our approach to Integrated Reporting is deliberately simple; experience has shown us that this works best. Things are often only complicated because people made them that way.

Our experienced, independent teams can help you keep focused throughout the entire Integrated Reporting process and can support you, no matter what stage you are at. Please speak to your Engagement Lead if you would like to discuss this further.

## Grant Thornton publications

### Challenge question:

- Have you thought about how the principles of Integrated Reporting can help your organisation become more focussed?

 Grant Thornton  
An outlet for growth

Integrated reporting  
Looking beyond the report  
November 2016



# Integrated Thinking and Reporting

## Focusing on value creation in the public sector

Grant Thornton has seconded staff to the International Integrated Reporting Council on a pro bono basis for a number of years.

Page 17 They have been working on making the principles of Integrated Reporting <IR> relevant to the public sector and co-authored a recent report by CIPFA and the World Bank: *Integrated thinking and reporting: focusing on value creation in the public sector - an introduction for leaders*.

Around one third of global gross domestic product (GDP) is made up by the public sector and this is being invested in ensuring there is effective infrastructure, good educational opportunities and reliable health care. In many ways, it is this investment by the public sector that is helping to create the conditions for wealth creation and preparing the way for the success of this and future generations.

Traditional reporting frameworks, focussed only on historic financial information, are not fit-for-purpose for modern, multi-dimensional public sector organisations.

Integrated Reporting supports sustainable development and financial stability and enables public sector organisations to broaden the conversation about the services they provide and the value they create.

The public sector faces multiple challenges, including:

- Serving and being accountable to a wide stakeholder base;
- Providing integrated services with sustainable outcomes;
- Maintaining a longer-term perspective, whilst delivering in the short term; and
- Demonstrating the sustainable value of services provided beyond the financial.

The <IR> Framework is principle based and enables organisations to tailor their reporting to reflect their own thinking and strategies and to demonstrate they are delivering the outcomes they were aiming for.

Integrated Reporting can help public sector organisations deal with the above challenges by:

- Addressing diverse and often conflicting public accountability requirements;
- Focussing on the internal and external consequences of an organisation's activities;
- Looking beyond the 'now' to the 'near' and then the 'far';
- Considering the resources used other than just the financial.

The report includes examples of how organisations have benefitted from Integrated Reporting.

CIPFA Publications (co-authored by Grant Thornton secondees)

### Challenge question:

- Have you reviewed the CIPFA guide to Integrated Reporting in the public sector?



# Apprentice Levy-Are you prepared?

Grant Thornton update

## What is the levy?

The UK has been struggling on productivity, now estimated to be 20% behind the G7 average. Developing apprenticeships is set to play a key part in tackling this and bridging the skills gap.

Announced by government in July 2015, the levy is to encourage employers to offer apprenticeships in meeting their skill, workforce and training needs, developing talent internally. The levy is designed to give more control to employers, through direct access to training funds and creation of apprenticeships through the Trailblazer process.

## What is the levy?

From April 2017, the way the government funds apprenticeships in England is changing. Some employers will be required to pay a new apprenticeship levy, and there will be changes to the funding for apprenticeship training for all employers.

All employers will receive an allowance of £15,000 to offset against payment of the levy. This effectively means that the levy will only be payable on paybill in excess of £3 million per year.

The levy will be payable through Pay As You Earn (PAYE) and will be payable alongside income tax and National Insurance.

Each employer will receive one allowance to offset against their levy payment. There will be a connected persons rule, similar the Employment Allowance connected persons rule, so employers who operate multiple payrolls will only be able to claim one allowance.

Employers in England are also able to get 'more out than they put in', through an additional government top-up of 10% to their levy contribution.

When employers want to spend above their total levy amount, government will fund 90% of the cost for training and assessment within the funding bands.

The existing funding model will continue until the levy comes into effect May 2017. The levy will apply to employers across all sectors.

Paybill will be calculated based on total employee earnings subject to Class1 National Insurance Contributions. It will not include other payments such as benefits in kind. It will apply to total employee earnings in respect of all employees.

## What will the levy mean in practice

Employer of 250 employees, each with a gross salary of £20,000:

Paybill:  $250 \times £20,000 = £5,000,000$

Levy sum:  $0.5\% \times = £25,000$

Allowance:  $£25,000 - £15,000 = £10,000$  annual levy

## How can I spend my levy funds?

The funding can only be used to fund training and assessment under approved apprenticeship schemes. It cannot be used on other costs associated with apprentices, including wages and remuneration, or training spend for the wider-team.

Through the Digital Apprenticeship Service (DAS), set up by government, employers will have access to their funding in the form of digital vouchers to spend on training.

Training can be designed to suit the needs of your organisation and the requirements of the individual in that role, in addition to specified training for that apprenticeship. Training providers must all be registered with the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

## What do I need to start thinking about now?

- How much is the levy going to cost and have we budgeted for it?
- How do we ensure compliance with the new system?
- Which parts of my current spend on training are applicable to apprenticeships?
- Are there opportunities to mitigate additional cost presented by the levy?
- How is training in my organisation structured?
- How do we develop and align to our workforce development strategy

# Off-payroll working in the public sector

The Chancellor's Autumn Statement 2016 speech delivered a number of changes that will impact the UK business environment and raise considerations for you as an employer.

In particular, the Chancellor announced that the measures that were proposed in Budget 2016 that could affect services supplied through personal service companies (PSCs) to the public sector will be implemented.

At present, the so-called IR35 rules require the worker to decide whether PAYE and NIC are due on the payments made by a PSC following an engagement with a public sector body. The onus will be moved to the payer from April 2017. This might be the public sector body itself, but is more likely to be an intermediary, or, if there is a supply chain, to the party closest to the PSC.

The public sector body (or the party closest to the PSC) will need to account for the tax and NIC and include details in their RTI submission.

The existing IR35 rules will continue outside of public sector engagements.

**HMRC Digital Tool** – will aid with determining whether or not the intermediary rules apply to ensure of “*consistency, certainty and simplicity*”

When the proposals were originally made, the public sector was defined as those bodies that are subject to the Freedom of Information rules. It is not known at present whether this will be the final definition. Establishing what bodies are caught is likely to be difficult however the public sector is defined.

A further change will be that the 5% tax free allowance that is given to PSCs will be removed for those providing services to the public sector.

## Impact

- Increased costs
- Responsibility moved to the engager
- Increased risks for the engager
- Consider current arrangements in place

## Areas / risks to consider

- Interim and / or temporary staff engaged through an intermediary or PSC
- Where using agencies ensure they're UK based and operating PAYE
- Update on-boarding / procurement systems, processes and controls
- Additional take on checks and staff training / communications
- Review of existing PSC contractor population before April 2017
- Consider moving long term engagements onto payroll

# Salary Sacrifice Arrangements-Autumn Statement

The Chancellor's Autumn Statement 2016 speech delivered a number of changes that will impact the UK business environment and raise considerations for you as an employer.

In particular, the proposals from earlier this year to limit the tax and NIC advantages from salary sacrifice arrangements in conjunction with benefits will be implemented from April 2017.

Although we await the details, it appears that there is a partial concession to calls made by Grant Thornton UK and others to exempt the provision of cars from the new rules (to protect the car industry). Therefore, the changes will apply to all benefits other than pensions (including advice), childcare, Cycle to Work schemes and ultra-low emission cars.

Arrangements in place before April 2017 for cars, accommodation and school fees will be protected until April 2021, with others being protected until April 2018.

These changes will be implemented from April 2017.

As you can see, there is a limited opportunity to continue with salary sacrifice arrangements and a need also to consider the choice between keeping such arrangements in place – which may still be beneficial – or withdrawing from them

## What should you be thinking about?

- Review the benefits you offer - particularly if you have a flex renewal coming up
- Consider your overall Reward and Benefit strategy
- Consider your Employee communications



# Brexit

## Planning can help organisations reduce the impact of Brexit

Several months have passed since the referendum to leave the European Union (EU), during which there has been a flurry of political activity, including the party conference season.

After many years of relative stability, organisations will need to prepare themselves for a period of uncertainty and volatility and will need to keep their risk registers under constant review. The outcome of the US Presidential election in November 2016 has added to this uncertainty.

The High Court ruling that Parliament should have a say before the UK invokes Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty – which triggers up to two years of formal EU withdrawal talks – will not, in our view, impact on the final outcome. There appears to be a general political consensus that Brexit does mean Brexit, but we feel there could be slippage beyond the original timetable which expected to see the UK leave the EU by March 2019.

2017 elections in The Netherlands (March), France (April/May), and Germany (October/November) will complicate the Brexit negotiation process and timeline at a time when Brexit is more important for the UK than it is for the remaining 27 Member States

The question still remains, what does Brexit look like?

While there may be acceptance among politicians that the UK is leaving the EU, there is far from any agreement on what our future relationship with the continent should be.

So, what do we expect based on what has happened so far?

### Existing EU legislation will remain in force

We expect that the Government will introduce a “Repeal Act” (repealing the European Communities Act of 1972 that brought us into the EU) in early 2017.

As well as undoing our EU membership, this will transpose existing EU regulations and legislation into UK law. We welcome this recognition of the fact that so much of UK law is based on EU rules and that trying to unpick these would not only take many years but also create additional uncertainty.

### Taking back control is a priority

It appears that the top priority for government is 'taking back control', specifically of the UK's borders. Ministers have set out proposals ranging from reducing our dependence on foreign doctors or cutting overseas student numbers. The theme is clear: net migration must fall.

## Grant Thornton update

### Challenge questions:

- Have you assessed the potential impact of Brexit on your organisation?
- Does your risk register include Brexit and is this regularly updated and reported?

### Leaving the Single Market appears likely

The tone and substance of Government speeches on Brexit, coupled with the wish for tighter controls on immigration and regulation, suggest a future where the UK enjoys a much more detached relationship with the EU.

Potential existing examples for the UK's future relationship, such as the 'Norwegian' or 'Swiss' models, seem out of the question. The UK wants a 'bespoke deal'.

Given the rhetoric coming from Europe, our view is that this would signal an end to the UK's membership of the Single Market. With seemingly no appetite to amend the four key freedoms required for membership, the UK appears headed for a so-called 'Hard Brexit'. It is possible that the UK will seek a transitional arrangement, to give time to negotiate the details of our future trading relationship.

# Brexit (continued)

This is of course, all subject to change, and, politics, especially at the moment, moves quickly.

Where does this leave the public sector?

After a relatively stable summer, we expect there will be increased volatility as uncertainty grows approaching the formal negotiation period.

## Planning can help organisations reduce the impact of Brexit

The chancellor has acknowledged the effect this may have on investment and signalled his intention to support the economy, delaying plans to get the public finances into surplus by 2019/20.

We expect that there will be some additional government investment in 2017, with housing and infrastructure being the most likely candidates.

Clarity is a long way off. However, public sector organisations should be planning now for making a success of a hard Brexit, with a focus on:

**Staffing** – organisations should begin preparing for possible restrictions on their ability to recruit migrant workers and also recognise that the UK may be a less attractive place for them to live and work. Non-UK employees might benefit from a degree of reassurance as our expectation is that those already here will be allowed to stay. Employees on short term or rolling contracts might find it more difficult to stay over time.

**Financial viability** – public sector bodies should plan how they will overcome any potential shortfalls in funding (e.g. grants, research funding or reduced student numbers).

**Market volatility** – for example pension fund and charitable funds investments and future treasury management considerations.

**International collaboration** – perhaps a joint venture or PPP scheme with an overseas organisation or linked research projects.

For regular updates on Brexit, please see our website:

<http://www.grantthornton.co.uk/en/insights/brexit-planning-the-future-shaping-the-debate/>

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