



**Grant Thornton**

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Our ref:  
Your ref:

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22 February 2018

Dear Bob,

**Certification work for Cannock Chase District Council for year ended 31 March 2017**

We are required to certify the Housing Benefit subsidy claim submitted by Cannock Chase 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) took on the transitional responsibilities for HB COUNT issued by the Audit Commission in February 2015.

We have certified the Housing Benefit subsidy claim for the financial year 2016/17 relating to subsidy claimed of £25.8million. Further details are set out in Appendix A.

We identified the following issues from our certification work that we wish to highlight for your attention. There were errors from the extended testing that we carried out on this year's subsidy return that recurred from 2015/16 and two new areas. The extrapolated financial impact on the claim was again relatively insignificant to the total subsidy receivable. However, the errors found means that there will be a higher volume of testing required for the 2017/18 subsidy claim audit.

The volume of errors found during our certification process was more than previous years and indicative of weaknesses in the quality control procedures in place. This increases the audit testing required and means that some claimants may not be receiving benefits consistent with their entitlement under the regulations.

Our certification of the claim was qualified, and we reported our findings to the DWP. The DWP may require the Council to undertake further work or provide assurances on the errors we have identified.

The indicative £7,740 certification fee for 2016/17 was set by PSAA, based on the final 2014/15 certification fee. This reflects the amount of work required by the auditor to certify the Housing Benefit subsidy claim that year. Due to the additional work required to complete the 2016/17 certification audit, we have agreed with you an additional fee of £2,353. This is subject to confirmation from PSAA and is set out in more detail in Appendix B.

Yours sincerely



For  
Grant Thornton UK LLP

**Appendix A - Details of claims and returns certified for 2016/17**

Claim or return	Value	Amended?	Amendment value	Qualified?	Comments
Housing benefits subsidy claim	£25,790,154	No	N/A	Yes	See below

Findings from certification of housing benefits subsidy claim

**Appendix B: Fees for 2016/17 certification work**

Claim or return	2014/15 fee (£)	2016/17 indicative fee (£)	2016/17 actual fee (£)	Variance (£)	Explanation for variances
Housing benefits subsidy claim (BEN01)	£10,320	£7,740	£10,093	£2,353	Fee variation submitted to PSAA
Total	10,320	7,740	10,093	2,353	