

# Public Sector Real Estate – Why Grant Thornton?

2025

# Why Grant Thornton?

Delivering real estate with a public sector dynamic requires innovation and resilience, given the significant opportunities and challenges developments face in this space.

With increasing demand for housing remaining high, alongside a desire to deliver economic growth, strategic investment that is deliverable remains key. Unlocking this ambition in a changing political environment remains difficult – hence the need to focus on innovative financing and funding solutions to unlock projects.

At Grant Thornton, we understand these complexities and are committed to providing comprehensive support to our clients in this market. Our expertise spans across financial diligence, finance raising, business case assembly as well as broader strategic advice, to enable success for our clients.

\*UK member firms of Grant Thornton International Ltd (Grant Thornton UK LLP and Grant Thornton UK Advisory & Tax LLP)



23  
UK offices



200+  
Partners



5,000+  
UK employees



£724m  
Turnover



56%  
FTSE 100 are  
non-audit clients



No.1  
Independent nominated  
adviser of AiM



6th  
Largest auditor – FTSE 350



6th  
Largest auditor –  
UK's top privately-  
held companies



76,000+  
People worldwide

## Awards

Ranked Leading M&A Advisor  
in the Mid-market in 2024



The Financial Times  
2024  
UK's Leading Management Consultants:  
the ratings



Stonewall Workplace Equality  
Index Top 100 Employers – Gold  
Award 2024 and 2023, Silver  
Award 2022



# Support across real estate and social infrastructure

At Grant Thornton, our cross-sector team supports public services across every element of the planning, appraisal and delivery of complex capital programmes. This advice spans advisory, tax, accounting as well as wider assurance and restructuring where required.

From capital strategy through to fundraising, you can leverage our deep public sector knowledge and network to achieve your goals.

## Commercial structuring and planning

Developing viable delivery models, governance frameworks, and procurement strategies that incorporate:

- Public-private partnership models
- Institutional investor engagement
- Market sounding & feasibility

## Financial due diligence and risk reviews

Robust assessment of forecasts, costs, and assumptions:

- Business plan reviews
- Cash flow sustainability
- Benchmarking
- Options appraisal - Sensitivity analysis and scenario testing

## Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) and Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs)

Strategic and financial advice on legacy and new PPP structures:

- Exit strategy & refinancing
- Asset handback assessments
- VFM reappraisal
- Operational reviews

## Funding and finance

Structuring innovative funding packages:

- Borrowing strategies and lender engagement
- Investment fund structuring
- Grant, loan & income strips
- Funding mechanisms

# Our experience across the sector

Examples of how we've supported clients across the public sector:

## Local government

London Borough of Camden



### Options assessment for investment programme

Supported the development of its £300m Community Investment Programme (CIP) strategy.

Breckland Council



### Financial viability assessment

Assessed the financial and strategic viability of acquiring 34 refurbished MOD homes to address an affordable housing shortage.

## Arms length bodies

Homes England



### Subsidy control assessment

Advised on equity and debt investments of c.£60m into developing a shopping centre to facilitate affordable housing and a modular homes company.

Transport for London



### Rolling stock financing

Advised on the rolling stock procurement for the Elizabeth Line, helping raise £1 billion in finance.

## Central government

Department for Transport



### Funding and financing options assessment

Conducted a comprehensive evaluation of potential funding options for the development of two High Speed 2 (HS2) stations located at Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Airport.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government



### Towns Fund advisory

Led the funding and investment, monitoring and evaluation and data and insight workstreams for the £3.6bn Towns Fund, advising 101 towns on their investment proposals.



## Case study

# Advising on railway stations redevelopment

## Network Rail

Network Rail procured Grant Thornton to advise on the 7 Stations Programme, an ambitious initiative seeking to shift the dial in achieving a station network that is a catalyst to attracting investment.

Grant Thornton led the workstream to produce a feasibility study highlighting what an ambitious development of the seven stations across Manchester could look like, working alongside the Department for Transport (DfT), Local Authorities, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and other advisors.



### How we helped

We created a set of development appraisals and visual sketches for each of the 7 stations, highlighting the opportunities and the associated land values. Using this, we could understand any viability issues across the stations.

The ambitions can be delivered across short, medium, and long-term time horizons, and based on this feasibility study, the development of a combination of landowners could deliver up to £255m of land value from commercial and residential development, covering 23 million sq ft of space.

We presented a range of funding options across the station portfolio, each aligned to the defined beneficiaries of the schemes, allowing for an equitable approach to recuperating any deficits with negative land values. Each of these proposals was discussed through soft market testing with the private sector to identify other funding and financing solutions, efficient ways of working, and to assess market appetite for the proposals.

### How we made a difference

This work created the groundwork to help the project team understand potential funding sources, the costs associated with delivery, the models through which different stations could be delivered, the identification of the plots of land for development, and an integrated design with other live projects currently happening in the local area.

Each station delivered an output providing the team with development appraisals, funding proposals, financing proposals, delivery model methods, architect sketches, and were developed in line with the limitations of each site and set of stakeholders according to the unified strategic objectives of each stakeholder group.

This work set the foundations for continued conversations with funders and developers to continue progressing the development opportunities across the 7 stations and provided a clear set of recommendations and next steps to provide clear instructions on how best to progress.



## Case study

# Market and risk assessment of housing interventions

## London Borough of Newham

London Borough of was considering a portfolio of five potential housing interventions (through its wholly owned housing company).

The housing interventions required a market and risk assessment under both financial and strategic contexts.



### How we helped

#### Part 1 - Market assessment of the Interventions

Assessed the extent to which the interventions addressed and mitigated the risks associated with the current housing provision and commented on how the Interventions met the Council's strategic housing objectives.

Assessed the Council's HRA financial capacity and General Fund financial capacity, for increasing the housing supply.

#### Part 2 - Risk assessment

Assessed whether the risks associated with the Interventions sat within the limits of the Council's stated risk appetite.

Compared the business case and risk profile of the interventions with other housing funding models available to the Council, including the use of prudential borrowing, private sector capital and long leases.

### How we made a difference

Our review provided Newham Council with an independent, evidence-based appraisal of its key housing interventions. The report helped identify which delivery models offered the strongest strategic and financial fit, and flagged risks requiring further attention. Our comparative analysis of funding options offered valuable insights into potential future approaches for housing delivery.

Specifically, regarding the Council's wholly owned housing company, we provided clear recommendations for ensuring appropriate on-going financial scrutiny, including the funding of working capital requirements, potential updates to the existing capital structure and on-going monitoring of the HRA operating position.

The Council is now better equipped to prioritise interventions that meet housing needs at pace, while managing financial exposure and risk. Our work informed internal discussions on housing strategy and contributed to strengthening governance around major housing investments.

# Our Team



## Jason Hurst

### Advisory Partner

T: +44 (0) 7973 334457

E: Jason.m.hurst@uk.gt.com

#### Role

Jason has over 25 years' experience of providing commercial and financial advice, and due diligence across various engagements.

This has included support on transactions or solving complex commercial challenges for infrastructure owners, investors, governments, regulators, and operators across asset classes.

#### Experience:

- Jason has also supported partners engaging with Homes England, including viability assessments, funding applications, and development strategy alignment.
- Jason has played a key role in shaping capital strategies for local authorities, including Merton Council, where he provided strategic challenge and assurance on a wide-ranging capital programme.
- Jason advised on the disposal of Section 106 properties by CHP to an institutional fund—balancing commercial return with long-term stewardship responsibilities.



## Wayne Butcher

### Advisory Director

T: +44 (0) 7825 256 899

E: wayne.butcher@uk.gt.com

#### Role

Wayne leads our work in the delivery of engagements to local and central government across property including housing, leisure, and mixed-use development schemes. Wayne also advises private sector clients in the delivery of major infrastructure and property transactions/programmes.

Wayne joined Grant Thornton UK after graduating with a mathematics degree from the University of Manchester and has been with the firm since 2006 – he is a qualified fellow of the ICAEW.

#### Experience:

- Wayne led and successfully raised £650m fundraise for the wholly owned subsidiary of Glasgow City Council, completing in late 2019 (with a further £210m raised in 2023);
- Wayne led the financing component of the £3bn Towns Fund programme, engaging with over 101 towns on behalf of the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government;
- Wayne led a circa £83m debt for equity swap with Northumberland County Council as part of its financial re-structure with its development company, Advance Northumberland; and
- Wayne led a £58m financial restructure of a housing PFI company, advising Together Housing, an RP who wholly owns the PFI.



## Nick Moseley

### Associate Director

T: +44 020 7383 5100

E: Nick.L.Moseley@uk.gt.com

#### Role

Nick is an Associate Director with Grant Thornton's Public Services Advisory Team. Nick has 10 years' experience within Grant Thornton's Corporate Finance Team and Real Estate Advisory. Nick has worked on a range of large-scale transactions within both financial services and real estate. He has been assigned as the project manager on several key assignments giving him overall responsibility for daily communications and updates for all stakeholders as well as delivering outputs and overseeing work performed by junior team members.

#### Experience

- Supported delivery of the £3.6bn Towns Fund by reviewing investment plans, running training workshops, and leading a soft market testing exercise to attract private co-funding from institutional and international investors.
- Led a team assessing over 100 local authority applications to the £100m Covid recovery fund, co-designing the portal, allocating funding fairly, and adapting processes quickly in response to renewed pandemic-related leisure centre closures.
- Developed an appraisal framework for South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to evaluate public investments across grant, debt, and equity options; reviewed proposed projects for financial return, strategic alignment with authority objectives, and compliance with subsidy control and MEOP principles.



## Alex Springall

### Associate Director

T: +44 (0) 7880 469 942

E: alex.j.springall@uk.gt.com

#### Role

Alex is a qualified accountant, having joined the Public Services Advisory team in February 2022, bringing with him prior experience in Project Management Office (PMO) and Audit. Alex has solid background in project management for large capital programmes within central government, financial review, business case analysis, and business planning.

Recently, he has concentrated on funding strategies for significant capital programmes across stations development, student accommodation, mixed use schemes and assessing investment portfolios of local authorities.

#### Experience:

- Alex led the workstream on behalf of Network rail to identify circa £1.5bn of funding solutions address viability gaps across station development.
- Alex managed the bid preparation for Cityheart to deliver student accommodation for Staffordshire University. He assessed various funding options and provided advanced modelling of construction costs and funding requirements. Alex developed and issued the Information Memorandum to the funder market, securing over £100 million of funding for the DBFO scheme on behalf of Cityheart through his network of contacts.

Proactive and strategic Real Estate advice | 7

# Our Team



Mike Bradley

Director

T: +44 (0) 20 7728 2187

E [mike.c.bradley@uk.gt.com](mailto:mike.c.bradley@uk.gt.com)



Beth Parker

Associate Director

D +44 (0)20 7728 3035

E [Beth.E.Parker-Lee@uk.gt.com](mailto:Beth.E.Parker-Lee@uk.gt.com)



Rich Thomas

Director

T: +441132001581

E: [Richard.DM.Thomas@uk.gt.com](mailto:Richard.DM.Thomas@uk.gt.com)

## Role

Mike has many years experience advising large international corporate clients on property transactions including tax structuring options and due diligence. He has a broad knowledge of the tax issues that impact clients within the property sector.

## Experience

- Led multiple acquisition due diligence transactions for a number of high value property backed businesses in the UK
- Advised a major Real Estate Investment Trust on restructuring steps following an acquisition of a portfolio of commercial properties
- Advised a UK fund on implications and practicalities of structuring a new venture as a Real Estate Investment Trust
- Advised various Asian investors investing into UK property and associated structuring considerations over the lifecycle of the investment
- Mike also has significant experience working in industry in various in house tax manager/HOT roles and **can Role**

## Role

Beth is a chartered accountant with over 12 years experience, specialising in real estate tax.

## Experience

Beth has experience advising a range of property companies, funds, infrastructure businesses, local authorities and charities on the tax implications of land and property transactions and their on-going tax compliance requirements.

Beth's experience includes:

- Corporate acquisitions and due diligence
- tax health checks and audits (direct taxes, stamp taxes, ATED)
- Stamp taxes advice on acquisitions, restructures and leases, including SDLT, Stamp Duty, LTT and LBTT
- Direct tax compliance for UK companies, non-UK companies and partnerships (including joint ventures)
- Offshore investment in UK real estate
- Structuring property transactions involving sovereign and exempt investors.
- Public/private transactions, development and regeneration.
- Supporting clients in relation to student accommodation projects from bid stage through to financial close.

## Role

Richard heads up our specialist public sector financial reporting and accounting team. Richard has 23 years' experience working across the public and private sector in a variety of roles. Whilst specialising in supporting finance functions with complex financial reporting, accounting and finance function improvement he has a broad range of experience that allows him to provide additional insight and value

## Experience

- Richard has providing complex accounting advice to a number of Local Authority Housing Company structures. This has included for example, developer buyout, refinancing arrangements, revising group restructures and debt to equity swaps.
- Richard worked directly with the combined authority to support them with a number of areas as part of their large-scale regeneration and commercial projects.
- Richard led our accounting work with Homes England in relation to the MADE partnership with Lloyds Banking Group and Barratts Developments PLC. The proposed structure was to set up a Joint Venture master developer platform. This work involved reviewing the joint venture structure and agreement to determine how this would be treated within Homes England together with assessment of the treatment for the Loan Notes that would be issued by Homes England into the Joint Venture.



© 2025 Grant Thornton UK LLP and Grant Thornton UK Advisory & Tax LLP. All rights reserved.

'Grant Thornton' refers to the brand under which the Grant Thornton member firms provide assurance, tax and advisory services to their clients and/or refers to one or more member firms, as the context requires. Grant Thornton UK LLP and Grant Thornton Advisory & Tax LLP are member firms of Grant Thornton International Ltd (GTIL). GTIL and the member firms are not a worldwide partnership. GTIL and each member firm is a separate legal entity. Services are delivered by the member firms. GTIL does not provide services to clients. GTIL and its member firms are not agents of, and do not obligate, one another and are not liable for one another's acts or omissions. This publication has been prepared only as a guide. No responsibility is accepted by us for loss occasioned to any person acting or refraining from acting as a result of any material in this publication.