

REPORT TITLE: CERTIFICATION OF CLAIMS AND RETURNS ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

21 JULY 2022

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Power – Cabinet Member for Finance and Value

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Certification of Claims and Returns Annual Report is to summarise the results of KPMG LLP's assurance work on the council's housing benefits subsidy claim for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Of the sample testing undertaken by KPMG three errors were returned and are detailed in Appendix A of the attached report. One of the three errors had no impact on the subsidy claim at all, and the other two errors had no overall financial effect on the subsidy value being claimed. Given the volume of claims processed for Housing Benefit in 2020-21, which is in excess of 13,000, this is a very positive report and highlights the level of accuracy executed by officers within the Benefits team.

It should be noted that this report refers to claims made within 2020-21 which was the first year of the effects of Covid. The Benefits team at that time operated under significant pressure due to the economic impact on residents and the additional work passed down from central government, such as the Test and Trace scheme and the Council Tax Hardship Support Fund.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Audit and Governance Committee considers the attached Annual Report (Appendix 1).

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 Certification of Claims and Returns Annual Report 2020/21