

REPORT TITLE: CERTIFICATION OF CLAIMS AND RETURNS ANNUAL REPORT
2017/18

7 MARCH 2019

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER: CLLR GUY ASHTON – PORTFOLIO
HOLDER FOR FINANCE

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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 External Audit's work on the Council's housing benefits subsidy claim for 2017/18.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Audit Committee considers the attached Annual Report (Appendix 1) and takes the opportunity to raise any points of clarification or concerns with the External Auditors (who will be present at the Committee meeting).

IMPLICATIONS:1 COUNCIL STRATEGY OUTCOME

- 1.1 External Audit findings contribute to the corporate governance arrangements of the Council, which in turn supports the achievement of the objectives in the Council Strategy.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The audit fee for grant certification work relating to 2017/18 is £12,535 which is an increase of £2,000 from the indicative fee provided. The additional fee is based on the additional hours required in respect of the extended testing. The actual fee for 2016/17 was £8,483.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 None.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 None required.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSEMENT

- 8.1 None required.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 None required

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
<i>Property</i>	n/a	n/a
<i>Community Support</i>	n/a	n/a
<i>Timescales</i>	n/a	n/a
<i>Project capacity</i>	n/a	n/a
<i>Financial / VfM</i>	Checks carried out by the	n/a

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
	external audit ensure that the Council is calculating its Housing Benefit Subsidy claim accurately.	
<i>Legal</i>	n/a	n/a
<i>Innovation</i>	n/a	n/a
<i>Reputation</i>	n/a	n/a
<i>Other</i>	n/a	n/a

11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 11.1 The only remaining Government Grant received by the Council that requires external certification is in respect of Housing Benefit Subsidy. The Council's external auditors; Ernst & Young have completed their review of the Housing Benefit Subsidy claim (totalling £26.58m).
- 11.2 The auditor's review of the Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim 2017/18 identified seven errors in the calculation of claimant income within the sample of 120 cases reviewed. The auditors have reported that the estimated extrapolated impact of the errors is £1,667 overpayment of benefit; however, the auditors have not adjusted the claim.
- 11.3 The final claim was adjusted by £205 as a result of two other minor adjustments.
- 11.4 This is a positive report for the Council that provides assurance to the Audit Committee in respect of the Council's ability to provide good financial stewardship of taxpayer's money.
- 11.5 The external auditor's Certification of claims and returns report for 2017/18 is attached as Appendix 1 to this report

12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 12.1 None.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

AUD205 Certification of Claims and Returns Annual Report 2016/17

Other Background Documents:-

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 Certification of Claims and Returns Annual Report 2017/18