

REPORT TITLE: CERTIFICATION OF CLAIMS & RETURNS ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

9 JANUARY 2025

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Cutler – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member For Finance and Performance

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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 (HB) subsidy claim for the year ended 31 March 2024. A summary report is provided by KPMG and is attached at Appendix 1 for consideration. It details only one observation for the period.

On page 5 of the report the observation in respect of the council's local scheme for War Disablement Pensions or War Widows Pensions was that the council had underclaimed subsidy on one case to the value of £8.47. The auditor makes clear that this issue had no effect on the value of benefit paid to the claimant. The underclaimed subsidy has now been corrected and reclaimed.

The volume of claims and change of circumstances processed for housing benefit in 2023/24 (just under 10,000) was, again, considerable. Together with the volume of HB paid out to claimants (in excess of £18.6m), this is an extremely positive annual review for the Benefits team.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 Housing Benefit Assurance Process Accountants Report 2023/24.