

Audit and Governance Committee

Date of Meeting:	9 March 2023
Report Title:	Certification of Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim and Teachers Pensions Return 2021/22
Report of:	Alex Thompson, Director of Finance & Customer Services
Report Reference No:	AG/45/21-22
Ward(s) Affected:	All

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present the outcome of the External Auditor's certification process for the 2021/22 Housing Benefit Subsidy claim and for Members to note that the audit work on the Teachers' Pension End of Year Certificate (EOYC) is not yet complete.
- 1.2. The report contributes to the Council's objective of being an open and enabling organisation.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. With regard to the 2021/22 Housing Benefit Subsidy claim the External Auditor's certification process has concluded with no errors or exceptions identified.
- 2.2. The audit work on the 2021/22 Teachers' Pension End of Year Certificate (EOYC) is not yet complete; the outcome of this work will be included in a subsequent report to the Audit & Governance Committee.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That Members note that as a result of the audit testing of the 2021/22 Housing Benefit Subsidy claim no errors or exemptions were found and no recommendations for improvements were made to the DWP.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1. To ensure that Members consider the findings of the certification process.

5. Other Options Considered

- 5.1. Not applicable.

6. Background

- 6.1. KPMG were appointed as external auditors, following a joint procurement with the Greater Manchester Councils, to complete the Housing Benefit (Subsidy) Assurance Process and to certify the Teachers' Pension annual statement of contributions. The contract commenced on 1 April 2019. This is in addition to the main audit of the Council's financial statements which is undertaken by Mazars LLP.
- 6.2. The audit of the Housing Benefits Subsidy Claim was completed in accordance with HBAP Modules 1 and 6 2021/22 issued by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 6.3. Following the completion of the Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim the auditors reported that no errors or exceptions were found as a result of their testing. In addition, no recommendations for improvements to the Council's claims completion process were made to the DWP.
- 6.4. The certification of the Teachers' Pension annual statement of contributions for the year end 31 March 2022 is being carried out in accordance with the Teachers' Pensions Regulations 2010 (SI 2010/990) and The Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014 (SI 2014/512).
- 6.5. At the time of writing this report, the certification process has not yet been completed. Following recent correspondence, KPMG have been provided with final pieces of evidence for review; and it is expected that they will be able to provide their certificate in the near future. The outcome of this work will be included in a subsequent report to the Audit and Governance Committee.

7. Consultation and Engagement

- 7.1. Engagement with the auditors was carried out by the relevant officers.

8. Implications

8.1. Legal

- 8.1.1. There are no legal implications identified.

8.2. Finance

- 8.2.1. The audit fees will be met from within the Council's revenue budget.

8.3. Policy

- 8.3.1. There are no policy implications identified.

8.4. Equality

8.4.1. There are no equality implications identified.

8.5. Human Resources

8.5.1. There are no human resources implications identified.

8.6. Risk Management

8.6.1. The risks associated with the findings of this report relate to a position where the Council may not meet the requirements of the certification process and a financial liability is incurred.

8.7. Rural Communities

8.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

8.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

8.8.1. There are no direct implications for children and young people.

8.9. Public Health

8.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

8.10. Climate Change

8.10.1. There are no direct implications for climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Paul Goodwin Head of Finance & Deputy Chief Finance Officer paul.goodwin@cheshireeast.gov.uk 01270 686185
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	KPMG report for the Housing Benefit Subsidy claim form MPR720A for the year ended 31 March 2022