

Report of the Chief Finance Officer

Report to Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

Date: 28th January 2019

Subject: KPMG Certification of Grants Report 2017/18

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The only grant claim which a council's appointed auditors were required to audit for 2017/18 was the Housing Benefit Subsidy claim. Their report on this audit is attached, and represents the final report from KPMG in their capacity as the council's appointed auditors.
2. KPMG's audit of the Housing Benefit Subsidy claim identified a number of minor errors, as a result of which KPMG have qualified the claim. This is in line with the outcome in previous years.
3. There are also a number of minor grants each year for which the council is required by the awarding body to arrange for an external audit. All such grant claims during the year have been certified without adjustment.

Recommendations

4. Members are asked to receive KPMG's Certification of Grant Claims and Returns report and to note the conclusions arising from their 2017/18 audit work.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To inform members on the outcomes of the work of auditors in respect of the certification of grant claims in 2017/18.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Each year the Government determines which grant claims require audit certification by a council's appointed auditors. For 2017/18, the only such grant claim was the Housing Benefit Subsidy claim.
- 2.2 In addition the Council is required to arrange independent audits of a number of grants requested directly by the granting body. Audit firms are invited to tender for this work on a grant-by-grant basis.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The attached report highlights the audit issues identified by KPMG in respect of the 2017/18 Housing Benefit Subsidy grant claim.
- 3.2 As has been the case in previous years, KPMG have qualified the Housing Benefit Subsidy claim due to minor errors. There was a nil net impact on the value of the claim as a result. KPMG have made no new recommendations as a result of their audit, but have commented that the Council should continue its current approach of providing training to staff and undertaking quality checks in order to minimise the risk of errors.
- 3.3 In addition to the above, during 2017/18 the Council invited tenders for the audit of a number of other grants not covered by the appointed auditor role. To date, all such completed audits have been certified without adjustment.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 This is a factual report based on evidence provided by the external auditors and consequently no public, Ward Member or Councillor consultation or engagement has been sought.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 There are no direct implications for equality, diversity, cohesion and integration arising from this report.

4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 Under this Committee's terms of reference members are required to consider the Council's arrangements relating to external audit, including the receipt of external audit reports. There are no implications for council policies arising from the report.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 Members are asked to note the KPMG audit fee of £15.9k for certification of grants and returns for the financial year 2017/18.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 As this is a factual report based on evidence provided by the external auditors none of the information enclosed is deemed to be sensitive or requesting decisions going forward and therefore raises no issues for access to information or call in.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 In line with KPMG's comments, the Benefits Service will continue to provide training to staff and to undertake quality checks in order to minimise the risk of errors.

5 Conclusions

5.1 All grant claims and returns have been successfully completed and the final approved claims submitted to the relevant granting organisation.

5.2 KPMG's audit work identified a number of minor errors in the Housing Benefit Subsidy claim which required qualification and amendment.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Members are asked to receive KPMG's report on the Certification of Grant Claims and Returns and to note the conclusions arising from their audit work.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.