

14 March 2019		ITEM: 6
Standards and Audit Committee		
Certification of Claims and Returns Report 2017/18		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: Sean Clark, Director of Finance, IT and Legal		
Accountable Assistant Director: Jonathan Wilson, Assistant Director of Finance		
Accountable Director: Sean Clark, Director of Finance, IT and Legal		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

Attached to this paper is a report from Ernst and Young on the Certification of Claims and Returns Annual Report 2017/18. This will be presented by Ernst and Young and sets out the findings from the work conducted on the 2017/18 claims and returns.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the report attached at Appendix 1 is noted.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Certification of Claims and Returns Annual Report 2017/18 was issued in January 2019. The report is specifically completed in relation to the Housing Benefits subsidy claim. There are two further claims and returns requiring an external audit opinion and this work has been completed by Ernst and Young. This work is completed according to the methodology set by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the findings are included within this report.

2.2 The certification of the Housing Benefit subsidy claim was completed in November 2018. The report sets out the detailed findings and is presented to the Committee by Ernst and Young who are happy to receive questions on the report. All findings have been accepted and agreed by officers.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 Ernst and Young were required to certify one claim relating to the year 2017/18. The Housing Benefit claim was audited against a DWP methodology and the summary of the findings are set out below.

- 3.2 The total value of the Housing Benefits subsidy claim was £52.2m – the audit work identified amendments totalling £3,613 as well as two minor errors.
- 3.3 It is pleasing to note the overall quality of the claim is high and the fee for the work on the Housing Benefits subsidy claim continues to fall.
- 3.4 The total proposed fee for the audit of the Housing Benefit claim is £15,664 which represents a decrease of 8.9 per cent relative to 2016/17. This reflects the continued improvement in the processes supporting the completion of the claim compared with the prior year.
- 3.5 Ernst and Young also audit the Teachers' Pension claim and the Pooling of Capital Receipts return. The work is ongoing and has not identified any significant issues to date.
- 3.6 The total fee for this work is proposed to be £19,500 – an increase of 5 per cent compared with the prior year.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to note the findings of the report. Future reports to the Committee will contain updates on the recommendations raised.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 The matters have been considered by this Committee. The detailed findings from the report have been discussed and agreed with relevant officers. They are also subject to the review of the Director of Finance, IT & Legal.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report in terms of the community and delivery of services.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Jonathan Wilson**
Assistant Director of Finance

The financial implications have been noted in the body of the report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**

Assistant Director of Law and Governance

There are no specific legal implications of the report. The claims and returns are certified under section 28 of the Audit Commission Act 1998.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
**Community Engagement and Project
Monitoring Officer**

There are no specific implications from this report.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

9. Appendices to the report

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

Report Author:

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Corporate Finance