

Certification of Claims Report

Executive Portfolio Holder: Councillor Peter Seib
Director: Netta Meadows, Director – Strategy and Support Services
Lead Officer: Paul Fitzgerald, S151 Officer
Paul Matravers, Specialist - Finance
Contact Details: Paul.fitzgerald@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462226
Paul.matravers@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462275

Purpose of the report

1. This report introduces the annual report from our external auditors Grant Thornton on their findings from the signing off of the Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim for 2017/18.

Recommendations

2. The Audit Committee is asked to note the contents of the Certification of Claim Report for 2017/18.

Introduction

3. The Certification of Claims Report is included within the remit of the Audit Committee under its terms of reference as follows:

“To consider the effectiveness of the Council’s risk management arrangements, the control environment and associated anti-fraud and corruption arrangements and seek assurance from management that action has been taken”

“To consider the reports of external audit and inspection agencies and seek assurance from management that action has been taken”

Subsidy Claim

4. The external auditors certify the subsidy claim for the Housing Benefit Scheme. The report from Grant Thornton is attached at Appendix A. The total claim was £37,874,981 and because there were errors the claim has been qualified. Training sessions and additional testing will be undertaken on the areas of concern identified in the report which will reduce claim errors going forward.

Financial Implications

5. The final outcome of the claim was a refund of £9,783 from the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) which is a very small percentage change to the overall claim total and not a significant concern for financial control and reporting.

The indicative scale fee set by PSAA for the Council for 2017/18 was £9,898. Work undertaken is subject to a fee variation due to extra work being carried out. This is currently under discussion with management, and subject to agreement with PSAA. We will report the outcome from this process in a future Audit Committee.

Background Papers

Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim