



**Governance and Audit  
Committee**

**Tuesday, 14 January 2020**

**Subject: Certification of Grants 2018/19**

Report by:

Executive Director of Resources

Contact Officer:

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Corporate Finance Team Leader

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Purpose / Summary:

To present the Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim Audit for 2018/19 from our External Auditor, Mazars.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

- 1. That members accept the contents of the report**
- 2. That members agree to accept this report through the West Lindsey Members' Bulletin in future. It will return to Governance and Audit Committee if there are errors to report which are higher than triviality (£26,000) as detailed annually by our External Auditors, Mazars.**

## IMPLICATIONS

**Legal:** None arising from this report

### **Financial : FIN/145/20/CC**

The cost of the Housing Benefit Subsidy Audit resulted in a charge of £6,100 (£5,796 in 2017/18) the core fee was £5,800 however additional testing was required resulting in an additional half day of work at a cost of £300 and this has been contained within the revenue budget.

An overpayment error of £147.80 was identified during the Audit and will be reclaimed from the recipient.

**Staffing :** None from this report

### **Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :**

None from this report

**Risk Assessment :** None arising from this report

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :** None arising from this report

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

### **Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

**Yes**

**No**

**x**

### **Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

**Yes**

**No**

**x**

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 The summary letter provided in Appendix A summarises the report by our external auditors (Mazars) which was designed to meet the agreed requirements of the Council and the DWP as described in the DWP Housing Benefit Assurance Process (HBAP) reporting framework instruction 2018/19.

1.2 It is important to note that the procedures specified in DWP's HBAP Reporting framework instruction does not constitute an examination made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, the objective of which would be the expression of assurance on the contents of the Council's claim for Housing Benefit subsidy on form MPF720A.

1.3 The headlines of the letter include:

- The Housing Benefits Subsidy Claim had a value of £20.230m
- The Grant HBAP record was signed off on 21 November 2019
- There were no significant issues identified
- An error was found in the assessment of one claim, due to incorrect information being supplied by the claimant. This resulted in an overpayment of £147.80. Officers conducted a full review of all Housing Association claimants with a monthly tenancy and no other errors were identified.
- The final claim was resubmitted to correct the error.
- The final audit cost was £6,100, core fee £5,800 with an additional half day of testing required at an additional £300.