



Carlisle City Council

Report to Audit Committee

Report details

Meeting Date:	8 July 2022
Portfolio:	Finance, Governance and Resources
Key Decision:	Not applicable
Policy and Budget Framework	Yes
Public / Private	Public
Title:	HOUSING BENEFIT SUBSIDY 2020/21
Report of:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND RESOURCES
Report Number	RD 27/22

Purpose / Summary:

This report provides the Audit Committee with details of the completed audit of the Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim for 2020/21 undertaken by Mazars.

Recommendations:

The Audit Committee is asked to note the contents of the Housing Benefits Subsidy Report for 2020/21.

Tracking

Audit Committee:	08 July 2022
Scrutiny:	Not applicable
Council:	Not applicable

1. Background

- 1.1. DWP require the Council to engage a reporting accountant to review its administration of housing benefit awarded to claimants on an annual basis using a standard methodology.
- 1.2. The Council has engaged Mazars to undertake this work, independent of the Council and to report to DWP and the Council on its findings; 2020/21 was the third year that Mazars have undertaken this work.
- 1.3. Mazars reviewed the Council's claim for housing benefit subsidy of £20.045m for the year ended 31 March 2021, including testing of individual cases and other related testing specified by DWP; this is detailed and technical work.
- 1.4. Mazars reported its findings on the 2020/21 claim on 31 March 2022, following the agreement of findings with officers.
- 1.5. The summary from Mazars is contained at **Appendix A**.
- 1.6. The key outcomes to be noted by Members are that there were no significant adverse findings and no impact on the £20.045m subsidy claimed by the Council.

2. Definitions

HBAP – Housing Benefit Assurance Process

CAKE – Cumulative Audit Knowledge and Experience

3. Consultation

3.1 Not applicable

4. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

4.1 The Audit Committee is asked to note the contents of the Housing Benefits Subsidy Report for 2020/21.

5. Contribution to the Carlisle Plan Priorities

5.1 To support the Council in maintaining an effective framework regarding governance, risk management and internal control which underpins the delivery the Council's corporate priorities and helps to ensure efficient use of Council resources.

Contact details:

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Appendices attached to report:

- **Mazars Summary Report – Appendix A**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

Corporate Implications:

Legal - In accordance with the terms of reference of the Audit Committee, Members must consider summaries of specific internal and external audit reports. This report fulfils that requirement

Property Services - None

Finance – Contained within report

Equality - None

Information Governance- None

Summary of HBAP report

Summary of testing arising from Cumulative Assurance Knowledge and Experience

In line with the requirements of HBAP Modules CAKE 40+ testing has been undertaken based upon the preceding HBAP report. We undertook this testing for:

Rent allowances Cell 094 overpaid benefit due to income calculation error No claims were found to be in error.

Summary of Initial Testing

In accordance with HBAP modules an initial sample of cases was completed for all general expenditure cells. We undertook this testing.

Cell 011 Non HRA Rent Rebate

No claims were found to be in error.

The Council had obtained confirmation of claimants' benefits information where appropriate, but not in the way specified in its Risk Based Verification (RBV) policy. We concluded that the value of housing benefit awarded was correct in all cases.

Cell 055 HRA rent rebate

There are no HRA rent rebate cases at Carlisle City Council

Cell 094 Rent Allowance

No claims were found to be in error.

Completion of Modules

Completion of Module 2 – Uprating Checklist

We have completed Module 2 and no issues were identified.

Completion of Module 5 – Software Diagnostic Tool

We have completed the questionnaire for the appropriate software supplier and no issues were identified.

Completion of other tests in Module 1 Modified

Schemes

The required testing was undertaken in relation to modified schemes. We undertook this testing.

An error was identified in the completion of cell 225 due to an administrative error in compiling the claim. This has been amended on the revised claim.

No claims were found to be in error.

Other Tests

There are no matters to report.