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Certification of grants and returns 2011/12

Wiltshire Council

January 2013



**The contacts at KPMG
in connection with this
report are:**

Chris Wilson
Partner

Tel: 0118 964 2269
christopher.wilson@kpmg.co.uk

Darren Gilbert
Director

Tel: 02920 468205
darren.gilbert@kpmg.co.uk

Duncan Laird
Assistant Manager

Tel: 0117 905 4253
duncan.laird@kpmg.co.uk

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Introduction and background	<p>This report summarises the results of work on the certification of the Council's 2011/12 grant claims and returns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ For 2011/12 we certified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – two grants with a total value of £133m; and – three returns with a total value of £156m. 	<p>-</p>
Certification results	<p>We issued unqualified certificates for most grants and returns but qualification was necessary in one case.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This means that we were generally happy that the Council complied in all significant respects with the terms and conditions of the schemes that we reviewed and prepared claims that were fairly stated (following amendment in some cases). However, we identified issues to report to central government on the Housing & Council Tax Benefit grant claim. 	<p>Pages 3 – 4</p>
Audit adjustments	<p>Adjustments were necessary to two of the Council's grants and returns as a result of our certification work this year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All adjustments were insignificant in nature. This is consistent with our findings in the previous year. 	<p>Pages 3 – 4</p>
The Council's arrangements	<p>The Council has generally good arrangements for preparing its grants and returns and supporting our certification work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No specific improvement points have been noted as a result of our certification work in 2011/12 and all recommendations made in 2010/11 have been implemented. 	
Fees	<p>Our overall fee for the certification of grants and returns has been contained within the original estimate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ For each grant claim certified in 2011/12, the fee charged is lower than for 2010/11. 	<p>Page 5</p>

Overall, we certified five grants and returns:

- three were unqualified with no amendment;
- one was unqualified but required some amendment to the final figures; and
- one required a qualification to our audit certificate and minor amendment.

Detailed comments are provided overleaf.

Detailed below is a summary of the key outcomes from our certification work on the Council's 2011/12 grants and returns, showing where either audit amendments were made as a result of our work or where we had to qualify our audit certificate.

A qualification means that issues were identified concerning the Council's compliance with a scheme's requirements that could not be resolved through adjustment. In these circumstances, it is likely that the relevant grant paying body will require further information from the Council to satisfy itself that the full amounts of grant claimed are appropriate.

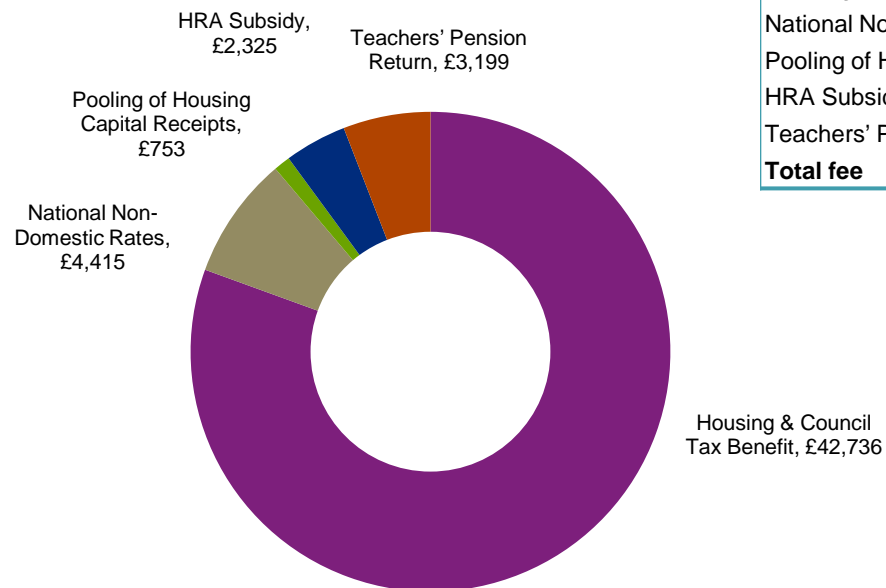
	Comments overleaf	Qualified certificate	Significant adjustment	Minor adjustment	Unqualified certificate
Housing & Council Tax Benefits	1				
National Non-Domestic Rates					
Pooling of Housing Capital Receipts					
HRA Subsidy					
Teachers' Pension Return	2				
		1	0	2	4

This table summarises the key issues behind each of the adjustments or qualifications that were identified on the previous page.

Ref	Summary observations	Financial impact
1	<p>Housing & Council Tax Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A small number of amendments were made to the Housing Benefit claim, resulting in an overall reduction to the total subsidy claimed of £42,788 (for a claim with a total value of £133 million). The majority of amendments related to the misclassification of overpayments. The claim was qualified due to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our sample testing identified one case of under paid rent rebates. The total underpayment only amounted to £6 but the Audit Commission requires that any underpayments (regardless of value) are highlighted through a qualification letter to the Department for Work and Pensions. However, no amendment is required to the grant claim. Our sample testing of rent allowance and council tax benefit overpayments identified errors which, when extrapolated, were not considered to be representative of the likely error in the population as a whole. We are required to report this to the Department of Work and Pensions, which has contacted the Council with details of further work it requires in order to quantify the error. Our certificate was otherwise unqualified for the remainder of this particular grant claim, which covered approximately £133 million of grant income claimed by the Council through the subsidy system. 	- £42,788
2	<p>Teachers' Pension Return</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An amendment was made by management to the original form as it was identified that a digit had been missed off an entry in Part A section 4. 	-

Our overall fee for the certification of grants and returns is slightly above the original estimate but 11% lower than 2010/11.

Breakdown of certification fees 2011/12



Breakdown of fee by grant/return

	2011/12 (£)	2010/11 (£)
Housing & Council Tax Benefits	42,736	46,673
National Non-Domestic rates	4,415	4,763
Pooling of Housing Capital Receipts	753	2,415
HRA Subsidy	2,325	2,803
Teachers' Pension Return	3,199	3,687
Total fee	53,428	60,341

Our initial estimated fees for certifying 2011/12 grants and returns was £52,775. The actual fee charged was slightly above that estimate. For each grant claim certified in 2011/12 the fee charged is lower than for 2010/11, with the total fee being 11% lower than the previous year. This has been mainly achieved through fewer issues being identified from our testing in 2011/12 and key officers being available to answer queries in a more timely manner.



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