

Independent auditor's report to the members of Wirral Council

In our auditor's report issued on 28 January 2022, we explained that we could not formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate for the Wirral Council for the year ended 31 March 2021 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice, until we had:

- Completed the work necessary to issue our Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) Component Assurance statement for the year ended 31 March 2021, and
- Completed our work on the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and issued our Auditor's Annual Report.

We have now completed this work.

Opinion on the financial statements

In our auditor's report for the year ended 31 March 2021 issued on 28 January 2022 we reported that, in our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority as at 31 March 2021 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

No matters have come to our attention since that date that would have a material impact on the financial statements on which we gave this opinion.

Opinion on the pension fund financial statements

In our auditor's report for the year ended 31 March 2021 issued on 28 January 2022 we reported that, in our opinion the pension fund financial statements of Merseyside Pension Fund:

- give a true and fair view of the financial transactions of the pension fund during the year ended 31 March 2021 and of the amount and disposition at that date of the fund's assets and liabilities;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

No matters have come to our attention since that date that would have a material impact on the financial statements on which we gave this opinion.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements - the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

In our auditor's report for the year ended 31 March 2021 issued on 20 July 2022 we reported that:

- we have nothing to report in respect of whether the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2021 except on 20 July 2022 we identified the following significant weaknesses in arrangements in relation to:
 - How the Council managed the risks to its financial sustainability. The key recommendations made were that the Council should implement the recommendations outlined in the CIPFA Local Government Finance report; and that the Council should review its capital programme to ensure that the revenue implications of additional borrowing are affordable.
 - Governance arrangements both at the entity level and within the Council overall. The key recommendation made was the governance arrangements for the oversight of the regeneration

agenda and in issuing financial guarantees for leases and acquisition of assets should be significantly strengthened.

No matters have come to our attention since that date that would have resulted in any additional exception reporting on the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements – Audit certificate

We certify that we have completed the audit of Wirral Council for the year ended 31 March 2021 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the members of the Authority, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and as set out in paragraph 43 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Authority's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Authority and the Authority's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Mark Stocks

Mark Stocks, Key Audit Partner
for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP, Local Auditor

Birmingham

12 June 2023