

Independent auditor's report to the members of St Helens Borough Council

Audit completion

Opinion on the financial statements

In our auditor's report, issued on 26 November 2025, for St Helens Borough Council (the 'Authority') for the year ended 31 March 2025, we reported an unqualified opinion on the Authority's financial statements.

We explained that we could not formally conclude the audit and issue the audit certificate for the Authority for the year ended 31 March 2025, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice, until we had:

- received confirmation from the National Audit Office (NAO) that the audit of the Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) is complete for the year ended 31 March 2025. The NAO has now concluded their work in respect of WGA for the year ended 31 March 2025 and confirmed that audit certificates held open in relation to this can be issued. We are therefore satisfied all audit work necessary has been completed.

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

Matter on which we are required to report by exception – the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

Under the Code of Audit Practice, we are required to report to you if, in our opinion, we have not been able to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2025.

In our auditor's report for the year ended 31 March 2025 issued on 26 November 2025 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 2025 except on the 29 October 2025 we identified a significant weakness in the Authority's arrangements to secure financial sustainability. This was in relation to managing cost and demand in the Children and Young People Portfolio.
We recommended that the Council places an urgent organisational focus on developing and implementing effective mitigations to manage escalating demand and cost in relation to Children's Services.

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 2025.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements – audit certificate

We certify that we have completed the audit of St Helens Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2025 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 85 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.

Michael Green

Michael Green, Key Audit Partner

for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP, Local Auditor

Manchester

9 July 2026