

Independent auditor's report to the members of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Audit completion

Opinion on the financial statements

In our auditor's report, issued on 29 January 2026, for Knowsley Metropolitan 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 29 January 2026 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 10 February 2025 we identified a significant weakness in the Authority's arrangements for improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. In November 2024, Ofsted undertook a focused inspection of the Authority's children's services and identified serious and widespread weaknesses.
We recommend the Authority should continue to deliver and embed improvements to Children's Services, building on the solid foundations put in place and positive improvement trajectory to date
- In addition, on the 8 December 2025 we identified a new significant weakness in how the Authority's plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services. This was in relation to the Authority's growing deficit on the Dedicated Schools Grant and significant cumulative deficit forecast at March 2026.
We recommend the Authority mitigating the forecast overspend for 2025/26 in order to protect reserves

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements – audit certificate

We certify that we have completed the audit of Knowsley Metropolitan 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.

John Farrar

John Farrar, Key Audit Partner

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

Liverpool

16 September 2026