

Independent auditor's report to the members of Kent County Council

In our auditor's report, issued on 6 November 2025, for Kent County Council (the 'Authority') for the year ended 31 March 2025, we reported an unqualified opinion on the Authority and Group'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:

- Completed our work in respect of a legal query with regard to the Council's ownership of certain assets;
- Completed the work necessary in relation to the Authority's consolidation returns and 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. This work is now complete and 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.

Opinion on the pension fund financial statements

In our auditor's report, issued on 6 November 2025, for Kent Pension Fund (the 'Pension Fund') for the year ended 31 March 2025, we reported an unqualified opinion on the Pension Fund's financial statements.

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 6 November 2025 we reported that:

We have nothing to report in respect of the above matter except on 12 December 2024 we identified two significant weaknesses in the Authority's arrangements for financial sustainability:

- The Authority continued to experience a stubbornly high spend on Adult Social Care and Health. We recommended that the Authority should explore options for increased efficiency in the Adult Social Care and Health directorate in 2024/25 and future years. The significant cost pressures have continued in 2024/25, with the position deteriorating in the financial year. Therefore, the significant weakness in arrangements remains in place for the year ended 31 March 2025. We have again recommended that the Authority should explore further options for increased efficiency in the Adult Social Care and Health service as reducing current overspends will be essential if reserves are to remain robust in the future.
- The Authority is party to a 'safety valve' agreement with the Department for Education with regards to the Dedicated Schools Grant. Under this agreement, the Authority is expected to contribute £80m and keep to an agreed profile of deficit reduction, and the Department for Education will provide additional funding until March 2027/28. We recommended that the Authority should work holistically to reduce spend on the high needs block. At 31 March 2025

the Authority had fallen behind its forecast deficit profile for Dedicated Schools Grant, having been slightly ahead of it in March 2024. A temporary 'statutory override' on accounting treatment has been implemented nationally, which means that that local authorities do not need to offset deficits on the Dedicated Schools Grant against general fund reserve. This is due to expire in March 2028, and the Authority is forecasting a residual deficit on the Dedicated Schools Grant at that point of over £30m. We recommend that the Authority should ensure that its Dedicated Schools Grant management plan is sufficient to address the legacy deficit as well as control the in-year pressure on the high needs block.

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 Kent County 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.

Paul Dossett

Paul Dossett, Key Audit Partner

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

London

14 September 2026