

Policy and Corporate

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Your ref
Our ref
Date 25 July 2017

Dear Kevin

Letter of Representation – 2016/17 financial year

This letter of representations is provided in connection with your audit of the consolidated and council financial statements of Colchester Borough Council (“the Group and Council”) for the year ended 31 March 2017. We recognise that obtaining representations from us concerning the information contained in this letter is a significant procedure in enabling you to form an opinion as to whether the consolidated and council financial statements give a true and fair view of the Group and Council financial position of Colchester Borough Council as of 31 March 2017 and of its financial performance (or operations) and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with, for the Group and Council, CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2016/17.

We understand that the purpose of your audit of our consolidated and council financial statements is to express an opinion thereon and that your audit was conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing, which involves an examination of the accounting system, internal control and related data to the extent you considered necessary in the circumstances, and is not designed to identify - nor necessarily be expected to disclose - all fraud, shortages, errors and other irregularities, should any exist.

Accordingly, we make the following representations, which are true to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made such inquiries as we considered necessary for the purpose of appropriately informing ourselves:

A. Financial Statements and Financial Records

1. We have fulfilled our responsibilities, under the relevant statutory authorities, for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with, for the Group and Council the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2016/17.
2. We acknowledge, as members of management of the Group and Council, our responsibility for the fair presentation of the consolidated and council financial statements. We believe the consolidated and council financial statements referred

to above give a true and fair view of the financial position, financial performance (or results of operations) and cash flows of the Group and Council, in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2016/17 and are free of material misstatements, including omissions. We have approved the consolidated and council financial statements.

3. The significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the Group and Council financial statements are appropriately described in the Group and Council financial statements.
4. As members of management of the Group and Council, we believe that the Group and Council have a system of internal controls adequate to enable the preparation of accurate financial statements in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2016/17 for the Group and the Council that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.
5. There are no unadjusted audit differences identified during the current audit and pertaining to the latest period presented.

B. Fraud

1. We acknowledge that we are responsible for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal controls to prevent and detect fraud.
2. We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the consolidated and council financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
3. We have no knowledge of any fraud or suspected fraud involving management or other employees who have a significant role in the Group or Council's internal controls over financial reporting. In addition, we have no knowledge of any fraud or suspected fraud involving other employees in which the fraud could have a material effect on the consolidated or council financial statements. We have no knowledge of any allegations of financial improprieties, including fraud or suspected fraud, (regardless of the source or form and including without limitation, any allegations by "whistleblowers") which could result in a misstatement of the consolidated or council financial statements or otherwise affect the financial reporting of the Group or Council.

C. Compliance with Laws and Regulations

1. We have disclosed to you all identified or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the consolidated and council financial statements.

D. Information Provided and Completeness of Information and Transactions

1. We have provided you with:
 - Access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;

- Additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
 - Unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
2. All material transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the consolidated and council financial statements.
 3. We have made available to you all minutes of the meetings of Council, Cabinet and Governance and Audit Committee (or summaries of actions of recent meetings for which minutes have not yet been prepared) held through the year to the most recent meeting on the following date: 25 July 2017.
 4. We confirm the completeness of information provided regarding the identification of related parties. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Group and Council's related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware, including sales, purchases, loans, transfers of assets, liabilities and services, leasing arrangements, guarantees, non-monetary transactions and transactions for no consideration for the year ended, as well as related balances due to or from such parties at the year end. These transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in the consolidated and council financial statements.
 5. We believe that the significant assumptions we used in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.
 6. We have disclosed to you, and the Group and Council has complied with, all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the consolidated and council financial statements in the event of non-compliance, including all covenants, conditions or other requirements of all outstanding debt.

E. Liabilities and Contingencies

1. All liabilities and contingencies, including those associated with guarantees, whether written or oral, have been disclosed to you and are appropriately reflected in the consolidated and council financial statements.
2. We have informed you of all outstanding and possible litigation and claims, whether or not they have been discussed with legal counsel.
3. We have recorded and/or disclosed, as appropriate, all liabilities related litigation and claims, both actual and contingent, and have disclosed in Note 39 to the consolidated and council financial statements all guarantees that we have given to third parties.
4. No other claims in connection with litigation have been or are expected to be received.

F. Subsequent Events

1. Other than that described in Note 8 to the consolidated and council financial statements, there have been no events subsequent to year end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the consolidated and council financial statements or notes thereto.

G. Group audits

1. Necessary adjustments have been made to eliminate all material intra-group unrealised profits on transactions amongst council, subsidiary undertakings and associated undertakings.

H. Other information

1. We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of the other information. The other information comprises of the Annual Governance Statement and the Narrative Report.
2. We confirm that the content contained within the other information is consistent with the financial statements.

I. Accounting Estimates

Valuation of Pension Asset/Liabilities and Property, Plant and Equipment Estimates

1. We believe that the measurement processes, including related assumptions and models, used to determine the accounting estimates have been consistently applied and are appropriate in the context of CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2016/17.
2. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the valuation of Pension Asset/Liabilities and Property, Plant and Equipment appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out specific courses of action on behalf of the Group and Council.
3. We confirm that the disclosures made in the financial statements with respect to the accounting estimates are complete and made in accordance with in the context of CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2016/17.
4. We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimates and disclosures in the financial statements due to subsequent events.

J. Use of the Work of a Specialist

1. We agree with the findings of the specialists that we engaged to evaluate the valuation of non-current assets and investment properties and have adequately considered the qualifications of the specialists in determining the amounts and disclosures included in the financial statements and the underlying accounting records. We did not give or cause any instructions to be given to the specialists with respect to the values or amounts derived in an attempt to bias their work, and we are not otherwise aware of any matters that have had an effect on the independence or objectivity of the specialists.

K. Retirement benefits

1. On the basis of the process established by us and having made appropriate enquiries, we are satisfied that the actuarial assumptions underlying the scheme liabilities are consistent with our knowledge of the business. All significant retirement benefits and all settlements and curtailments have been identified and properly accounted for.

Signed on behalf of Colchester Borough Council

I confirm that this letter has been discussed and agreed by the Governance and Audit Committee on 25 July 2017.

Sean Plummer
Strategic Finance Manager – Section 151 Officer

Cllr Nick Barlow
Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee