

# Colchester Borough Council

Audit Results Report - ISA (UK and Ireland) 260  
for the year ended 31 March 2016

July 2016

Ernst & Young LLP



Building a better  
working world

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In April 2015 Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) issued “Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies 2015-16”. It is available from the Chief Executive of each audited body and via the PSAA website ([www.psaa.co.uk](http://www.psaa.co.uk))

The Statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between appointed auditors and audited bodies. It summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies begin and end, and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas.

The ‘Terms of Appointment from 1 April 2015’ issued by PSAA sets out additional requirements that auditors must comply with, over and above those set out in the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice (the Code) and statute, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature.

This Audit Results Report is prepared in the context of the Statement of responsibilities. This report is intended solely for the use of the Members of the audited body. We, as appointed auditor, take no responsibility to any third party.

Our Complaints Procedure – If at any time you would like to discuss with us how our service to you could be improved, or if you are dissatisfied with the service you are receiving, you may take the issue up with your usual partner or director contact. If you prefer an alternative route, please contact Steve Varley, our Managing Partner, 1 More London Place, London SE1 2AF. We undertake to look into any complaint carefully and promptly and to do all we can to explain the position to you. Should you remain dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, you may of course take matters up with our professional institute. We can provide further information on how you may contact our professional institute.

# 1. Executive summary

The National Audit Office's Code of Audit Practice (the Code) requires us to report to those charged with governance – the Governance and Audit Committee – on the work we have carried out to discharge our statutory audit responsibilities together with any governance issues identified. This report summarises the findings from the 2015/16 audit which is substantially complete. It includes messages arising from our audit of your financial statements and the results of the work we have undertaken to assess your arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources.

Below are the results and conclusions on the significant areas of the audit process.

Status of the audit	<p>We have substantially completed our audit of the financial statements of Colchester Borough Council for the year ended 2015/16. Subject to satisfactory completion of the outstanding items included in Appendix A we will issue an audit opinion in the form which appears in Appendix D:</p> <p>We have performed the procedures outlined in our Audit Plan and anticipate issuing an unqualified opinion on the Authority's financial statements.</p> <p>We expect to conclude that you have put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in your use of resources.</p> <p>We expect to issue the audit certificate at the same time as the audit opinion. However, this is subject to the completion of procedures required by the National Audit Office (NAO) regarding the Whole of Government Accounts submission. These have yet to be performed as the Group Audit Instruction has yet to be issued following national delays in the WGA process.</p>
Audit differences	<p>There are no unadjusted audit differences.</p> <p>Our audit identified a number of minor amendments to disclosures which our team have highlighted to management for amendment. These have been corrected during the course of our work</p>
Scope and materiality	<p>In our audit plan, presented at the Governance and Audit Committee meeting on 28 June, we communicated that our audit procedures would be performed using a materiality of £2.9m. We have reassessed this based on the actual results for the financial year and there has been no change to the materiality level we have applied. The basis of our assessment is 2% of gross operating expenditure, which has remained consistent with prior years.</p> <p>The threshold for reporting audit differences which impact the financial statements has also not changed.</p> <p>We carried out our work in accordance with our Audit Plan.</p>
Significant audit risks	<p>We identified the following audit risks during the planning phase of our audit, and reported these to you in our audit plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of fraud in revenue recognition</li> <li>• Risk of management override.</li> </ul> <p>The 'addressing audit risks' section of this report sets out how we have gained audit assurance over those issues.</p>

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Other reporting issues	We have no other matters we wish to report.
Control observations	We have not identified any significant deficiencies in the design or operation of an internal control that might result in a material misstatement in your financial statements of which you are not aware.

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We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Council's staff for their assistance during the course of our work.

Kevin Suter

Executive Director  
For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP

## 2. Responsibilities and purpose of our work

### The Council's responsibilities

The Council is responsible for preparing and publishing its Statement of Accounts, accompanied by the Annual Governance Statement (AGS). In the AGS, the Council reports publicly on the extent to which it complies with its own code of governance, including how it has monitored and evaluated the effectiveness of its governance arrangements in the year, and on any planned changes in the coming period.

The Council is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

### Purpose of our work

Our audit was designed to:

- Express an opinion on the 2015/16 financial statements and the consistency of other information published with them;
- Report on an exception basis on the Annual Governance Statement;
- Consider and report any matters that prevent us being satisfied that the Council had put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources (the value for money conclusion); and
- Discharge our statutory duties and responsibilities as established by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and Code of Audit Practice.

In addition, this report contains our findings related to the areas of audit emphasis and any views on significant deficiencies in internal control or the Council's accounting policies and key judgments.

Alongside our work on the financial statements, we also review and report to the National Audit Office on your Whole of Government Accounts return. The extent of our review and the nature of our report are specified by the National Audit Office.

### 3. Financial statements audit

#### Addressing audit risks

We identified the following audit risks during the planning phase of our audit, and reported these to you in our Audit Plan. Here, we set out how we have gained audit assurance over those issues.

A significant audit risk in the context of the audit of the financial statements is an inherent risk with both a higher likelihood of occurrence and a higher magnitude of effect should it occur and which requires special audit consideration. For significant risks, we obtain an understanding of the entity's controls relevant to each risk and assess the design and implementation of the relevant controls.

Significant Risks (including fraud risks)	Audit procedures performed	Assurance gained and issues arising
<p><b>Risk of management override</b></p> <p>As identified in ISA (UK and Ireland) 240, management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of its ability to manipulate accounting records directly or indirectly and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. We identify and respond to this fraud risk on every audit engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tested the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements;</li> <li>Reviewed accounting estimates for evidence of management bias, specially the NNDR provision as it has been calculated by council staff for the first time this year;</li> <li>Evaluated the business rationale for any significant unusual transactions; and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We selected a number of journals to review based on our risk assessment. We have agreed these to other areas of our audit work or other supporting evidence. We have no concerns to raise.</li> <li>Our review of estimates has not identified evidence of management bias</li> <li>We have not identified any unusual business transactions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Risk of fraud in revenue recognition</b></p> <p>Under ISA240 there is a presumed risk that revenue may be misstated due to improper recognition of revenue.</p> <p>In the public sector, this requirement is modified by Practice Note 10, issued by the Financial Reporting Council, which states that auditors should also consider the risk that material misstatements may occur by the manipulation of expenditure recognition.</p> <p>For local authorities the potential for the incorrect classification of revenue spend as capital is a particular area where there is a risk of incorrect recognition, and also management override.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewed and tested revenue and expenditure recognition policies;</li> <li>Developed a testing strategy to test material revenue and expenditure streams including payroll, housing benefits, rents repairs and maintenance accounts payable and accounts receivable; and</li> <li>Reviewed and tested revenue cut-off at the period end date.</li> <li>Reviewed capital expenditure on property, plant and equipment to ensure it meets the relevant accounting requirements to be capitalised.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have tested revenue recognition and cut off as part of income and expenditure testing and have not identified any issues with classification or recognition of expenditure.</li> <li>We have reviewed capital expenditure on property plant and equipment and found no issues with the classification as capital expenditure.</li> </ul>

We also identified the following audit risks during the planning phase of our audit, and reported these to you in our Audit Plan. Here, we set out how we have gained audit assurance over those issues.

Other Risks	Audit procedures performed	Assurance gained and issues arising
<p>The Council's brought forward provision for business rates appeals is significant, totalling £5m and was predicted to increase to £7m at year end. This provision is subject to significant estimation techniques as well as precedent set by rate payers who may have successfully appealed in other parts of the country. Significant national appeals are currently in progress, mainly affecting GP surgeries and NHS trusts, which may result in the need for the Council to recognise additional provision for the 2015-16 financial year. As appeals are made to the Valuation Office (VOA), the Council may not be aware of the level of claims lodged in the year, as well as those claims successfully lodged elsewhere, and there is therefore a risk that the provision could be materially misstated or incomplete.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed the Council's methodology underpinning the provision for business rate appeals to ensure it has been calculated on a reasonable basis in line with IAS37;</li> <li>• ensured the provision is supported by appropriate evidence and that the level of estimation uncertainty is adequately disclosed; and</li> <li>• reviewed the completeness and valuation of the provision, taking into account information held by the VOA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have reviewed the methodology and supporting evidence to confirm that the approach the council has taken is robust.</li> <li>• In addition we also carried out testing to gain assurance that the list of properties provided for was complete.</li> </ul>

## Other matters

As required by ISA (UK&I) 260 and other ISAs specifying communication requirements, we are required to communicate to you significant findings from the audit and other matters that are significant to you oversight of the Council's financial reporting process, including the following:

- Qualitative aspects of your accounting practices; estimates and disclosures;
- Matters specifically required by other auditing standards to be communicated to those charged with governance. For example, issues about fraud, compliance with laws and regulations, external confirmations and related party transactions;
- Any significant difficulties encountered during the audit; and
- Other audit matters of governance interest

We have no matters we wish to report.



## **Control themes and observations**

It is the responsibility of the Council to develop and implement systems of internal financial control and to put in place proper arrangements to monitor their adequacy and effectiveness in practice. Our responsibility as your auditor is to consider whether the Council has put adequate arrangements in place to satisfy itself that the systems of internal financial control are both adequate and effective in practice.

We have tested the controls of the Council only to the extent necessary for us to complete our audit. We are not expressing an opinion on the overall effectiveness of internal control.

We have not identified any significant deficiencies in the design or operation of an internal control that might result in a material misstatement in your financial statements of which you are not aware.

We have reviewed the Annual Governance Statement and can confirm that it not misleading or inconsistent with other information forthcoming from the audit or our knowledge of the Council.

## **Request for written representations**

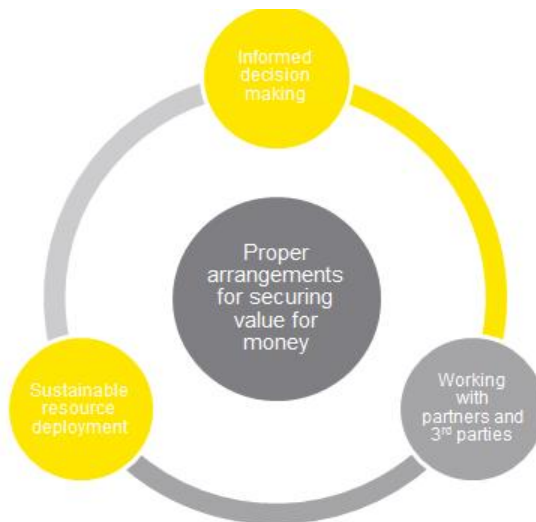
We have requested a management representation letter to gain management's confirmation in relation to a number of matters, as outlined in Appendix E. In addition to the standard representations, we have requested the following specific representations:

## **Whole of Government Accounts**

Alongside our work on the financial statements, we also review and report to the National Audit Office on your Whole of Government Accounts return. The extent of our review and the nature of our report are specified by the National Audit Office.

There has been a national delay in the WGA completion process, and Group Audit Instruction, and therefore we are yet to conclude our work in this area. We will report any matters that arise to the Governance and Audit Committee.

## 4. Value for money



We are required to consider whether the Council has put in place 'proper arrangements' to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on its use of resources. This is known as our value for money conclusion.

Proper arrangements are defined by statutory guidance issued by the National Audit Office. They comprise your arrangements to:

- ▶ Take informed decisions;
- ▶ Deploy resources in a sustainable manner; and
- ▶ Work with partners and other third parties.

### Overall conclusion

We identified a significant risk in relation to these arrangements regarding sustainable resource deployment.

We have performed the procedures outlined in our audit plan. We did not identify any significant weaknesses in the Council's arrangements

We therefore expect to conclude that you have put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in your use of resources.

### Significant risks

The table below presents the findings of our work in response to the risk areas in our audit plan.

VFM risk identified within our audit plan	To date the Council has responded well to the financial pressure resulting from the continuing economic downturn. However, the Council continues to face significant financial challenges over the next three to four years, with a forecasted underlying budget gap of £2.7m by 2019-20. Given the scale of the savings needed, there is a risk that savings plans to bridge this gap are not robust and/or achievable.
Impacts arrangements for:	Deploying resources in a sustainable manner

Key findings

We reviewed the Council's 2016/17 budget and the medium term forecast, assessing the extent of the savings plans in place. This took into account the Council's historic record.

In 2015/16 the Council continued its track record of achieving its annual budget, delivering a surplus of £0.8m, including approximately £2.2m of savings and additional income. The general fund balance now stands at £10.3m as at 31 March 2016,

The 2016/17 budget is balanced, through the use of efficiencies and income plans. Although it is still relatively early in the financial year, we assessed these as reasonably based taking into account the Council's track record of delivering savings over the recent financial periods. While incrementally savings can become harder to achieve over time, the Council's performance in delivering its plans gives confidence that it can continue to do so.

We also reviewed the key assumptions in the budget and MTFF, which adequately took into account the economic environment at that time for business rate projections, and the forecast for reduced central government funding and the potential four-year settlement.

The cumulative budget gap, taking into account the 2015/16 outturn, is now forecast at £2.8m to 2019/20. Compared to a gross expenditure of approximately £135m per annum, we judge this to be a manageable budget gap.

Therefore, based on the known information as at the end of the financial year, we assess the Council to have adequate arrangements.

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## Appendix A – Outstanding matters

The following items relating to the completion of our audit procedures are outstanding at the date of the release of this report

Item	Actions to resolve	Responsibility
Management representation letter	Receipt of signed letter of representation.	Management, and Governance and Audit Committee
Accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporation of EY review comments on disclosure notes.</li> <li>• Accounts re-certified by RFO.</li> <li>• Approval of accounts by Governance and Audit Committee.</li> </ul>	EY, management and Governance and Audit Committee
Subsequent events review	Completion of the subsequent events procedures to the date of signing the audit report.	EY and management
Final review procedures	Management and EY to work together to complete any outstanding work arising as a result of outstanding review	EY and management
Receipt of investment confirmations.	Management and EY to continue to chase investment managers for these	EY and management
IAS Assurance	Awaiting final IAS19 assurance from auditors of Essex Pension Fund	EY

## Appendix B – Independence

We confirm there are no changes in our assessment of independence since our confirmation in our Audit Plan dated 10 June 2016.

We complied with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors and the requirements of the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA)'s Terms of Appointment. In our professional judgement the firm is independent and the objectivity of the audit engagement partner and audit staff has not been compromised within the meaning of regulatory and professional requirements.

We confirm that we are not aware of any relationships that may affect the independence and objectivity of the firm that we are required by auditing and ethical standards to report to you.

We consider that our independence in this context is a matter that should be reviewed by both you and ourselves. It is therefore important that you consider the facts of which you are aware and come to a view. If you wish to discuss any matters concerning our independence, we will be pleased to do so at the forthcoming meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee on 26 July 2016.

We confirm that we have met the reporting requirements to the Governance and Audit Committee, as 'those charged with governance' under International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) 260 – Communication with those charged with governance. Our communication plan to meet these requirements was set out in our Audit Plan of 10 June 2016.

## Appendix C – Auditor fees

The table below sets out the scale fee and our final proposed audit fees.

Description	Proposed final Fee 2015/16 £	Scale Fee 2015/16 £	Variation comments
Total Audit Fee – Code work	62,582	62,582	
Certification of claims and returns – work not yet completed*	12,557	12,557	
Non-audit work Housing pooled capital receipts – work not yet completed	2,350	-	Non-audit work is not include within the scale fee.

*\* Our certification of the Housing Benefit claim will be completed to the 30 November 2016 deadline, and the final fee concluded at that time.*

Our actual audit fee is in line with the scale fee set by the PSAA at this point in time, subject to satisfactory clearance of the outstanding work.

We confirm we are planning to undertake non-audit work outside of the PSAA's requirements. This is for the certification of the Councils Pooled housing capital receipts return to DCLG.

## Appendix D – Draft audit report

### Independent auditor's report to the members of Colchester Borough Council

#### Opinion on the Authority's financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of Colchester Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2016 under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The financial statements comprise the:

- Authority and Group Movement in Reserves Statement,
- Authority and Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement,
- Authority and Group Balance Sheet,
- Authority and Group Cash Flow Statement,
- Related notes 1 to 42 and G1 to G13,
- Housing Revenue Account Income and Expenditure Statement, the Movement on the Housing Revenue Account Statement and related notes H1 to H13, and
- Collection Fund and the related notes C1 to C5

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2015/16.

This report is made solely to the members of Colchester Borough Council, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and for no other purpose, as set out in paragraph 43 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. 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.

#### Respective responsibilities of the Strategic Finance Officer and auditor

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts set out on page 20, the Strategic Finance Manager is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2015/16, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

#### Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Authority and Group's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Strategic Finance Manager, and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition, we read all the financial and non-financial information in the Statement of Accounts 2015/16 to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in

the course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

### **Opinion on financial statements**

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of Colchester Borough Council and Group as at 31 March 2016 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended; and
- have been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2015/16.

### **Opinion on other matters**

In our opinion, the information given in the Statement of Accounts 2015/16 for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

### **Matters on which we report by exception**

We report to you if:

- in our opinion the annual governance statement is misleading or inconsistent with other information forthcoming from the audit or our knowledge of the Council;
- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- we make written recommendations to the audited body under Section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- we make an application to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law under Section 28 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- we issue an advisory notice under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; or
- we make an application for judicial review under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

We have nothing to report in these respects

### **Conclusion on Colchester Borough Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources**

#### ***Authority's responsibilities***

The Authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and to review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

#### ***Auditor's responsibilities***

We are required under Section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) requires us to report to you our conclusion relating to proper arrangements.

We report if significant matters have come to our attention which prevent us from concluding that the Authority has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.



***Scope of the review of arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources***

We have undertaken our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance on the specified criterion issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) in November 2015, as to whether Colchester Borough Council had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people. The Comptroller and Auditor General determined this criterion as that necessary for us to consider under the Code of Audit Practice in satisfying ourselves whether the whether Colchester Borough Council put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2016.

We planned our work in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice. Based on our risk assessment, we undertook such work as we considered necessary to form a view on whether, in all significant respects, Colchester Borough Council had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

***Conclusion***

On the basis of our work, having regard to the guidance issued by the C&AG in November 2015, we are satisfied that, in all significant respects, Colchester Borough Council put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2016.

***Certificate***

We certify that we have completed the audit of the accounts of Colchester Borough Council in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office.

*Kevin Suter*

*for and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP, Appointed Auditor*

*Luton*

*26 July 2016*

## Appendix E – Management representation letter

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 2016. 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 2016 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 2015/16

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 2015/16.
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 2015/16 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 2015/16 for the Group and Council that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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 the 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: 26 July 2016.
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.<sup>1</sup>
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 claims in connection with litigation have been or are expected to be received.<sup>2</sup>

#### **F. Subsequent Events**

1. Other than described in Note 7 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.

Yours faithfully,

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Strategic Finance Manager

<sup>1</sup> ISA (UK and Ireland) 501.12

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Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee

## Appendix F – Required communications with the Governance and Audit Committee

There are certain communications that we must provide to the Governance and Audit Committee. These are detailed here:

Required communication	Reference
<b>Planning and audit approach</b> Communication of the planned scope and timing of the audit, including any limitations.	Audit Plan
<b>Significant findings from the audit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Our view about the significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures</li> <li>▶ Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit</li> <li>▶ Significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed with management</li> <li>▶ Written representations that we are seeking</li> <li>▶ Expected modifications to the audit report</li> <li>▶ Other matters if any, significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process</li> </ul>	Audit Results Report
<b>Going concern</b> Events or conditions identified that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Whether the events or conditions constitute a material uncertainty</li> <li>▶ Whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements</li> <li>▶ The adequacy of related disclosures in the financial statements</li> </ul>	No conditions or events were identified, either individually or in aggregate, that indicated there could be doubt about Colchester Borough Council's ability to continue as a going concern for the 12 months from the date of our report.
<b>Misstatements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion</li> <li>▶ The effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods</li> <li>▶ A request that any uncorrected misstatement be corrected</li> <li>▶ In writing, corrected misstatements that are significant</li> </ul>	Audit Results Report
<b>Fraud</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Enquiries of the audit committee to determine whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity</li> <li>▶ Any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that a fraud may exist</li> <li>▶ A discussion of any other matters related to fraud</li> </ul>	We have made enquiries of management and the Audit & Governance Committee. We have not become aware of any fraud or illegal acts during our audit.
<b>Related parties</b> Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the entity's related parties including, when applicable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Non-disclosure by management</li> <li>▶ Inappropriate authorisation and approval of transactions</li> <li>▶ Disagreement over disclosures</li> <li>▶ Non-compliance with laws and regulations</li> <li>▶ Difficulty in identifying the party that ultimately controls the entity</li> </ul>	We have no matters we wish to report regarding related parties.

Required communication	Reference
<b>External confirmations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Management's refusal for us to request confirmations</li> <li>▶ Inability to obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence from other procedures</li> </ul>	We have received all requested confirmations, other than where outlined in Appendix A.
<b>Consideration of laws and regulations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Audit findings regarding non-compliance where the non-compliance is material and believed to be intentional. This communication is subject to compliance with legislation on tipping off</li> <li>▶ Enquiry of the audit committee into possible instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements and that the audit committee may be aware of</li> </ul>	We have not identified any material instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations.
<b>Independence</b> Communication of all significant facts and matters that bear on EY's objectivity and independence  Communication of key elements of the audit engagement partner's consideration of independence and objectivity such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The principal threats</li> <li>▶ Safeguards adopted and their effectiveness</li> <li>▶ An overall assessment of threats and safeguards</li> <li>▶ Information about the general policies and process within the firm to maintain objectivity and independence</li> </ul>	Audit Plan and Audit Results Report
<b>Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit</b>	Annual Audit Letter/Audit Results Report
<b>Group audits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ An overview of the type of work to be performed on the financial information of the components</li> <li>▶ An overview of the nature of the group audit team's planned involvement in the work to be performed by the component auditors on the financial information of significant components</li> <li>▶ Instances where the group audit team's evaluation of the work of a component auditor gave rise to a concern about the quality of that auditor's work</li> <li>▶ Any limitations on the group audit, for example, where the group engagement team's access to information may have been restricted</li> <li>▶ Fraud or suspected fraud involving group management, component management, employees who have significant roles in group-wide controls or others where the fraud resulted in a material misstatement of the group financial statements</li> </ul>	Audit Plan Audit Results Report
<b>Fee Information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Breakdown of fee information at the agreement of the initial audit plan</li> <li>▶ Breakdown of fee information at the completion of the audit</li> </ul>	Audit Plan Audit Results Report Annual Audit Letter if considered necessary
<b>Certification work</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Summary of certification work undertaken</li> </ul>	Certification Report

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