

Mazars LLP  
Rivergreen Centre  
Aykley Heads  
Durham  
DH1 5TS

My Ref: DC/SLJ  
Your Ref:  
Date: 28 July 2017

Dear Sirs

### **Gateshead Council – Audit for year ended 31 March 2017**

This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the statement of accounts for Gateshead Council (“the Council”) for the year ended 31 March 2017 for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the statement of accounts give a true and fair view in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2016/17 (the Code).

I confirm that the following representations are made on the basis of enquiries of management and staff with relevant knowledge and experience (and, where appropriate, inspection of supporting documentation) sufficient to satisfy ourselves that I can properly make each of the following representations to you.

#### **My responsibility for the statement of accounts and accounting information**

I believe that I have fulfilled my responsibilities for the true and fair presentation and preparation of the statement of accounts in accordance with the Code.

#### **My responsibility to provide and disclose relevant information**

I have provided you with:

- access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the statement of accounts such as records, documentation and other material;
- additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
- unrestricted access to individuals within the Council you determined it was necessary to contact in order to obtain audit evidence.

I confirm as Strategic Director, Corporate Resources that I have taken all the necessary steps to make me aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that you, as auditors, are aware of this information. As far as I am aware there is no relevant audit information of which you, as auditors, are unaware.

## **Accounting Records**

I confirm that all transactions that have a material effect on the financial statements have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements. All other records and related information, including minutes of all Council and Committee meetings, have been made available to you.

## **Accounting Policies**

I confirm that I have reviewed the accounting policies applied during the year in accordance with the Code and International Accounting Standard 8 and consider these policies to faithfully represent the effects of transactions, other events or conditions on the Council's financial position, financial performance and cash flows.

## **Accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value**

I confirm that any significant assumptions used by the Council in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.

## **Contingencies**

There are no material contingent losses including pending or potential litigation that should be accrued where:

- information presently available indicates that it is probable that an asset has been impaired or a liability had been incurred at the balance sheet date; and
- the amount of the loss can be reasonably estimated.

There are no material contingent losses that should be disclosed where, although either or both the conditions specified above are not met, there is a reasonable possibility that a loss, or a loss greater than that accrued, may have been incurred at the balance sheet date.

There are no contingent gains which should be disclosed.

All material matters, including unasserted claims, that may result in litigation against the Council have been brought to your attention. All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to you and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the Code.

## **Laws and Regulations**

I confirm that I have disclosed to you all those events of which I am aware which involve known or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations, together with the actual or contingent consequences which may arise therefrom.

The Council has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that would have a material effect on the accounts in the event of non-compliance.

## **Fraud and Error**

I acknowledge my responsibility as Strategic Director, Corporate Resources for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.

I have disclosed to you:

- all the results of my assessment of the risk that the statement of accounts may be materially misstated as a result of fraud;
- all knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the Council involving:
  - management and those charged with governance;
  - employees who have significant roles in internal control; and
  - others where fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.

I have disclosed to you all information in relation to any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the Council's statement of accounts communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

## **Related Party Transactions**

I confirm that all related party relationships, transactions and balances, have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of the Code.

I have disclosed to you the identity of the Council's related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which I am aware.

## **Impairment Review**

To the best of my knowledge, there is nothing to indicate that there is a permanent reduction in the recoverable amount of the property, plant and equipment below their carrying value at the balance sheet date. An impairment review is therefore not considered necessary.

## **Future Commitments**

I am not aware of any plans, intentions or commitments that may materially affect the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities or give rise to additional liabilities.

## **Service Concession Arrangements**

I am not aware of any material contract variations, payment deductions or additional service charges in 2016/17 in relation to the Council's PFI schemes that you have not been made aware of.

## **Subsequent Events**

I confirm all events subsequent to the date of the financial statements and for which the Code require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed. Should further material events occur after the date of this letter which may necessitate revision of the figures included in the financial statements or inclusion of a note thereto, I will advise you accordingly.

## **Going Concern**

To the best of my knowledge there is nothing to indicate that the Council will not continue as a going concern in the foreseeable future. The period to which I have paid particular attention in assessing the appropriateness of the going concern basis is not less than twelve months from the date of approval of the accounts.

## **Unadjusted Misstatements**

I confirm that the effects of the uncorrected misstatements as included in the auditor's draft Audit Completion Report and listed below are immaterial, both individually and in aggregate, to the statement of accounts as a whole.

- £0.665m of unpaid interest for Newcastle Airport had been treated as short-term investment rather than short-term debtor
- The instant build approach adopted for Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRC) in local authorities should exclude finance costs but the valuations for the Council have included them. The total amount in the DRC population is £4.481million
- The valuation of the SITA Waste Disposal site incorrectly calculated the residual useful economic life of the assets by 1 year. This resulted in an error in the overall valuation amounting to the equivalent of 1 year's depreciation. The impact is to understate Property, Plant and Equipment Net Book Value on the Balance Sheet by £2.307million.

Yours faithfully

Darren Collins  
Strategic Director  
Corporate Resources