


Agenda Item No:	7	
Committee:	Corporate Governance Committee	
Date:	05 November 2019	
Report Title:	Letter of Representation	

Cover sheet:

1 Purpose / Summary

To agree the format and content of the Letter of Representation provided to the independent external auditor (EY) at the conclusion of the audit of the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts.

2 Key issues

- Written representation provides an acknowledgement of our responsibilities in relation to the Statement of Accounts.
- The letter includes details of the reasons for not correcting a misstatement, detailed in the Audit Results Report, which is considered immaterial to the financial statements as a whole.
- The letter required by the independent external auditor is attached.
- The letter requires signing by the Chairman of this Committee and the Council's Chief Finance Officer.

3 Recommendations

- It is recommended that members approve the content and form of the Letter of Representation to be signed by the Chairman of this Committee and the Council's Chief Finance Officer.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Chris Boden, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance
Report Originator(s)	Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer Mark Saunders, Chief Accountant
Contact Officer(s)	Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer Mark Saunders, Chief Accountant
Background Paper(s)	

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5 November 2019

Dear Mark,

**Fenland District Council – 2018/19 Financial Year
Letter of Representation**

This letter of representations is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Fenland District Council (“the Council”) for the year ended 31 March 2019.

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 financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of Fenland District Council as of 31 March 2019 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended in accordance with the CIPFA /LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19.

We understand that the purpose of your audit of our financial statements is to express an opinion thereon and that your audit is conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland), 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 yourselves:

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 Council the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19.

2. We acknowledge, as members of management of the Council, our responsibility for the fair presentation of the Council's financial statements. We believe the 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 Council in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19 and are free of material misstatements, including omissions. We have approved the Council financial statements.
3. The significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are appropriately described in the financial statements.
4. As members of management of the Council, we believe that the Council has 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 2018/19, that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.
5. We believe that the effects of any unadjusted audit differences, summarised in the Audit Results Report, accumulated by us during the current audit and pertaining to the latest period presented are immaterial, both individually and in aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.

The unadjusted audit difference relates to the impact of the McCloud and GMP issues on the defined benefit pension liability. These would increase the pension liability by approximately £428,000 and we consider this to be immaterial individually as it represents an increase of only 0.66% of the disclosed liability in the Council's balance sheet. We also consider this to be immaterial to the financial statements as whole as it falls below the audit performance materiality limit. Consequently, for these reasons we have not corrected this difference.

B. Non-compliance with law and regulations, including fraud

1. We acknowledge that we are responsible to determine that the Council's activities are conducted in accordance with laws and regulations and that we are responsible for identifying and addressing any non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.
2. We acknowledge that we are responsible for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal controls to prevent and detect fraud.
3. We have disclosed to you the results of your assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
4. We have no knowledge of any identified or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud that may have affected the Council (regardless of the source or form and including without limitation, any allegations by "whistleblowers"), including non-compliance matters:
 - involving financial statements;
 - related to laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the Council's financial statements;

- related to laws and regulations that have an indirect effect on amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, but compliance with which may be fundamental to the operations of the Council's activities, its ability to continue to operate, or to avoid material penalties;
- involving management, or employees who have significant roles in internal controls, or others; or
- in relation to any allegations of fraud, suspected fraud or other non-compliance with laws and regulations communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

C. 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 as agreed in terms of the audit engagement ;
- 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 financial statements.
3. We have made available to you all minutes of the meetings of the Council and its relevant committees (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: 5 November 2019.
4. We confirm the completeness of information provided regarding the identification of related parties. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Council 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 period 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 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 Council has complied with, all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance, including all covenants, conditions or other requirements of all outstanding debt.

D. 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 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 the financial statements (at Note 41) all guarantees that we have given to third parties.

E. Subsequent Events

1. Other than described in the financial statements, there have been no events subsequent to period end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the financial statements or notes thereto.

F. Accounting Estimates

1. We believe that the significant assumptions we used in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.
2. In respect of accounting estimates recognised or disclosed in the financial statements:
 - We believe the measurement processes, including related assumptions and models, we used in determining accounting estimates is appropriate and the application of these processes is consistent.
 - That the disclosures relating to accounting estimates are complete and appropriate in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.
 - That the assumptions we used in making accounting estimates appropriately reflects our intent and ability to carry out specific courses of action on behalf of the entity, where relevant to the accounting estimates and disclosures.
 - That no subsequent event requires an adjustment to the accounting estimates and disclosures included in the financial statements.

G. Expenditure Funding Analysis

1. We confirm that the financial statements reflect the operating segments reported internally to the Council.

H. Going Concern

1. We have made you aware of any issues that are relevant to the Council's ability to continue as a going concern, including significant conditions and events, our plans for future action, and the feasibility of those plans.

I. Ownership of Assets

1. That except for assets capitalised under finance leases, the Council has satisfactory title to all assets appearing in the balance sheet, and there are no liens or encumbrances on the Council's assets, nor has any asset been pledged as collateral. All assets to which the Council has satisfactory title appear in the balance sheet.

J. Reserves

1. We have properly recorded or disclosed in the council financial statements the useable and unusable reserves.

K. Valuation of Property, Plant and Equipment Assets

1. That you agree with the findings of the experts engaged to evaluate the values of the Council's land and buildings and have adequately considered the qualifications of the experts in determining the amounts and disclosures included within the Council's financial statements and the underlying accounting records. That you did not give or cause any instructions to be given to the experts with respect to the values or amounts derived in an attempt to bias their work, and that you are not otherwise aware of any matters that have had an effect on the independence or objectivity of the experts.
2. We believe that the measurement processes, including related assumptions and models, used to determine the accounting estimate(s) have been consistently applied and are appropriate in the context of the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19.
3. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the valuation of assets appropriately reflect your intent and ability to carry out specific courses of action on behalf of the entity.
4. We confirm that the disclosures made in the council financial statements with respect to the accounting estimate(s) are complete and made in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19.
5. We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimate(s) and disclosures in the council financial statements due to subsequent events.
6. We confirm that we have performed a desktop review of all assets not subject to revaluation as part of the 5 year rolling programme for valuations and that each asset category is not materially misstated.
7. We confirm that for assets carried at historic cost, that no impairment is required.

L. Retirement benefits

1. That 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.
2. We agree with the findings of the specialists that we engaged to evaluate the Valuation of Pension Liabilities and have adequately considered the qualifications of the specialists in determining the amounts and disclosures included in the consolidated and council 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.

- 3. We believe that the measurement processes, including related assumptions and models, used to determine the accounting estimate(s) have been consistently applied and are appropriate in the context of the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19.
- 4. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the valuation of the pension liability appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out specific courses of action on behalf of the entity.
- 5. We confirm that the disclosures made in the consolidated and council financial statements with respect to the accounting estimate(s) are complete and made in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19.
- 6. We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimate(s) and disclosures in the consolidated and council financial statements due to subsequent events.

M. Other information

- 1. We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of the other information. The other information comprises the Narrative Report included in the Statement of Accounts 2018/2019.
- 2. We confirm that the content contained within the other information is consistent with the financial statements.

N. Specific Representations

You do not require any specific representations in addition to those above.

As approved by the Corporate Governance Committee at its meeting on 5 November 2019.

Signed on behalf of Fenland District Council:

Peter Catchpole
(Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer)

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Date:

Councillor John Clark
(Chairman of Corporate Governance Committee)

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Date: