



# Bedfordshire

## Fire & Rescue Service

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Kempston, Bedford  
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@bedsfire

Debbie Hanson  
Associate Partner  
Ernst & Young LLP  
400 Capability Green  
Luton  
LU1 3LU

**Please respond to:**  
Name: ACO Gavin Chambers  
Telephone: 01234 845000  
Email: [Gavin.chambers@bedsfire.gov.uk](mailto:Gavin.chambers@bedsfire.gov.uk)  
Date: 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Dear Debbie,

This letter of representation is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority ("the Authority") for the year ended 31 March 2022. 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 Authority's financial position as of 31 March 2022 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended in accordance with CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22.

We understand that the purpose of your audit of our financial statements is to express an opinion thereon and that your audit was conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK), 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 the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22.

2. We acknowledge, as members of management of the Authority, our responsibility for the fair presentation of the financial statements. We believe the 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 Authority in accordance with [the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22, and are free of material misstatements, including omissions. We have approved the 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 Authority, we believe that the Authority 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 2021/22, that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. We have disclosed to you any significant changes in our processes, controls, policies and procedures that we have made to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our system of internal controls.
5. We believe that the effects of any unadjusted audit differences, summarized in the accompanying schedule, accumulated by you during the current audit and pertaining to the latest period presented are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the Authority's financial statements taken as a whole. We have corrected the immaterial items where we deemed appropriate.

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

1. We acknowledge that we are responsible to determine that the Authority's activities are conducted in accordance with laws and regulations and that we are responsible to identify and address 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 our 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 or regulations, including fraud that may have affected the Authority (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 Authority'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 Authority'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;
- 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 all material transactions, events and conditions are reflected in the financial statements, including those related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. We have made available to you all minutes of the meetings of the Authority and audit committees held through the year to the most recent meeting(s) subsequent to the year end.

4. We confirm the completeness of information provided regarding the identification of related parties. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Authority'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 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 methods, significant assumptions and the data we used in making accounting estimates and related disclosures are appropriate and consistently applied to achieve recognition, measurement and disclosure that is in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22.

6. We have disclosed to you, and the Authority 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.

7. From the date of our last management representation letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022 through the date of this letter we have disclosed to you any unauthorised access to our information technology systems that either occurred or to the best of our knowledge is reasonably likely to have occurred based on our investigation, including of reports submitted to us by third parties (including regulatory agencies, law enforcement agencies and security consultants) , to the extent that such unauthorized access to our information technology systems is reasonably likely to have a material impact to the financial statements, in each case or in the aggregate.

## **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 no possible litigation and claims, whether or not they have been discussed with legal counsel.
3. We have considered all liabilities related to litigation and claims, both actual and contingent, and guarantees given to third parties but have none to disclose.

## **E. Going Concern**

1. The Authority's financial statements discloses all the matters of which we are aware that are relevant to the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, including significant conditions and events, our plans for future action, and the feasibility of those plans.

## **F. Subsequent Events**

1. There have been no events, including events related to the COVID-19 pandemic, subsequent to year end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the Authority financial statements or notes thereto.

## **G. Other information**

1. We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of the other information. The other information comprises the Governance Statement and Narrative Report for the year 2021/22.
2. We confirm that the content contained within the other information is consistent with the financial statements.

## **H. Ownership of Assets**

1. Except for assets recognised as right of use assets in accordance with IFRS 16 Leases, the Authority has satisfactory title to all assets appearing in the balance sheets, and there are no liens or encumbrances on the Authority's assets, nor has any asset been pledged as collateral. All assets to which the Authority has satisfactory title appear in the balance sheet.
2. All agreements and options to buy back assets previously sold have been properly recorded and adequately disclosed in the financial statements.
3. We have no plans to abandon lines of product or other plans or intentions that will result in any excess or obsolete inventory, and no inventory is stated at an amount in excess of net realisable value.
4. There are no formal or informal compensating balance arrangements with any of our cash and investment accounts.

## **I. Reserves**

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

## **J. Contingent Liabilities**

1. We are unaware of any violations or possible violations of laws or regulations the effects of which should be considered for disclosure in the Authority's financial statements or as the basis of recording a contingent loss (other than those disclosed or accrued in the Authority's financial statements).
2. We are unaware of any known or probable instances of non-compliance with the requirements of regulatory or government authorities, including their financial reporting requirements, and there have been no communications from regulatory agencies or government representatives concerning investigations or allegations of non-compliance except as follows:
  - (i) Matters of routine, normal, recurring nature (eg examinations by bank and insurance examiners, examinations by taxing authorities), none of which involves any allegations of non-compliance with laws or regulations that should be considered for disclosure in the Authority's financial statements or as a basis for recording a loss contingency.

## **K. Use of the Work of a Specialist**

1. We agree with the findings of the specialists that we engaged to evaluate the valuation of land and building assets and the IAS19 actuarial valuations of pension liabilities 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.

## **L. Estimates**

### **Valuation of Land and Buildings Estimate**

1. We confirm that the significant judgments made in making the valuation of the land and buildings estimate have taken into account all relevant information and the effects of Covid-19 pandemic of which we are aware.
2. We believe that the selection or application methods, assumptions and data used by us have been consistently and appropriately applied or used in making the valuation of land and buildings estimate.
3. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the valuation of land, buildings estimate appropriately reflect our intent and ability to continue to provide services on behalf of the Authority.
4. We confirm that the disclosures made in the financial statements with respect to the accounting estimates, including those describing estimation uncertainty and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, are complete and are reasonable in the context of CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22.
5. We confirm that appropriate specialized skills or expertise has been applied in making the valuation of land and buildings.

## IAS 19 Pensions Liability Estimate

6. We confirm that the significant judgements made in making the IAS 19 pensions liability estimate have taken into account all relevant information and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic of which we are aware.
7. We believe that the selection or application of the methods, assumptions and data used by us have been consistently and appropriately applied or used in making the IAS 19 Pensions Liability estimate.
8. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the ISA 19 Pensions Liability estimate appropriate reflect our intent and ability to provide an accurate valuation of the Authority's pensions liability.
9. We confirm that the disclosures made in the financial statements with respect to the accounting estimates, including those describing estimation uncertainty and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, are complete and reasonable in the context of CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22.
10. We confirm that appropriate specialized skills or expertise has been applied in making the IAS pensions liability.

## M. 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.

Yours sincerely,



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Gavin Chambers (Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer)



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Andrew Hopkinson (Chief Fire Officer)

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Cllr Ali (Chair of Audit and Standards Committee)