



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

<b>MEETING</b>	Overview and Audit Committee
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	11 November 2020
<b>OFFICER</b>	Mark Hemming, Director of Finance & Assets
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Councillor David Carroll
<b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>Letter of Management Representation 2019/20</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	The Authority is required to consider and sign the letter of representation to Ernst & Young in order for the audit opinion and conclusion to be issued.
<b>ACTION</b>	Decision.
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	That the Letter of Representation be approved for signature by the Chief Finance Officer and the Chairman of the Overview and Audit Committee.
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>	The results of the audit give reassurance regarding entries in the accounts and value for money arrangements.
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	No direct impact.
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	The audit of the financial statements is a statutory requirement.
<b>CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE</b>	No direct impact.
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	No direct impact.
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b>	No direct impact.
<b>USE OF RESOURCES</b>	No direct impact.
<b>PROVENANCE SECTION &amp; BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	Letter of Management Representation 2019-20 taken to O&A committee on 22 July 2020: <a href="https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/07/item-11-letter-of-management-representation-2019-20.pdf/">https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/07/item-11-letter-of-management-representation-2019-20.pdf/</a>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	Annex A: Letter of Management Representation 2019/20.

<b>TIME REQUIRED</b>	10 minutes
<b>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</b>	Marcus Hussey <a href="mailto:mhussey@bucksfire.gov.uk">mhussey@bucksfire.gov.uk</a> 01296 744680



**Buckinghamshire**  
**FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**  
*we save lives*

Neil Harris  
Ernst & Young  
400 Capability Green  
Luton  
Bedfordshire  
LU1 3LU

Our ref: Letter of Representation 2019/20  
Enquiries to: Mark Hemming  
Direct line: 01296 744687  
Date: 11 November 2020  
Email: mhemming@bucksfire.gov.uk

Dear Neil,

**Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Authority - Audit for the year ended 31 March 2020**

This letter of representations is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority ("the Authority") for the year ended 31 March 2020. 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 financial position of **Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority** as of 31 March 2020 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 2019/20.

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 2019/20.
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 2019/20.

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**Director of Finance & Assets: Mark Hemming FCPFA**  
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service  
Brigade Headquarters, Stocklake, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1BD  
Tel: 01296 744400 Fax: 01296 744419



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Kingdom 2019/20, 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 2019/20, 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. There are no unadjusted audit differences identified during the current audit and pertaining to the latest period presented.

#### **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 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.

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### 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, the Executive Committee and the Overview and Audit Committee held through the year to the most recent meeting on the following date: 16 September 2020.
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 significant assumptions we used in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.
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 20 November 2019 through the date of this letter we have disclosed to you any unauthorized 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



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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.

#### **E. Subsequent Events**

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

#### **F. Other information**

1. We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of the other information. The other information comprises the narrative statement.
2. We confirm that the content contained within the other information is consistent with the financial statements.

#### **G. Going Concern**

The Statement of Accounting Policies in the 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.

#### **H. Ownership of Assets**

1. Except for assets capitalised under finance leases, the Authority has satisfactory title to all assets appearing in the balance sheet, 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. 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. Use of the Work of a Specialist**

1. We agree with the findings of the specialists that we engaged to evaluate the **fair value of property, plant and equipment and the IAS19 actuarial valuations of pension liabilities** and have adequately considered the qualifications of the specialists in



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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. Pension Liability and PPE Estimate**

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 the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20.
2. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the estimates appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out the specific courses of action on behalf of the entity.
3. We confirm that the disclosures made in the financial statements with respect to the accounting estimates are complete, including the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the pension liability and PPE and are made in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20.
4. We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimates and disclosures in the financial statements due to subsequent events, including due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **L. 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 faithfully,*

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Director of Finance and Chief Financial Officer

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Chairman of the Overview and Audit Committee