

14 December 2021

ERNST & YOUNG
2 ST PETER'S SQUARE
MANCHESTER
M2 3DF

Dear Sirs,

This letter of representations is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Staffordshire Pension Fund (“the Fund”) for the year ended 31 March 2021. 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 transactions of the Fund during the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 and of the amount and disposition of the Fund’s assets and liabilities as at 31 March 2021, other than liabilities to pay pensions and benefits after the end of the period, have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.

We understand that the purpose of your audit of the Fund’s 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 2020/21.
2. We confirm that the Fund is a Registered Pension Scheme. We are not aware of any reason why the tax status of the scheme should change.
3. We acknowledge, as members of management of the Fund, 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 and the financial performance of the Fund in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21, and are free of material misstatements, including omissions. We have approved the financial statements.
4. The significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are appropriately described in the financial statements.
5. As members of management of the Fund, we believe that the Fund 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 2020/2021 that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

6. There are no unadjusted audit differences identified during the current audit and pertaining to the latest period presented.

B. NON-COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND REGULATIONS INCLUDING FRAUD

7. We acknowledge that we are responsible for determining that the Fund'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.
8. We acknowledge that we are responsible for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal controls to prevent and detect fraud.
9. 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.
10. We have not made any reports to The Pensions Regulator, nor are we aware of any such reports having been made by any of our advisors.
11. There have been no other communications with The Pensions Regulator or other regulatory bodies during the Fund year or subsequently concerning matters of noncompliance with any legal duty.
12. We have no knowledge of any identified or suspected non-compliance with laws or regulations, including fraud that may have affected the Fund (regardless of the source or form and including without limitation, any allegations by "whistleblowers"), including non-compliance matters:
 - Involving financial improprieties
 - Related to laws or regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the Fund'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 Fund, its ability to continue, or to avoid material penalties
 - Involving management, or employees who have significant roles in internal control, or others
 - 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

13. 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.

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- Additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit.
 - Unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
14. You have been informed of all changes to the Fund rules.
 15. 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.
 16. We have made available to you all minutes of the meetings of members of the management of the Fund and committees of members of the management of the Fund (or summaries of actions of recent meetings for which minutes have not yet been prepared) held through the period to the most recent meeting on the following date, 24 September 2021.
 17. We confirm the completeness of information provided regarding the identification of related parties. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Fund'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 period end. These transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements.
 18. We confirm the completeness of information provided regarding annuities held in the name of the members of the management of the Fund.
 19. We have disclosed to you, and the Fund 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.
 20. No transactions have been made which are not in the interests of the Fund members or the Fund during the fund year or subsequently.
 21. 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 2020/2021.
 22. From the date of our last management representation letter 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

23. 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.

24. We have informed you of all outstanding and possible litigation and claims, whether or not they have been discussed with legal counsel.
25. We have recorded and/or disclosed, as appropriate, all liabilities related to litigation and claims, both actual and contingent, and have disclosed in Notes to the financial statements all guarantees that we have given to third parties.¹

E. GOING CONCERN

26. Note 2 to the financial statements discloses all the matters of which we are aware that are relevant to the Pension Fund'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

27. Other than matters described in Note 6 to the financial statements, 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.

G. OTHER INFORMATION

28. We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of the other information. The other information comprises the Introduction to the Annual Report and Accounts, the Management Commentary, and Governance statements.
29. We confirm that the content contained within the other information is consistent with the financial statements.

H. INDEPENDENCE

30. We confirm that, under section 27 of the Pensions Act 1995, no members of the management of the Fund of the Scheme are connected with, or is an associate of, Ernst & Young LLP which would render Ernst & Young LLP ineligible to act as auditor to the Scheme.

I. DERIVATIVE FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

31. We confirm that all investments in derivative financial instruments have been made after due consideration by the members of the management of the Fund of the limitations in their use imposed by The LGPS Management and Investment of Funds Regulations 2016. The Fund's Investment Strategy Statement has been duly reviewed to ensure that such investments comply with any limitations imposed by its provisions. The financial statements disclose all transactions in derivative financial instruments that have been entered into during the period, those still held by the members of the management of the Fund at the Fund's year end and the terms and conditions relating thereto.
32. Management has duly considered and deemed as appropriate the assumptions and methodologies used in the valuation of 'over the counter' derivative financial instruments which the Fund is holding, and these have been communicated to you.

¹ ISA 501.12

J. POOLING INVESTMENTS, INCLUDING THE USE OF COLLECTIVE INVESTMENT VEHICLES AND SHARED SERVICES

33. We confirm that all investments in pooling arrangements, including the use of collective investment vehicles and shared services, meet the criteria set out in the November 2015 investment reform and criteria guidance and that the requirements of the LGPS Management and Investment of Funds Regulations 2016 in respect of these investments has been followed.

K. ACTUARIAL VALUATION

34. The latest report of the actuary Hymans Robertson as at 31 March 2019 and dated 26 March 2020 has been provided to you. To the best of our knowledge and belief we confirm that the information supplied by us to the actuary was true and that no significant information was omitted which may have a bearing on his report.

L. USE OF THE WORK OF A SPECIALIST

35. We agree with the findings of the specialists that we have engaged to value directly held property 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.

M. ESTIMATES

Valuation of Complex Investments Estimate

36. We confirm that the significant judgments made in making the valuation of complex investments have taken into account all relevant information of which we are aware.
37. 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 valuation of complex investments.
38. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the valuation of complex investments appropriately reflect full available information that might affect fair value of the investment assets. the fair value on behalf of the entity.
39. We confirm that the disclosures made in the financial statements with respect to the accounting estimate, including those describing estimation uncertainty, are complete and are reasonable in the context of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.
40. We confirm that appropriate specialized skills or expertise has been applied in making the valuation of complex investments.
41. We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimate and disclosures in the financial statements.

Actuarial Present Value of Promised Retirement Benefits Estimate

42. We confirm that the significant judgments made in making the actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits have taken into account all relevant information of which we are aware.
43. We believe that the selection or application of the methods, assumptions and data used by the actuary producing the estimate have been consistently and appropriately applied or used in making this estimate.
44. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making this estimate appropriately reflect all available information at the point of making the estimate on behalf of the entity.
45. We confirm that the disclosures made in the financial statements with respect to the accounting estimate, including those describing estimation uncertainty, are complete and are reasonable in the context of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.
46. We confirm that appropriate specialized skills or expertise has been applied in making the actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits.
47. We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimate and disclosures in the financial statements.

Yours faithfully,

Rob Salmon
County Treasurer (Section 151 Officer)

Councillor Mike Worthington
Chair, Audit and Standards Committee