

21 October 2010

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— Dear Jim

## **Recent Meeting re: Grant Awards and the Consultation Framework**

Thank you for meeting with me recently to discuss various matters relating to the awarding of a grant to a member of one of the Council Task Forces and to bring me up to date on the Consultation Exercise. It was a most helpful meeting and good to get the views of Bill Norman, Ian Coleman and Emma Degg on the background to both issues.

I am assured having met with you and the other statutory officers that the grants matter was scrutinised thoroughly and that you have each concluded that there are no matters on which you feel you need to advise the Council. I am aware that the Director of Finance had Internal Audit undertake a detailed review of the process and procedures surrounding the award of the grant and that the review concluded that Council procedures had been complied with.

I would like to thank Emma for the detailed explanation of the process and procedures put in place around the Consultation exercise and her explanation of what happens with the output and the timetable for decision making. Again I am assured that whilst the Task Forces are looking at options, the statutory officers are clear that any decisions regarding setting the budget will be subject to the normal scrutiny and decision-making arrangements within the Council.

Local authorities have taken different approaches to tackling the difficult financial decisions facing them. In recent months I have seen some who have acted quickly, in year, to those who have taken a more consultative approach and are awaiting the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review and Local Government Spending allocations before making decisions. In all cases I think there will still be some very difficult decisions to be taken in a very short period of time. We will consider the Council's arrangements in more detail in our 2010-11 value for money work.

I look forward to meeting with you in the near future to discuss future working arrangements.

Yours sincerely

Mr. M. Thomas  
*District Auditor*