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30<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Mr John Baker  
Chairman of Audit Committee  
Newport City Council  
Civic Centre  
NP20 4UR

**RE: City Services Audit**

Dear Mr Baker,

Thank you for your letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> April.

The number of unsatisfactory audits in Streetscene (now City Services) has been a legacy issue for some time, due to a number of factors. After a long period of instability, a new Head of Service was appointed in May 2017.

As your letter highlights, in June 2017, four weeks after his appointment, the Head of Service and Strategic Director attended Audit Committee to respond to the repeated unsatisfactory audits that had occurred prior to him commencing his employment.

In September 2018, the Head of Service again attended Audit Committee to give an update on progress. At this meeting, the Committee was appraised of the considerable changes that had already been made by the Strategic Director and Head of Service, which included a wholesale management restructure and a significant amount of work to eliminate previous patterns of overspending.

It is also important to note that in May 2018, the Cabinet under advice from the Senior Leadership Team, allocated specific funding to support issues that had been identified by the Strategic Director and Head of Service. This funding spans a two-year period and from conversations with the Head of Service and Strategic Director, I do not believe further resource is needed at this time.

This additional resource is currently being utilised to conduct in-depth service reviews of the systems and processes of each area of City Services to inform detailed action plans for improvement. However, internal audit has also been asked to audit these specific areas before they are reviewed (in service) to ensure there is a clear and robust picture of the issues.

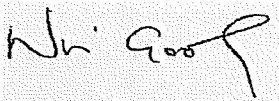
In the short-term, this is likely to result in further unsatisfactory reports for a period of time. I am, however, content with this approach, as I feel this is a better use of internal audit resource and will ensure the services involved are able to plan for improvement for more effectively, rather than audit being directed towards improved or improving services.

Furthermore, there is frequently a lag between the audit review period and the final report being issued, which can lead to a lack of understanding in terms of distance

travelled by a service. For example, you mention specifically the unsatisfactory audits in the Waste and Cleaning department. As part of the aforementioned restructure, a new Service Manager and Team Managers have been appointed and are working extremely hard to improve the position and respond to audit recommendations. The most recent review of the refuse collection service (completed March 2019) achieved the first 'good' in the service area for many years. I have also recently presented the Cleansing Team Manager with a Staff Values award in recognition of the rapid improvement in his department.

It is clear that whilst much good work has been done and further work is already underway, it will take a little more time to improve all of the many and varied functions that form part of City Services. Hopefully, we all appreciate the continued challenges facing City Services and I would like to reassure you that the Strategic Director, Head of Service, and myself are committed to building on the work already undertaken and addressing any issues arising from future audits.

Yours Sincerely,



Will Godfrey  
Chief Executive, Newport City Council