

[To be prepared on the entity's letterhead]

*[Date]*

Ernst & Young

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This letter of representations is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Strathclyde Pension Fund ("the Fund") for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. 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 year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, and of the amount and disposition at that date of its assets and liabilities, other than liabilities to pay pensions and benefits after the end of the year, in accordance with CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23.

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, as set out in the terms of the audit engagement letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022, for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014 and CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23.<sup>1</sup>
2. We confirm that the Fund is a Registered Pension Fund. We are not aware of any reason why the tax status of the Fund should change.
3. The significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are appropriately described in the financial statements.
4. We believe that the effects of any unadjusted audit differences, summarized in the accompanying schedule, accumulated by you during the current audit and

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<sup>1</sup> ISA (UK) 580.10

pertaining to the latest period presented are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.

We have not corrected these differences identified and brought to our attention by the auditor on the grounds of materiality

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

1. We acknowledge that we are responsible to determine that the Fund'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.<sup>2</sup>
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.<sup>3</sup>
4. 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.
5. 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.

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's business, its ability to continue in business, 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.<sup>4</sup>

#### **C. Information Provided and Completeness of Information and Transactions**

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<sup>2</sup> ISA (UK) 240.39(a)

<sup>3</sup> ISA (UK) 240.39(b)

<sup>5</sup> ISA (UK) 580.11(a); ISA (UK) 210.6(b)(iii)

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.<sup>5</sup>
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 and including those related to the conflict and related sanctions in Ukraine, Russia and/or Belarus.
3. We have made available to you all minutes of the meetings of shareholders, directors, and committees of directors (or summaries of actions of recent meetings for which minutes have not yet been prepared) held through the year to the most recent meeting on the following date on 13th September 2023.
4. 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.<sup>6</sup> We believe that the significant assumptions we used in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.
5. 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.
6. No transactions have been made which are not in the interests of the fund members or the fund during the year or subsequently.
7. 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 Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014 and CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23.

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<sup>5</sup> ISA (UK) 580.11(a); ISA (UK) 210.6(b)(iii)

<sup>22</sup> ISA (UK) 560.9

8. From the beginning of the current through the date of this letter we have disclosed to you, to the extent that we are aware, any (1) unauthorized access to our information technology systems that either occurred or is reasonably likely to have occurred, 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, and (2) ransomware attacks when we paid or are contemplating paying a ransom, regardless of the amount.

#### **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 informed you of all outstanding and possible litigation and claims, whether or not they have been discussed with legal counsel.

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

1. Other than matters described in Note 3 to the financial statements, there have been no events, subsequent to period end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the financial statements or notes thereto, including events related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and including events related to the conflict and related sanctions in Ukraine, Russia and/or Belarus subsequent to period end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the financial statements or notes thereto.<sup>7</sup>

#### **F. Other information<sup>8</sup>**

1. We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of the other information. The other information comprises the Introduction, Governance, Funding, Climate Change, Investment and Scheme Administration statements.
2. We confirm that the content contained within the other information is consistent with the financial statements.

#### **H. Independence**

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

#### **I. Derivative Financial Instruments**

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

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<sup>22</sup> ISA (UK) 560.9

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.

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.

#### **J. Actuarial valuation**

The latest report of the actuary Hymans Robertson, as at 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2023 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.

#### **K. Estimates**

##### **Valuation of Complex Investments Estimate (property valuations, private equity/infrastructure/private debt and pooled investments vehicles)**

1. We confirm that the significant judgments made in making the estimate of the valuation of complex investments have taken into account all relevant information.
2. 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 estimate of the valuation of complex investments.
3. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the estimate of the valuation of complex investments appropriately reflect all available information which may affect the fair value of the investment assets.
4. We confirm that the disclosures made in the financial statements with respect to the accounting estimate(s), are complete and are reasonable in the context of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23.
5. We confirm that appropriate specialized skills or expertise has been applied in making the estimate of the valuation of complex investments.
6. We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimate(s) and disclosures in the financial statement.

##### **Actuarial Present Value of Promised Retirement Benefits Estimate**

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the estimate of the actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits appropriately reflect all available information at the point of making the estimate.

4. 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 2022/23.
5. We confirm that appropriate specialized skills or expertise has been applied in making the actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits.
6. We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimate and disclosures in the financial statements.

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

We agree with the findings of Hymans Robertson that we have engaged to value of promised retirement benefits 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.

We agree with the findings of Avison Young that we have engaged to value investment 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. Going Concern**

Based on our assessment of going concern, the details of which have been shared with you, we confirm that we are not aware of any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the fund's ability to continue as a going concern. We do not intend to wind up the Fund. We are satisfied that the use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements.

The financial statements disclose all of the matters of which we are aware that are relevant to the 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.

#### **N. Climate-Related Matters**

1. We confirm that to the best of our knowledge all information that is relevant to the recognition, measurement, presentation and disclosure of climate-related matter has been considered, as well as the impact resulting from the commitment made by the fund in the financial statements.
2. The key assumptions used in preparing the financial statements are, to the extent allowable under the requirements of United Kingdom Generally Accepted

Accounting Practice aligned with the statements we have made in the other information or other public communications made by us.

Yours faithfully,

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(Director of Strathclyde Pension Fund)

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(Chair of Strathclyde Pension Fund Committee)