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Please contact us in Welsh or English.

Cysylltwch â ni'n Gymraeg neu'n Saesneg.

Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee,
c/o Newport City Council,
Civic Centre,
Godfrey Road,
Newport,
NP20 4UR

Date issued: 21 September 2018

Dear Members of the Joint Committee,

Greater Gwent Cremation Joint Committee – Independent Examination of the 2017-18 Annual Return

Requirement to produce an Annual Return

The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 (the Regulations) define local government bodies in Wales as 'larger' or 'smaller' bodies. To qualify as a 'smaller' body under the Regulations, a body must have gross income or expenditure (whichever is higher) of not more than £2.5 million in the year of account or in either of the two preceding years.

According to this definition, the Greater Gwent Crematorium Joint Committee (the Committee) is a 'smaller' local government body, with income and expenditure below £2.5 million for the 2017-18 financial year.

As a 'smaller' body, the Committee is only required to produce a summarised Annual Return, rather than a full set of accounts. That return is then subject to a 'limited assurance' independent examination rather than a full external audit, in line with the Auditor General for Wales' Code of Audit Practice.

A limited assurance opinion (if satisfactory) aims only to confirm that:

- the information contained in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices; and
- no matters have come to the auditor's attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Outcome of Independent Examination

We have completed our independent examination of the Committee's Annual Return for 2017-18. In carrying out this work, both we and management have identified some amendments that have now been made to the Return:

- In the Accounting Statements on page 2, Box 6 (other payments) has been reduced by £37,761, leading to corresponding changes to Boxes 7, 9, and 11. This change relates to a mis-posting in the original Return.
- Section 6 of Part 1 of the Annual Governance Statement has been changed from 'yes' to 'no', as there has been no internal audit of the Greater Gwent Crematorium in 2017-18.
- Section 2 of Part 2 of the Annual Governance Statement has been changed from 'yes' to 'no', as the Committee does not award any grants to third parties.
- Section 3 of Part 2 of the Annual Governance Statement has been amended, to reflect that the Committee has no obligation or intention to pay a gratuity to employees.
- There are references to 'Council/Board/Committee' throughout the annual return which have been deleted as applicable to leave the term 'Committee' throughout.

Certification of the Annual Return

As stated above, the above amendments have now been made, and if re-approved by the Committee and Responsible Finance Officer during the Committee meeting on 24 September, we propose to certify this amended Annual Return as follows:

'On the basis of our review, in our opinion, the information contained in the Annual Return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.'

We also propose to add two further comments to our certificate in the 'other matters and recommendations' section, which do not affect our overall opinion above but are raised for the Committee's information to confirm the following:

- The Committee has not been subject to an internal audit during the 2017-18 financial year.
- As per Section 2 of Part 2 of the Annual Governance Statement, it is our understanding that the Committee does not in fact award any grants.

Conclusion

We would like to thank all staff within Newport City Council who assisted with the production and independent examination of the 2017-18 Annual Return.

Yours sincerely,

Gareth Lucey
Financial Audit Manager
Wales Audit Office