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Dear Norma,

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Certification work for North Hertfordshire District Council for year ended 31 March 2014

We are required to certify certain claims and returns submitted by North Hertfordshire District Council ('the Council'). This certification typically takes place six to nine months after the claim period and represents a final but important part of the process to confirm the Council's entitlement to funding.

Arrangements for certification are prescribed by the Audit Commission, which agrees the scope of the work with each relevant government department or agency, and issues auditors with a Certification Instruction (CI) for each specific claim or return.

We have certified one claim for the financial year 2013/14 relating to expenditure of £38.3 million. Further details of the claim certified is set out in Appendix A.

There are two issues arising from our certification work which we wish to highlight for your attention:

- The draft housing subsidy was subject to amendment with a positive amendment to the overall balance owed by the Council of £20,091. The reason for the amendment was that the Council performed a manual adjustment exercise after the claim had been submitted to the DWP but prior to the commencement of the audit of the return.
- HRA rent rebate expenditure amounting to £921 was deducted from the claim as the claims could not be supported by a claim form or other relevant prime records.

The indicative fee for 2013/14 for the Council is based on the final 2011/12 certification fees, reflecting the amount of work required by the auditor to certify the claims and returns in that year. Fees for schemes no longer requiring certification (such as the national non-domestic rates return) have been removed. The fees for certification of housing benefit subsidy claims have been reduced by 12 per cent, to reflect the removal of council tax benefit from the scheme. The indicative scale fee set by the Audit Commission for the Council for 2013/14 is £10,032. This is set out in more detail in Appendix B.

Yours sincerely

For Grant Thornton UK LLP

FAR COMMITTEE (26.1.14)

**APPENDIX A - DETAILS OF CLAIMS AND RETURNS CERTIFIED FOR
2013/14**

Claim or return	Value	Amended?	Amendment (£)	Qualified?	Comments
Housing benefits subsidy claim	£38.3 million	Yes	19,170	No	Claim amended for the net of the manual adjustments processed by the Council and removal of HRA rent rebate expenditure from the claim.

APPENDIX B: FEES FOR 2013/14 CERTIFICATION WORK

Claim or return	2012/13 fee (£)	2013/14 indicative fee (£)	2013/14 actual fee (£)	Variance (£)	Explanation for variances
Housing benefits subsidy claim (BEN01)	9,400	10,032	10,032	-	No variance as there was no requirement to perform additional testing.
National non-domestic rates return (NNDR3)	2,000	N/a	N/a	-	No requirement to certify this return in 2013/14
Total	11,400	10,032	10,032	-	