CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE PUBLIC AUDIT COMMITTEE TO NHS HIGHLAND, DATED 26 MARCH 2015

AUDITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (AGS) SECTION 22 REPORT “THE 2013/14 AUDIT OF NHS HIGHLAND: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT”

At its meeting on 25 March 2015, the Public Audit Committee considered and agreed its approach to its forthcoming evidence session with you, Garry Coutts and Nick Kenton scheduled for 13 May 2015.

Having considered the written and oral evidence received from NHS Highland, we agreed that it would be helpful to confirm with you in advance that the purpose of this session. Specifically the evidence session on 13 May is to clarify certain issues with NHS Highland witnesses and therefore Members will therefore most likely direct their questions to a specific witness. I would be grateful if you could share this agreed approach with your fellow witnesses.

As set out in the invite letter of 17 March 2015, the evidence session will begin with questions from members without any opening statements.

The Committee also agreed that it would be helpful to receive a written submission from NHS Highland in advance of the oral evidence session. The Committee agreed therefore to seek from you as part of that written submission—

- an update on NHS Highland’s finances at year end for 2014/15;
- confirmation of the number of NHS Highland patients that have been transferred out with NHS Highland for elective surgery over the 3 years to 31 March 2015; and the extent to which this practice arose as a consequence of the financial issues experienced at NHS Highland; and
- clarification of the extent to which the lead agency model adopted by NHS Highland and the Highland Council contributed to the financial difficulties experienced by NHS Highland in 2013/14.

Our normal practice is to publish relevant evidence that is sent to us on our website and we may also include it in the hard copy of any committee report. Therefore, if you wish your evidence to be treated as confidential, or for your evidence to be published anonymously, please contact the Clerk to the Committee, before you submit your evidence. Further information on the publication of written submissions is contained in the policy on the treatment of written evidence by committees which is available at: http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/help/31037.aspx Please take time to read this policy. We welcome written evidence in English, Gaelic or any other language.

In view of the Committee’s request for specific written information I would be grateful for a written response by no later than Monday 19 April. Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact the Assistant Clerk, Gary Cocker on 0131 348 5236 or by email at pa.committee@scottish.parliament.uk.

Yours sincerely

Paul Martin MSP, Convener