

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2021/22

In respect of **Cantley and Branton Parish Council – SY0021**

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/> .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with Proper Practices which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2022; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

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Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

The AGAR has not been signed/approved in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015:

- Section 2 was not signed by the Responsible Finance Officer before approval.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review. The AGAR had to be sent back for amendment.

We note that Section 1, Box 9 and Section 2, Box 11 in respect of trust funds has been left blank, the smaller authority has confirmed that it does not act as sole managing trustee for trust funds, and thus the responses should have been 'N/A' and 'N/A' respectively. The smaller authority should ensure the AGAR is fully completed in future.

The Annual Internal Audit Report focuses on a series of internal control objectives covering an authority's key financial and accounting systems and concludes whether, in all significant respects, the internal control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the authority. We note that the internal auditor has not provided a conclusion on the internal control objective M in respect of public rights or an adequate explanation where the response given is 'Not covered'. The Annual Internal Audit Report will inform the authority's response to assertions 2 and 6 in the annual governance statement. As a result, the authority must ensure that assurance that has not been provided via these control objectives has been sought elsewhere.

In the completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report, and their detailed report, the internal auditor has drawn attention to weaknesses in relation to VAT calculations and payroll calculations. The smaller authority has confirmed that both issues have been subsequently rectified.

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We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2022.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

PKF Littlejohn LLP

Date

09/09/2022

* Note: the NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on limited assurance reviews in Auditor Guidance Note AGN/02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)