

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2018/19

In respect of

Welney Parish Council – NO0502

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

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 2019; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below). Our work **does not** constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

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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 smaller authority failed to approve the AGAR in time to publish it before 1 July 2019, the date required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and did not disclose this by answering 'No' to Section 1, Box 1.
- The smaller authority failed to publish the final signed AGAR by 30 September 2019, the date required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and did not disclose this by answering 'No' to Section 1, Box 1. This is as a result of the AGAR and additional documentation not being submitted for review until October 2019.
- The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review:
 1. Section 2, Box 2, the annual precept, does not agree to the figure published by the precepting authority. The figures in Box 2 should read £16,077 grants, including Council Tax Support Grant, should be shown in Box 3, as per the guidance notes on the AGAR
 2. The responses given in Section 1, Box 9 and Section 2, Box 11 are not consistent.

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

- We note that the smaller authority did not comply with Regulation 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as it failed to make proper provision during the year 2019/20 for the exercise of public rights, since the period for the exercise of public rights did not include the first 10 working days of July. As a result, the smaller authority must answer 'No' to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20 and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights during 2020/21.
- The smaller authority has not provided:
 - a year end bank reconciliation in support of Section 2
 - an adequate explanation for the variance between the prior and current year values in Boxes 2,3,4,6 and 9 of Section 2
 - confirmation of the year end loan balance included in Section 2, Box 10.
- 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 an explanation for the 'No' response on the following internal control objectives: B. 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.
- Information in Section 1 of the AGAR is inconsistent with information in the Annual Internal Audit Report and no evidence was provided in explanation.
- We received correspondence in relation to the 2017/18 AGAR which we considered before completing our work. The authority will receive an invoice in relation to this additional work.

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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 2019.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature



Date

31/03/2022

* 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)