

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2021/22

In respect of

GILLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL – NO0178

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.

2 External auditor report 2021/22

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.

Information has come to our attention from the internal auditor highlighting the fact that Sections 1 & 2 of the 2020/21 AGAR were not published on the authority's website by the dates specified in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review. Please ensure that amendments are corrected in the prior year comparatives when completing next year's AGAR:

- Information received from the smaller authority indicates that assets disposed and purchased during the year have not been correctly included in Section 2, Box 9. The Box 9 figure for 2021/22 should read £80,612

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

In the prior year, the smaller authority was exempt from our review, thus we have not reviewed any evidence to support the prior year comparatives on the AGAR.

We note that Section 1, Box 9 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 response should have been 'N/A'. The smaller authority should ensure the AGAR is fully completed in future.

Information has come to our attention indicating that the smaller authority has not published explanations for the 'No' responses given in respect of Assertions 1,2,4,6,7 on the Annual Governance Statement. Accordingly, the smaller authority must disclose this by responding 'No' to Assertion 3 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 and publish the reason for that 'No' response on its website when the 2022/23 AGAR is published.

In the completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report, and their detailed report, the internal auditor has drawn attention to significant weaknesses in relation to internal control objectives B,D,H,K,L,M,N. The smaller authority must ensure that action is taken to address these areas of weakness in a timely manner

3 External auditor certificate 2021/22

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



Date

25/09/2022

* 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)