

Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of

Lighthorne Parish Council

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

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 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors

2 External auditor limited assurance opinion 2023/24

Except for the matters reported below on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with the 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.

On the original Section 2 - Accounting Statements submitted, the figures in Boxes 1-6 did not cast down to the figure in Box 7 with an imbalance shown of £239.

Upon further investigation, it can be seen that from the bank reconciliation the difference relates to allocated reserves interest which appears to have not been included within Box 3 of Section 2.

On resubmission of Section 2, the Council then restated Boxes 7 & 8 and therefore this appears to have been incorrectly amended based on the points noted above.

The Council should consider the above points when entering their 2024 figures on the 2024/25 AGAR.

On review of the full Internal Auditor report provided on submission, it appears that the Council last reviewed their Risk Assessment in March 2021. This is not in accordance with best practice which suggests that this should be reviewed annually as per Paragraph 5.86 of JPAG Practitioners' Guide 2023. The Council should look to ensure this is reviewed annually going forwards.

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

As a result of the Council appearing to not have reviewed their risk assessment during the financial year, we feel that the response to control objective C on the Annual Internal Audit Report would have been more appropriately marked as a 'No'.

3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

We ~~certify~~ **do not 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 2024.

External Auditor Name



External Auditor Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Moore", written over a light blue background.

Date

12/08/2024