

## Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of

CASTLE BYTHAM PARISH COUNCIL – LI0076

### 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 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

### 2 External auditor report 2022/23

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 has not addressed the 'except for' matters raised by the external auditor when qualifying the prior year annual return. The request to ensure that amendments were made to the prior year comparatives for Boxes 4, 6 and 9 in this year's AGAR has not been followed.
- Section 1, Assertion 6 has been incorrectly completed. As the internal auditor was not independent of the financial decision making, management and control of the smaller authority in the 2021/22 financial year, the authority should have disclosed this by answering 'No' to Assertion 6 of the Annual Governance Statement on the 2022/23 AGAR as noted in the 2021/22 external auditor report. We note that a different internal auditor has been appointed, however has still assisted in the preparation of the AGAR, including the preparation of bank reconciliations, and therefore the authority must disclose this by answering 'No' to Assertion 6 of the Annual Governance Statement when completing next year's AGAR. In future years, the smaller authority must maintain an independent system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.

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

None.

### 3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

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 2023.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature



Date

03/08/2023