

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2019/20

In respect of

WELDON PARISH COUNCIL – NH0238

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 2020; 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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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.

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 amended by SI 2020/404 the Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 as it failed to make proper provision during the year 2020/21 for the exercise of public rights, since the approval date was after the start of the period for the exercise of public rights and the announcement of the period for the exercise of public rights was the same date as the start of the period. As a result, the smaller authority must answer 'No' to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21 and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights during 2021/22.

The smaller authority has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance assertions in Section 1, Boxes 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7, but it has provided the appointed auditor with an adequate explanation for non-compliance and details of the actions necessary to address weaknesses identified.

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 the accounting records, the authority's demonstration of its power to make payments, the budgetary process, the risk assessment, the Financial Regulations, the asset register, and periodic bank reconciliations. The smaller authority must ensure that action is taken to address these areas of weakness in a timely manner.

The smaller authority has not provided an adequate explanation for the variance between the prior and current year values in Boxes 2, 3, 4 and 6 of Section 2

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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 2020.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature



Date

03/11/2020

* Note: the NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on limited assurance reviews for 2019/20 in Auditor Guidance Note AGN/02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)