

Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of **North Luffenham Parish Council**

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

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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, 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.

The Council has answered 'Yes' to Box 4 of Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return which relates to how the Notice of Public Rights was advertised within the financial year 2022-23 which relates to the Notice announcing the public right to review the 2021-22 return which was published during 2022-23. As noted in the External Auditor Report last year, this notice was not correctly advertised therefore we would have anticipated this to have been answered 'No'.

The clerk has brought to our attention that the prior year figures were incorrect. We would therefore have expected to see the prior year restated but this was not the case meaning the error persists in the comparative year figures. The council should therefore have answered 'No' to Assertion 1 of the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement

The Internal Auditor has marked control objective C as 'No' on the Annual Internal Audit Report as the council did not fully assess all risks in the year. We would therefore have expected Assertion 5 on the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement to have been marked 'No' but this has instead been marked as 'Yes' which is not in accordance with the Practitioners Guide.

Following the internal auditor's conclusions on their Internal Audit Report, it appears that the Council did not comply with the LGA 1972 and proper practices in the year. Therefore, the Council should have answered 'No' to Assertion 3 on the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement.

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

Incomplete information was provided with the initial supporting data submitted for review with regards to significant variances, which was later provided on request. The parish council should in future ensure that all the necessary supporting information is provided with their annual submission.

The Internal Auditor has signed off the Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23 after the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 was approved. This means the completed 2022/23 report was not available for review and consideration with the form. It is presumed that the statements in Section 1 Annual Governance Statement refer to the previous year's internal audit report.

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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 2023.

External Auditor Name



External Auditor Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Moore'.

Date

28/09/2023