

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2020/21

In respect of

RADWAY PARISH COUNCIL – WA0160

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 2021; 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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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 disclosed that it made proper provision during the year 2020/21 for the exercise of public rights, by answering 'Yes' to Section 1, Assertion 4. However, as was reported last year, we are aware that it failed to do this and therefore should have answered 'No' to this assertion.

The AGAR has not been signed/approved in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015:

- Section 1 was not signed by the Clerk.
- Section 2 was not signed by the Responsible Finance Officer.

The smaller authority failed to approve the AGAR in time to publish it before 1 July 2021, the date required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and did not disclose this by answering 'No' to Section 1, Box 1.

The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review:

- The smaller authority has confirmed that the 2019/20 figure in Section 2, Box 9 is incorrect.

Sections 1 and 2 have not been prepared in accordance with proper practices. Only the Chair has signed Sections 1 and 2. If the Chair has temporarily been acting as RFO, then another member should sign on behalf of the smaller authority. Please ensure that an RFO is appointed in line with section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 as soon as possible

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 it failed to make proper provision during the year 2021/22 for the exercise of public rights, since the approval date was after the start of the period for the exercise of public rights. As a result, the smaller authority must answer 'No' to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2021/22 and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights during 2022/23.

The smaller authority should ensure that it has regard to the level of reserves held when considering future precept requests.

The smaller authority has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance assertion in Section 1, Box 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.

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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 2021.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature



Date

28/09/2021

* 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)