

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

In respect of

**Hintlesham & Chattisham Parish Council – SF0200**

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

### 2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 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 AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review.

- Section 2, Box 7 for the prior year does not agree to Boxes 1+2+3-(4+5+6) due to the restatement of the year end balances. One of figures in Boxes 1-7 for the prior year should also have been restated for this error.
- Section 2, Box 4 incorrectly includes items which are not staff costs as defined in the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners’ Guide. Please note that Box 4 should comprise payments made in relation to the employment of staff including only gross salary, employers’ national insurance contributions, employers’ pension contributions, gratuities for employees or former employees and severance or terminations payments to employees. Employment expenses which are benefits (mileage, travel, etc.) and items of reimbursement of expenses for postage, stationery or other outlays made on behalf of the smaller authority are not staff costs for the purpose of completion of the AGAR in accordance with proper practice. The figures in Section 2, Boxes 4 and 6 should read £2,385 and £11,511 for the current year and £2,101 and £34,922 for the prior year (respectively).

The smaller authority failed to approve the AGAR in time to publish it before 1 July 2023, the date required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and did not disclose this by answering ‘No’ to Section 1, Box 1.

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 2023/24 for the exercise of public rights, since the period for the exercise of public rights did not include the first 10 working days of July. As a result, the smaller authority must answer ‘No’ to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights during 2024/25.

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

### 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

*PKF Littlejohn LLP*

Date

24/09/2023