

## Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2019/20

In respect of **Itchingfield Parish Council**

### 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 and Ireland) and **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

### 2 External auditor report 2019/20

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 not provided any information in relation to how they considered internal and external report points raised in the prior year, which was requested in relation to the intermediate level testing required to be considered by the Council this year. We have confirmed, from other information received, that the Council has properly provided the period for electors' rights this year and has completed the Return accurately. However, we could not directly confirm whether the Council was provided with any kind of written internal audit report this year whether reported formally or otherwise, other than the Annual Internal Audit Report included with the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. Having reviewed the minutes around the time of both reports, there is no clear confirmation of either the Internal or External Reports being considered and formally accepted, or otherwise, by the Council. We have therefore been unable to confirm and consider whether any and all points raised in those reports have been properly considered by the Council in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, regulations 6(3)(a) and 20. If the reports have not been properly considered, the Council should also have provided a 'No' response to assertion 7 on the Annual Governance Statement which specifically refers to this point.

The Council only included one PWLB loan repayment in Box 5 of the Accounting Statements. Both payments were made in the year however the second has been included in Box 6 in error. Box 5 should therefore have been £4,388 higher and Box 6 lower by the same amount. Care should be taken in future to ensure the correct analysis is provided.

The Council has answered 'Yes' to Box 4 of the Annual Governance Statement which relates to whether the proper period of elector's rights was given during the year. Our external audit for the 2019 year noted that the public rights period was not provided for correctly in the prior year and so this should have been answered 'No'.

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

The Internal Auditor answered 'Yes' to Box L in the Annual Internal Audit Report. Given the Council did not provide the proper period for electors' rights in the summer of 2019, this should have been answered 'No'.

### 3 External auditor certificate 2019/20

We certify/ ~~do not 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.

\*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name



External Auditor Signature

Date

27/11/2020

\*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](http://www.nao.org.uk))