

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

In respect of **Northampton Town Council – NH0267**

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

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 Section 2, Boxes 11 (a) and (b) in respect of trust funds has been left blank, the smaller authority has confirmed that it does not act as sole managing trustee for trust funds, and thus the responses should have been ‘No’ and ‘N/A’ respectively. The smaller authority should ensure the AGAR is fully completed in future.

In the completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report, and their detailed report, the internal auditor has drawn attention to weaknesses in relation to details of earmarked reserves not recorded in the minutes, the internal control process and the website requires attention for consistency and missing reports. 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:

- evidence that on appointment of the internal auditor, it satisfied itself with regard to the competence of the internal auditor and that there is a signed letter of engagement in place. We have seen an unsigned version of the engagement letter, but no evidence of the council confirming the appointment is recorded in the minutes for the 2022/23 financial year.

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



Date

27/09/2023