

Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2021/22

In respect of

Stedham with Iping 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 2022; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors

2 External auditor report 2021/22

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.

It is apparent that the proper procedure to post a notice of audit conclusion in line with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Section 16 was not followed for 2020/21. This requires a statement of the Conclusion of the Audit to be published with the supporting documentation. As a result, we would have expected to see a 'No' response at Assertion 3. The council should ensure it posts all of the remaining required documents on conclusion of the review.

We identified during our review of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return that boxes 4 and 6 of the prior year (2020-21) on Section 2 - Accounting Statements were restated due to office expenses being reported in box 4 in error. In reviewing the 2021-22 return we note that the prior year figures have been amended to reflect the correct analysis however the column has not been marked as 'Restated' to bring it to the attention of the reader, which is a breach of proper practices and as a result a 'No' response should have been provided at assertion 3 on the 2021-22 Governance Statement. As the figures for the 2022 year are correctly stated we do not believe this should impact the 2022-23 return.

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

The Return required to be amended in respect of Box 10 of Section 2 - Accounting Statements. This was originally left blank and resubmitted with a '0' inserted. The original return advertised to the public was therefore technically incorrect although we consider there to be no significant impact from this omission. The Council should in future ensure that all boxes are fully completed in accordance with paragraph 2.5 of the Practitioners' Guide.

During our review we identified that the notice of conclusion of audit had not been published. We would therefore have anticipated the Internal Auditor's Report to show a 'No' response at M.

It was also noted during our review that the 2021 AGAR documents were no longer appearing on the council's website. It is a requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 that documents be available for a minimum period of 5 years. This has been resolved and the documents re-instated.

3 External auditor certificate 2021/22

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 2022.

External Auditor Name



External Auditor Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Moore", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Date

25/09/2022