

## Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of

Graffham Parish Council

### 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 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors

### 2 External auditor limited assurance opinion 2023/24

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 answered 'Yes' to Assertion 4 of Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return which relates to how the Notice of Public Rights was advertised within the financial year 2023-24. Therefore, it relates to the Notice announcing the public right to review the 2022-23 return which was published during 2023-24. As noted in the Auditor Report last year, this notice was not correctly advertised therefore this Assertion should have been answered 'No'.

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

On initial submission of the AGAR, Assertion 7 was unanswered. On query, this section was resubmitted with a 'Yes' response which is consistent with our expectations. We have no remaining concerns in this area.

The internal auditor has provided a 'yes' response at control objective K on their report. This suggests that the council correctly claimed exemption from audit in the previous (2022-23) year. As the council was not exempt and did not claim exemption, the answer to this point should have been 'not covered'.

Last year the External Audit Report noted that the Notice of Public Rights did not include the first ten working days of July. Therefore, we expected a 'No' response to control objective M on the Annual Internal Audit Report.

### 3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

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 2024.

\*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

 MOORE

External Auditor Signature



Date

26/09/2024