

Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2019/20

In respect of **Brightwell-cum-Sotwell 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 Internal Auditor noted (Box I of the Annual Internal Audit Report) that there were errors on bank reconciliations during the year. The Council has explained this was due to some information being missed on handover between clerks however this suggests the Council should have answered 'No' to Assertion 1 on the Annual Governance Statement in relation to this. We note the problem has now been recorded as resolved.

Our external audit report raised a similar error in 2019 where the Internal Auditor report raised issues that were not reflected on the Annual Governance Statement and that this demonstrated that Internal and External Audit report matters had not been fully dealt with by the authority. As such the authority has again breached the requirement should have answered 'No' to Assertion 7 of Section 1 of the Return.

The Council has understated the 2019 figures in Box 2 of Section 2 of the Return. This appears to be an input error but is £3,000 lower than last year and means the comparative figures in this section do not add down. This is a technical breach of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Regulation 12(1) as the Return is not completed in accordance with the underlying records. Therefore, we would expect to see a 'No' response for Assertion 1 on the next Return.

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

Box 9 of Section 1 and box 11 of Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return was initially incomplete when submitted. The form has been revised and resubmitted to show answers of 'N/A' and 'No' respectively, which is consistent with other responses and explanations provided.

The authority has not entered a website address on Section 1 of the Return which is required under the Transparency Code.

We note the Internal Auditor has not covered assertion L on the Annual Internal Audit Report noting they were unable to confirm the notice of completion of the 2019 audit was displayed correctly. The Council should consider asking the Internal Auditor to verify this when available on a proactive basis or retaining evidence to show the Internal Auditor when they come to review this area.

3 External auditor certificate 2019/20

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 2020.

External Auditor Name



External Auditor Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Moore'.

Date

22/11/2020

*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)