

Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2021/22

In respect of

Crowmarsh 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 was noted on review that the announcement of the Period for Public Rights was the same date as the approval of Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. Regulation 12 – 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 set out the order required to be followed when approving, announcing and publishing the Return and related documents in order to satisfy the Public Rights requirements. The Return must be approved prior to the Notice being published. To be able to demonstrate this, proper practice requires that the Notice is published no sooner than the day following the approval meeting and the Public Rights period commences no sooner than the next working day after that.

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

A review of the level of reserves initially suggested that the council was carrying an excessive amount of general reserves. Whilst local authorities are allowed to accumulate reserves earmarked for specific projects as well as carry an amount of reserves to ensure they have a balanced budget, they are not permitted to retain excessive non-earmarked reserves. On further review it was explained that there are two significant projects for which funds are being raised. The council is also looking to obtain grants and other funding to assist with their completion but to date has not formally earmarked reserves for these purposes. We would recommend in future, as part of their budgeting process, the amount of funds which have been specifically accumulated towards these projects be earmarked so this is not an issue for the future.

3 External auditor certificate 2021/22

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 2022.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name



External Auditor Signature

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

Date

23/09/2022