

### Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of **Basildon Parish Council – BE0006**

#### 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 2025; 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 2024/25

Except for the matters reported below, 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.

- Section 1, Assertion 1 has been incorrectly completed. While payments are approved at meetings, and this is recorded in the minutes, there is no evidence of regular reporting of budget performance throughout the year. This is consistent with the Internal Auditor’s response to Internal Control Objective D.
- Section 1, Assertion 2 has been incorrectly completed. The smaller authority does not have current Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in place. This is consistent with the Internal Auditor’s response to Internal Control Objective B.
- Section 1, Assertion 5 has been incorrectly completed. Information received from the smaller authority highlights that risk management arrangements were not reviewed and approved by the authority as a whole during the year. As a result, this assertion should have been answered ‘No’. This is consistent with the Internal Auditor’s response to Internal Control Objective C.
- It has come to our attention from the internal auditor that the smaller authority has community land that has been valued at £Nil. The Practitioners’ Guide (the Guide) states that smaller authorities ‘need to apply a reasonable approach to asset valuation which is consistent from year to year’. Under this range of possible approaches, all assets are expected to carry some value, no matter how small. In particular, the Guide states that where assets are gifted at zero cost to the authority, they should be recorded at a nominal value of £1. When submitting the 2025/26 AGAR, the smaller authority should ensure that the 2024/25 comparative figure in Box 9 is restated for consistency and comparability.

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

In the completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report, and their detailed report, the internal auditor has drawn attention to weaknesses in relation to reserves, email management, updating Standing Orders and reviewing Financial Regulations. The smaller authority must ensure that action is taken to address these areas of weakness in a timely manner.

#### 3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

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 2025.

External Auditor Name

**PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP**

External Auditor Signature



Date

**09/09/2025**