

Email

To: deputytownclerk@northamtowncouncil.gov.uk Date: 21 September 2023

Organisation: Northam Town Council Our ref: DV0269

From: sba@pkf-l.com Your ref:

Dear Mr Langton

We issued our external report and certificate for Northam Town Council on 14 September 2023 which contained one 'other' matter in relation to the period for the exercise of public rights not meeting statutory requirements.

Unfortunately an error in the recording of the start of the inspection period date on our database meant the period appeared to be less than the required 30 working days. However, on closer inspection we can confirm that the period was compliant and the date was mistakenly read as 28th June instead of 26th June. As a result the Council does not need to take any action in relation to the previously raised 'other' matter in our report.

As you are aware, once we issue our opinion and certify closure we are unable to reissue our report; however this email may be published with the External Auditor Report for clarification.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused.



Kind Regards

SBA Team
For and on behalf of PKF Littlejohn LLP
sba@pkf-l.com

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Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of **Northam Town Council – DV0269**

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 2023; 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 2022/23

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 9 has been incorrectly completed. As reported in the external auditor report for 2021/22, there were delays in opening a separate bank account for the Charity the smaller authority acts as sole managing trustee for. As a result the Charity transactions and balances are included in the smaller authority’s bank account and subsequently in the figures reported in Section 2 of the AGAR, until post 31 March 2023 when following the funds being recorded completely separately in a separate accounts package and bank account, the remaining creditor balance of £5,993 was paid over into the Charity’s account. As a result, this Assertion should have been answered ‘No’. In addition, Section 2, Box 11 (b) should have also been answered ‘No’

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

We note that the smaller authority did not comply with Regulation 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as it failed to make proper provision during the year 2023/24 for the exercise of public rights, since the period for the exercise of public rights was less than 30 consecutive working days in length. As a result, the smaller authority must answer ‘No’ to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights during 2024/25.

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

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 2023.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

PKF Littlejohn LLP SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

13/09/2023