Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2025/26

In respect of **Great Blakenham Parish Council – SF0163**

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 2026; 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 2025/26

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 2 has been incorrectly completed. The Internal Auditor highlighting the fact that the smaller authority does not produce regular budget monitoring reports comparing budgeted and actual income and expenditure, VAT has not been correctly identified, recorded and claimed, Section 137 payments have not been separately recorded, and the Asset Register was not reviewed during the year. These are all consistent with the Internal Auditor's response to Internal Control Objective B and H.

Section 1, Assertion 3 has been incorrectly completed. The Internal Auditor highlighting the fact that the smaller authority has not produced or published its report for 2025/26 and has not published the report on its website. These are all consistent with the Internal Auditor's response to Internal Control Objective L.

Section 1, Assertion 6 has been incorrectly completed. The Internal Auditor highlighting the fact that the smaller authority has not formally reviewed the scope, effectiveness, or independence of its internal audit arrangements, as required under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Section 1, Assertion 7 has been incorrectly completed. The Internal Auditor highlighting the fact that the Internal Audit Report for the year ended 31 March 2025 was not formally considered by Full Council and appropriate action had not been taken in response to the recommendations raised.

Section 1, Assertion 10 has been incorrectly completed. The Internal Auditor highlighting the fact that the smaller authority has not reviewed its Publication Scheme, was not fully compliant with GDPR requirements, had not published a website accessibility statement, and there was no evidence that the Council had formally adopted its IT Policy. These all are consistent with the Internal Auditor's response to Internal Control Objective O.

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

The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review. The AGAR has been amended.

3 External auditor certificate 2025/26

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 2026.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP Date 07/09/2026