Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2025/26

In respect of **Silloth-on-Solway Town Council**

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 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, 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 council has answered 'Yes' to Assertion 4 of Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return which relates to how the Notice of Public Rights was advertised within the financial year 2025/26. Therefore, it relates to the Notice announcing the public right to review the 2024/25 return which was published during 2025/26. As noted in the Auditor Report last year, this notice was not correctly advertised therefore this Assertion should have been answered 'No'.

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

The council have published the exempt authority version of our Notice of Public Rights template form. As it contains misleading information for a non-exempt authority, we do not consider the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Section 15(2)(b) to have been properly met. The council should look to use the correct template in future and provide a 'No' response for Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement on the 2026/27 AGAR.

The responsibility for establishing and maintaining an adequate and effective system of internal audit rests with the council. As part of best-practice guidance for internal audit, every authority should ensure that it has a letter of engagement covering the roles and responsibilities of the internal auditor, as set out in paragraph 4.13 of the SAPPP Practitioners' Guide 2025. We note that the council does not currently hold an active letter of engagement with its internal auditor. Although this represents best practice rather than a mandatory requirement, we recommend that the council and internal auditor formalise and retain an appropriate letter of engagement for future years.

Last year the External Audit Report noted that the Notice of Public Rights was incorrectly provided - the notice of public rights period had been announced before the AGAR was approved. Therefore, we expected a 'No' response to control objective M on the Annual Internal Audit Report.

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	External Auditor Signature	Date
MOORE	Moore	11/08/2026