

Basic audits 2024-25

Application: Council subject to a Basic audit for 2024-25

The Auditor General's right of access to information and explanations

Section 52 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 provides the Auditor General with the right of access to all information and explanations that he considers to be necessary for the purposes of the audit. Persons holding such information are required to provide this on request.

The following information is provided to assist councils to prepare information required for the audit of accounts.

Councils must note that this information request represents the core information we require. In most cases, this will be sufficient for us to complete the audit.

However, we may request any further information that we consider necessary to complete the audit. Further information may be required due to issues being identified or clarification being required during the audit process and/or if we receive correspondence related to individual councils.

Audit cycle

Your Council is subject to a 'basic' audit this year. The information required for audit can be seen below.

To view the audit cycle for the period 2024-25 to 2026-27, please refer to the attached document 'TCC_audit_cycle_by_county.pdf'. It is arranged by county.

Information required

Council contact details and core information

Each year, we identify numerous changes to clerk's/councils' contact details. In many cases, councils do not inform us of these changes.

We will be asking all councils to confirm their contact details each year to help us maintain our records.

Page 5 sets out the contact details and other core information we require. All councils must complete this so that we can ensure our dataset is up to date.

Bank reconciliation

A bank reconciliation is a control schedule prepared by the Council that agrees the balance per the bank statement at the year end to the bank balance per the Council's own records e.g. the cashbook. The Council should prepare a bank reconciliation every time it receives a bank statement to ensure that any errors are identified at an early stage.

The bank reconciliation(s) should cover all the Council's bank accounts. If the Council has more than one bank account it is helpful if you can provide a summary of the bank reconciliations that agrees to Box 8 on the Annual Return in addition to the detailed reconciliations prepared for each account.

If there are no outstanding items at the year-end you must still supply a bank reconciliation. A zero or "Nil" should be included in the relevant lines on the schedule or a clear statement should be made to that effect.

An example bank reconciliation is provided on page 4. We recommend that councils use this format.

Explanations of significant variances on the Accounting Statements

We require explanations for significant variances (increases or decreases) of more than 15% between the current audit year and the last audit year in lines 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 13. Variances of less than 15% need not be explained.

Positive and negative variances must be explained.

Your explanations must be quantified, i.e. state how much of the variance is covered by each specific explanation. Your explanations must ensure that the variances for each line are explained and quantified to within 15%.

You can set out your explanations of variances in any way you wish, but they should be clear and complete and easy to follow. You should not simply send a copy of a cashbook. We need to understand why the council's activity level changed.

Our suggested method of how to identify variances that require explanation, and suggested layout for providing explanations are set out on pages 7 and 8.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

For those councils subject to the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, a copy of the Council's report on how it is contributing to the wellbeing of its area.

Governance themes 2024-25

Capital projects

Please provide the following information:

1. Details of capital projects undertaking during the year. This should include project name and spend in year. If none, please state that this is the case.
2. A copy of the minutes of the meeting at which the project contract was approved.

Member and officer training

Please provide the following information:

1. A copy of the Council's training plan.

Completion of audit 2023-24

Please provide the following information:

1. Link to the Council's website page where the audit completion notice for 2023-24 has been published or:
2. If the 2023-24 audit is not complete, link to the Council's website page where the latest audit completion notice has been published.

PLEASE NOTE THAT FOR THIS ITEM WE WANT A LINK TO YOUR WEBSITE NOT A COPY OF THE DOCUMENT

Annual Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

Accounting statement 2024-25 for:

Name of body: WELSHPOOL TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 (£)	31 March 2025 (£)	
Statement of income and expenditure/receipts and payments			
1. Balances brought forward	185,704	37,689	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Must agree to line 7 of the previous year.
2. (+) Income from local taxation/levy	699,049	731,075	Total amount of income received/receivable in the year from local taxation (precept) or levy/contribution from principal bodies.
3. (+) Total other receipts	305,029	284,288	Total income or receipts recorded in the cashbook minus amounts included in line 2. Includes support, discretionary and revenue grants.
4. (-) Staff costs	389,987	345,167	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include salaries and wages, taxable allowances, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and termination costs. Exclude reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	5,559	75,332	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on external borrowing (if any).
6. (-) Total other payments	756,547	582,557	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook minus staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	37,689	49,995	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6).
Statement of balances			
8. (+) Debtors	83,508	54,491	Income and expenditure accounts only: Enter the value of debts owed to the body at the year-end.
9. (+) Total cash and investments	61,019	46,939.	All accounts: The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and investments held at 31 March. This must agree with the reconciled cashbook balance as per the bank reconciliation.
10. (-) Creditors	106,838	51,435	Income and expenditure accounts only: Enter the value of monies owed by the body (except borrowing) at the year-end.
11. (=) Balances carried forward	37,689	49,995	Total balances should equal line 7 above: Enter the total of (8+9-10).
12. Total fixed assets and long-term assets	19,898,553	19,900,942	The asset and investment register value of all fixed assets and any other long-term assets held as at 31 March.
13. Total borrowing	74,000	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

Annual Governance Statement

We acknowledge as the members of the Council, our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the accounting statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

	Agreed?		'YES' means that the Council:	Toolkit
	Yes	No*		
1. In consultation with the community, we have developed a vision and purpose for the Council and used this vision to inform the Council's plans, budget and activities.			Has consulted with the community and focussed its activities to meet the community's needs	A, C
2. We have adopted a Code of Conduct for members and officers and implemented an appropriate training plan for members to ensure all councillors understand their role and responsibilities.			Ensures that councillors understand and are equipped to deliver their roles and responsibilities.	B
3. We have ensured that we electronically publish the information the Council is required to publish by law, on its website at [insert name of website].			Is transparent about its activities and provides the public with all information required by law	A, C, D, E
4. We have taken all reasonable steps to ensure that the Council complies with relevant laws and regulations when exercising its functions, including employment of staff and payment of allowances to members.			Has only done things that it has the legal power to do and has conformed to codes of practice and standards in the way it does so	
5. We have adopted standing orders, financial regulations and terms of reference and ensure that these are followed when conducting business including functions delegated to committees.			Has adopted rules and procedures to govern how the Council conducts its business including procurement of goods and services.	B, E
6. We have put in place arrangements for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective financial management including the setting and monitoring of the Council's budget Maintenance and security of accurate and up to date accounting and other financial records Identifying potential liabilities, commitments, events and transactions that may have a financial impact on the Council. 			Calculated its budget requirement in accordance with the law and properly monitors its financial position throughout the year	D
7. We have maintained an adequate system of internal control and management of risk, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption including clearly documented procedures for authorising and making payments assessment and management of risks facing the Council an adequate and effective system of internal audit and reviewed the effectiveness of these arrangements. 			Made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge including arranging for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether these meet the needs of the body.	D, E
8. We have taken appropriate action on all matters raised in previous reports from internal and external audit.			Considered and taken appropriate action to address weaknesses /issues brought to its attention by internal and external auditors.	D, E
9. We have provided proper opportunity for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014.			Has given all persons interested the opportunity to inspect the body's accounts as set out in the notice of audit issued by the Auditor General.	E
10. General power of Competence – The Council has resolved to adopt the General Power of Competence set out in Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021			Meets the eligibility criteria to exercise the general Power of Competence	E

* Please include an explanation for any 'No' answers

Additional disclosure notes

Include here any additional disclosures the Council considers necessary to aid the reader's understanding of the accounting statement and/or the annual governance statement

The following information is provided to assist the reader to understand the accounting statement and/or the Annual Governance Statement

1. Expenditure under S137 Local Government Act 1972

Section 137(1) of the 1972 Act permits the Council to spend on activities for which it has no other specific powers if the Council considers that the expenditure is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, the area or any part of it, or all or some of its inhabitants, providing that the benefit is commensurate with the expenditure. Section 137(3) also permits the Council to incur expenditure for certain charitable and other purposes. The maximum expenditure that can be incurred under both section 137(1) and (3) for the financial year 2024-25 was £10.81 per elector.

In 2024-25, the Council made payments totalling £ 793 under section 137. These payments are included within 'Other payments' in the Accounting Statement.

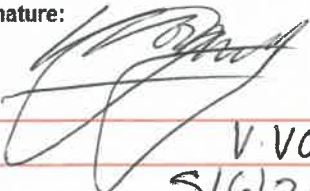
2.

Trust Funds

Trust funds – The Council acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing trust fund(s)/assets. We exclude transactions related to these trusts from the Accounting Statement. In our capacity as trustee, we have discharged our responsibility in relation to the accountability for the fund(s) including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A	Has met all of its responsibilities where it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.
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Council approval and certification

The Council is responsible for the preparation of the accounting statements and the annual governance statement in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 (the Act) and the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014.

Certification by the RFO I certify that the accounting statements contained in this Annual Return present fairly the financial position of the Council, and its income and expenditure, or properly present receipts and payments, as the case may be, for the year ended 31 March 2025.	Approval by the Council I confirm that these accounting statements and Annual Governance Statement were approved by the Council under minute reference:
RFO signature: 	Minute ref:
Name: V. VOYSEY	Chair signature:
Date: 5/6/2025	Name:
	Date:

* Please include an explanation for any 'No' answers

Annual internal audit report to:

Name of body:

The Council's internal audit, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, has included carrying out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the financial year ending 31 March 2025.

The internal audit has been carried out in accordance with the Council's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the following control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Council.

	Agreed?				Outline of work undertaken as part of the internal audit (NB not required if detailed internal audit report presented to body)
	Yes	No*	N/A	Not covered**	
1. Appropriate books of account have been properly kept throughout the year.					
2. Financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.					
3. The body assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.					
4. The annual precept/levy/resource demand requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process, progress against the budget was regularly monitored, and reserves were appropriate.					
5. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.					
6. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.					
7. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with contracts/ minuted approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.					
8. Asset and investment registers were complete, accurate, and properly maintained.					

* Please include an explanation for any 'No' answers

	Agreed?				Outline of work undertaken as part of the internal audit (NB not required if detailed internal audit report presented to body)
	Yes	No*	N/A	Not covered**	
9. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.					
10. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments/income and expenditure), agreed with the cashbook, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, and where appropriate, debtors and creditors were properly recorded.					
11. Trust funds (including charitable trusts). The Council has met its responsibilities as a trustee.					

For any risk areas identified by the Council (list any other risk areas below or on separate sheets if needed) adequate controls existed:

	Agreed?				Outline of work undertaken as part of the internal audit (NB not required if detailed internal audit report presented to body)
	Yes	No*	N/A	Not covered**	
12.					
13.					
14.					

* If the response is 'no', please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

** If the response is 'not covered', please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned, or if coverage is not required, internal audit must explain why not.

[My detailed findings and recommendations which I draw to the attention of the Council are included in my detailed report to the Council dated _____.] * Delete if no report prepared.

Internal audit confirmation

I/we confirm that as the Council's internal auditor, I/we have not been involved in a management or administrative role within the body (including preparation of the accounts) or as a member of the body during the financial years 2024-25 and 2025-26. I also confirm that there are no conflicts of interest surrounding my appointment.

Name of person who carried out the internal audit:

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit:

Date:

* Please include an explanation for any 'No' answers

Bank reconciliation²

COUNCIL NAME: WELSHPOOL TOWN COUNCIL

COUNTY: POLWYS

		£
A	Balance on the bank statement at 31 March (taken from bank statement)	14,447 32,217
B	Outstanding items Less unpresented cheques (List each outstanding cheque)	0
C	Plus uncleared payments into bank (to agree with attached list)	0
D	Petty cash Plus any petty cash balance held at 31 March	275
E	Balance in the cash book (Authority's own records) at 31 March (Calculated as A-B+C+D=E and agrees with Box 9 on the Annual Return)	46,939

² The bank reconciliation provided must equal line 9 on the annual return. Therefore, you need to either provide a reconciliation for every account held by the Council or combine them all on one sheet.

Council contact details and other core information

Please provide the following contact details for the Council.

	Current details
Clerk's name	RICHARD WILLIAMS.
Clerk's address ¹	WELSHPOOL TOWN COUNCIL TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE 1 VICARAGE GARDENS, WELSHPOOL, SY21 7DD
Clerk's contact telephone	01938 553142
Clerk's email address	TOWN.CLERK@WELSHPOOLTOWNCOUNCIL.GOV.UK
Council website	WWW.WELSHPOOLTOWNCOUNCIL.GOV.UK

Accounting records

Please indicate the format in which the Council keeps its accounting records

	Yes / No
Manuscript cashbook / receipts and payments book	
Spreadsheet	
Accounts software packages:	
• Rialtas	YES
• Sage	
• Scribe	
• Xero	
• Other (Please specify)	

¹ We will use this address to return any original records to you. The address you provide must be listed on [Postcode finder](#). We cannot return documents to a PO Box.

Explanation of variances

Working out what variances need to be explained

Line in section 1	Last Year £	This Year £	Variance Increase (+) or decrease (-) (This Year minus Last Year) £	% (Variance divided by Last Year figure multiplied by 100)	Explanation required? Less than 15% - NO More than 15% - YES
Line 3 Total other receipts	309,029	284,288	(20,741)	-6.80	NO
Line 4 Staff costs	389,987	349,167	(44,820)	-11.49	NO
Line 5 Loan interest/ capital repayments	5,559	75,332	69,773	1255.14	YES
Line 6 Total other payments	756,547	582,557	(173,990)	(23)	YES
Line 8 Debtors and stock balances	83,508	54,491	(29,017)	(34.75)	YES
Line 10 Creditors	106,838	51,435	(55,403)	(51.86)	YES
Line 12 Total fixed assets and long term assets	19,898,553	19,900,242	1,689	0.01	NO
Line 13 Total borrowing	74,000	0	(74,000)	(100)	YES

Suggested layout for explanations

One sheet to be prepared for **each variance** that requires explanation.

Line	£
Figure in This Year column	
Figure in Last Year column	
Variance (This Year figure less Last Year figure) A positive figure is an increase, a negative figure is a decrease	

Reasons (as many as are applicable)	Amount £
Reason 1	
Reason 2	
Reason 3	
Reason 4	
Unexplained	
Confirm unexplained amount is less than 15% of Last Year figure	

Please note that explanations should be quantified and should consider one off items in both the current and prior years. Explanations that do not quantify each element of the variance will not be accepted as a full explanation and will likely result in a qualified opinion. Examples of unacceptable explanations include:

- Expenditure increased because the Council spent more on staff.
- Other payments increased because of park benches and grass cutting,

Suggested layout for explanations

One sheet to be prepared for **each variance** that requires explanation.

Line <u>6</u>	£
Figure in This Year column	756,547
Figure in Last Year column	582,557
Variance (This Year figure less Last Year figure) A positive figure is an increase, a negative figure is a decrease	(173,990)

Reasons (as many as are applicable)	Amount £
Reason 1 SECTION 137	- 942
Reason 2 EVENTS / ADMIN INC. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS	- 21,342
Reason 3 BUILDINGS MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS	- 154,120
Reason 4 SERVICES INC. STOCK & UTILITIES	2,414
Unexplained	
Confirm unexplained amount is less than 15% of Last Year figure	

Please note that explanations should be quantified and should consider one off items in both the current and prior years. Explanations that do not quantify each element of the variance will not be accepted as a full explanation and will likely result in a qualified opinion. Examples of unacceptable explanations include:

- Expenditure increased because the Council spent more on staff.
- Other payments increased because of park benches and grass cutting,

Suggested layout for explanations

One sheet to be prepared for **each variance** that requires explanation.

Line8.....	£
Figure in This Year column	54,491
Figure in Last Year column	83,508
Variance (This Year figure less Last Year figure) A positive figure is an increase, a negative figure is a decrease	(29,017)

Reasons (as many as are applicable)	Amount £
Reason 1 DECREASE IN V.A.T CONTROL ACCOUNT	(13,054)
Reason 2 INCREASE IN STOCK	1,011
Reason 3 DECREASE IN PREPAYMENTS	(2,229)
Reason 4 DECREASE IN GENERAL DEBTORS	(14,745)
Unexplained	
Confirm unexplained amount is less than 15% of Last Year figure	

Please note that explanations should be quantified and should consider one off items in both the current and prior years. Explanations that do not quantify each element of the variance will not be accepted as a full explanation and will likely result in a qualified opinion. Examples of unacceptable explanations include:

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- Other payments increased because of park benches and grass cutting,

Suggested layout for explanations

One sheet to be prepared for **each variance** that requires explanation.

Line10.....	£
Figure in This Year column	51,435
Figure in Last Year column	106,838
Variance (This Year figure less Last Year figure) A positive figure is an increase, a negative figure is a decrease	(55,403)

Reasons (as many as are applicable)	Amount £
Reason 1 INCREASE IN CHARITY FUNDS HELD	1,742
Reason 2 INCREASE IN HOLDING DEPOSITS	158
Reason 3 INCREASE IN CREDIT CARD CREDITORS	799
Reason 4 DECREASE IN OTHER CREDITORS	(58,101)
Unexplained	
Confirm unexplained amount is less than 15% of Last Year figure	

Please note that explanations should be quantified and should consider one off items in both the current and prior years. Explanations that do not quantify each element of the variance will not be accepted as a full explanation and will likely result in a qualified opinion. Examples of unacceptable explanations include:

- Expenditure increased because the Council spent more on staff.
- Other payments increased because of park benches and grass cutting,

Suggested layout for explanations

One sheet to be prepared for **each variance** that requires explanation.

Line13.....	£
Figure in This Year column	0
Figure in Last Year column	74,000
Variance (This Year figure less Last Year figure) A positive figure is an increase, a negative figure is a decrease	(74,000)

Reasons (as many as are applicable)	Amount £
Reason 1 LOAN TO TRUST REPAID.	(74,000)
Reason 2	
Reason 3	
Reason 4	
Unexplained	
Confirm unexplained amount is less than 15% of Last Year figure	

Please note that explanations should be quantified and should consider one off items in both the current and prior years. Explanations that do not quantify each element of the variance will not be accepted as a full explanation and will likely result in a qualified opinion. Examples of unacceptable explanations include:

- Expenditure increased because the Council spent more on staff.
- Other payments increased because of park benches and grass cutting,

