

May 30, 2026

West Down Parish Council Internal Audit Report 2025/26

Testing was carried out using sampling where appropriate and covering a range of financial, risk and governance assessed as appropriate for a council of this size and complexity. The findings are reported below:

✓ **Governance and Control**

All councils of whatever size are required to annually prepare and consider:

- A general and financial risk assessment covering the council's activities.
- A statement of internal control.
- Annually review any charges for services whether or not they are increased and record this in minutes.

Councils under £25,000 turnover are legally required to publish on a website disclosure of information required by the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities 2014.

Councils with total turnover or expenditure over £25,000 are subject to the requirement of the Freedom of Information Act, where it is a requirement that public bodies publish certain information on their website, and should as best practice comply with the Local Government Smaller Bodies (Transparency Requirements) Regulations 2015.

Councils should ensure compliance with the rules regarding General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), which came into effect in May 2018.

Councils should have in place and periodically review:

- Standing orders for the conduct of council meetings are required by law and should be periodically review and changed to reflect current legislation.
- Financial regulations for the control of its financial administration are required by law and should be periodically reviewed for either changes in legislation or internal control procedure changes.
- Any Council moving away from 2 cheque signatories by Councillors and utilising online banking, should have procedures and controls in place to establish appropriate safeguards.

Satisfactory. The website is very comprehensive and compliant with the Transparency Code.

✓ **Precept, Budgets and Reserves**

The precept was agreed to the minute setting the precept, the principal authority tax collecting authority records. The receipt was traced and agreed to bank and cash book records. The

precept was set after consideration of a budget and consideration of an appropriate level of free reserves (the General Fund) which is generally accepted should lie between 3 and 12 months' expenditure.

Whilst the council have prepared a budget for 2026/27, no earmarked reserves are identified. The council minutes should document their discussion more fully and include discussion of considerations of reserves held.

✓ **Other Receipt or Income**

A sample of other receipts were tested to ensure that, as appropriate:

- That grants and interest were correctly recorded in the cash book and agreed to bank statement
- Chargeable services were correctly and promptly charged to the beneficiaries of those services and that arrangements were in place to pursue late payment.

Satisfactory, although it is recommended that a reconciliation, including previous years, be prepared relating to Parish Paths Partnership (P3) to assist with recording the balance, which is ring fenced.

✓ **Staff Cost**

Testing was carried out as appropriate to ensure that:

- Rates of pay were as approved by Council.
- Additional hours worked were approved and supported by time records.
- Employees are paid in accordance with contractual obligations and on the correct pay date.
- Employees have a written statement of principal terms and conditions.
- That PAYE and NI are operated and paid promptly.

Satisfactory, however, details of the clerk's annual leave should be recorded and will have a planned review at the next audit.

✓ **Payments including Bank and Petty Cash**

A sample of payments were tested as appropriate to confirm:

- Payments are made in accordance with financial regulations
- Payments are supported by invoice, receipt, expense claim, petty cash voucher or other appropriate documentation.
- Grant payments are subject to a proof of need assessment, are required to be evidenced as spent for the approved purpose, and unless having the general power of competence are made within permitted powers.
- Cheque payments are promptly cleared.
- Where payments are made other than by cheque with 2 councillor signatories the council has considered and actioned the requirements of appendix 10 of Governance and Accountability and have documented the process followed and annually review the control of wider definition "money".

Satisfactory, however, all invoices, where VAT is to be reclaimed, should be in the parish council name.

✓ **Insurance**

Insurance cover was reviewed as appropriate to confirm

- Adequate Fidelity Guarantee cover in place
- Range of cover in place has been reviewed at renewal and this has been recorded in the council minutes

- By sample test that assets other than land that appear on the Fixed Asset Register are insured or if not that there has been a decision not to cover them (for example because the excess is greater than the asset value insured).

Satisfactory. It was noted that Fidelity Guarantee (FG) insurance cover was increased in line with the indicative level, which equates to year-end balances plus half the annual precept.

The council will need to ensure that they have the necessary insurances in place for the car park.

✓ **Fixed Assets**

Tests were carried to confirm as appropriate

- Fixed asset register is up to date
- Additions have been correctly identified and a system exists for the identification of fixed assets
- That the disposal by scrapping, selling or part exchange of assets has been approved by council
- That where an insurance value has been used as the cost of an asset was unknown that the value is not increased as the insured value increases.

Satisfactory. The council have prepared a revised asset register in line with the Practitioners Guide. The council should investigate the whereabouts of the licences for the bus shelter sites and ensure that these are stored in a fireproof container along with other significant council documents.

Please refer to the audit checklist and request clarification for any of the audit points if necessary. Please provide a completed copy of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) once authorised. **In view of the External Auditors comments at the last audit, please ensure that approvals are in the correct order and minuted as such.**

Many thanks for your assistance in the completion of the audit.

Kind regards
Julie