WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

Small Local Government Bodies in Wales
Annual Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2015

Section 12 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 requires local government bodies in Wales to make up accounts each year to 31 March and to have those accounts audited by the Auditor General for Wales. Regulation 14 of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 states that smaller local government bodies (ie, those with annual income and expenditure below £2.5 million) must prepare their accounts in accordance with proper practices.

The following legislation defines proper practices as the One Voice Wales/SLCC Guidance publication *Governance and accountability for local councils in Wales – A Practitioners' Guide (2011)* (the Practitioners' Guide):

- Port health authorities: Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014, Regulation 4(b)
- Small joint committees: Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Wales) Regulations 2003, Regulation 25(1)

The Practitioners' Guide requires that smaller bodies prepare their accounts in the form of an annual return. This Annual Return meets the requirements of the Practitioners' Guide.

Please complete all sections highlighted in pink. Incomplete or incorrect returns may require additional external audit work and incur additional costs. Further guidance is included in Section 5 and in Section 2 which includes references to where the Practitioners' Guide has further information.

Under the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014, the Body must formally approve the return and certify Section 3 before the return is sent to the auditor. The Body must approve the Annual Return by 30 June. Unless the Annual Return needs to be amended, the auditor will certify the return and send it back to the Body for publication with no further approval by the Body required. The accounts approval and audit arrangements follow the process as set out below.

RFO/Clerk prepares Sections 1 and 2. Internal audit completes Section 4. RFO certifies return in Section 3 **before 30 June** and presents the return to the Body.

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The Body considers and approves the Annual Return at a meeting **before 30 June**. Section 3 of the return is signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting at which the Body approved the return.

RFO/Clerk sends the Annual Return and requested documents to the Auditor General for Wales.

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The Auditor General for Wales completes the audit.

If there are no amendments, the auditor will certify Section 3 and send it back to the Body for publication.

If amendments are required, the auditor will send the return back to the Body for amendment and re-approval. The amended return must then be sent back to the auditor for certification.

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The Body must publish the certified Annual Return by **30 September**.

If the Body is unable to publish the Annual Return by 30 September, it must publish the accounting statements together with a declaration and explanation that at the date of publication, the auditor has given no opinion.

Your external audit team will advise you what additional information is needed for the audit.

Please send the original Annual Return (ie, not a photocopy), together with any additional information requested, to your external auditor by the date specified by the auditor. Unless requested, please do not send any original financial records to the external auditor.

Audited and certified returns are sent back to the Body for publication or display of Sections 1, 2 and 3.

Section 1 – Accounting statements for: Joint Planning Policy Committee (Gwynedd and Isle of Anglesey Councils)

	Year ending		Notes and guidance for compilers
	31 March 2014 (£)	31 March 2015 (£)	Please round all figures to nearest £. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or nil balances. All figures must agree to the Body's underlying financial records for the relevant year.
1. Balances brought forward	0	175,440	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 and/or levy	886,438	601,204	Total amount of local taxation, rates and/or levy received or receivable in the year including funding from a sponsoring body.
3. (+) Total other receipts	364	157,272	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less income from local taxation and/or levy (Line 2). Include any grants received here.
4. (-) Staff costs	-463,551	-441,169	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and related expenses.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the Body's borrowing (if any).
6. (-) Total other payments	-247,811	-297,607	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	175,440	195,140	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6).
8. (+) Debtors and stock balances	0	7,718	**Income and expenditure accounts only:** Enter the value of debts owed to and stock balances held at the year-end.
9. (+) Total cash and investments	220,837	247,981	**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	-45,397	-60,559	**Income and expenditure accounts only:** Enter the value of monies owed by the Body (except borrowing) at the year-end.
11. (=) Balances carried forward	175,440	195,140	**Total balances should equal Line 7 above:** Enter the total of (8+9-10).
12. Total fixed assets and long-term assets	0	0	The original Asset and Investment Register value of all fixed assets, plus other long-term assets owned by the Body as at 31 March.
13. Total borrowing	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

14. Trust funds disclosure note	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A	The Body acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing (a) trust fund(s)/assets (readers should note that the figures above do not include any trust transactions).
			✓			✓	

Section 2 – Annual Governance Statement

We acknowledge as the members of the Body, 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 Body's accounting statements for the year ended 31 March 2015, that:

	Agreed?		'YES' means that the Body:	PG Chap.
	Yes	No*		
1. We have approved the accounting statements which have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 and proper practices.	✓		Prepared its accounting statements in the way prescribed by law.	6, 12
2. We have maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption, and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		Made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.	6, 7
3. We have taken all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and codes of practice that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the Body to conduct its business or on its finances.	✓		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 has done so.	6
4. We have provided proper opportunity for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014.	✓		Has given all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about the Body's accounts.	6, 23
5. We have carried out an assessment of the risks facing the Body and taken appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		Considered the financial and other risks it faces in the operation of the Body and has dealt with them properly.	6, 9
6. We have maintained an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Body's accounting records and control systems throughout the year and have received a report from the internal auditor.	✓		Arranged 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.	6, 8
7. We have taken appropriate action on all matters raised in previous reports from internal and external audit.	✓		Has responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.	6, 8, 23
8. We have considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on the Body and, where appropriate, have included them on the accounting statements.	✓		Disclosed everything it should have about its business during the year including events taking place after the year-end if relevant.	6

	Yes	No	N/A		
9. Trust funds – 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.			✓	Has met all of its responsibilities where it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.	3, 6

* Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'no' response given; and describe what action is being taken to address the weaknesses identified.

Section 3 – Certification and approval

Approval and certification of the accounts and annual governance statement

The Body is responsible for the preparation of the accounting statements in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 and for the preparation of an Annual Return which:

- summarises the Body's accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2015; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are important to the external auditor's responsibilities.

Certification by the RFO	**Approval by the Body**
Certificate under Regulation 15(1) Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 I certify that the accounting statements contained in this Annual Return presents fairly the financial position of the Body, and its income and expenditure, or properly presents receipts and payments, as the case may be, for the year ended 31 March 2015.	**Approval of accounting statements under Regulation 15(2) Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Annual Governance Statement** I confirm that these accounting statements and Annual Governance Statement were approved by the Body under body minute reference:
RFO signature: DLEdwards	**Chair signature:** DMi
Name: Dafydd L Edwards Statutory Finance Officer Gwynedd Council	**Name:** DAFYDD MEURIG
Date: 9/6/15	**Date:** 26/06/2015

External Audit Certificate

The external auditor conducts the audit in accordance with guidance issued by the Auditor General for Wales.

On the basis of their review of the Annual Return and supporting information, they report whether any matters that come to their attention give cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. We certify that we have completed the audit of the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2015 of:

Body

External auditor's report

~~[Except for the matters reported below]*~~ On the basis of our review, in our opinion, the information contained in the Annual Return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

~~[[These matters along with]* Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the Body/meeting are included in our report to the Body dated _____.]~~

~~(* Delete as appropriate)~~

External auditor's signature: AJBarlett **For and on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales**	
External auditor's name: A J BARLETT	**Date:** 30/9/15

Section 4 – Annual internal audit report to: **Joint Planning Policy Committee (Gwynedd and Isle of Anglesey Councils)**

The Body'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 2015.

The internal audit has been carried out in accordance with the Body'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 Body.

	Agreed?			
	Yes	No*	N/A	Not covered**
1. Appropriate books of account have been properly kept throughout the year.	✓			
2. The Body's 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 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 Body approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓			
8. Asset and investment registers were complete and accurate, and properly maintained.			✓	
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 Body has met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓	

For any risk areas identified by the Body (list any other risk areas below or on separate sheets if needed) adequate controls existed:	Agreed?			
	Yes	No*	N/A	Not covered**
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.

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: **Luned Fôn Jones**

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: Luned Fôn Jones

Date: 04-06-2015

Section 5 – Guidance notes on completing the 2015 Annual Return

1. **Please note the changes to the accounts approval and audit process for this year. These are described on the front cover of this Annual Return.**
2. For guidance please read the Practitioners' Guide (*Governance and accountability for local councils: A Practitioners' Guide 2011 (Wales)*) – available from One Voice Wales and SLCC. It contains everything you need for the financial year-end and the statutory audit.
3. **The Wales Audit Office Good Practice Exchange (www.wao.gov.uk/good-practice/finance/community-council-money) provides further information on the accounts and audit process along with guidance on governance matters.**
4. Please make sure that all sections are completed (ie, no empty pink boxes) by the appropriate person and the certificates in Section 3 are properly signed and dated. Avoid making any amendments to the completed return. If this is unavoidable, cross out the incorrect entries, make sure the amendments are properly initialled and an explanation for them is provided to the auditor. **Please do not use correction fluid.** Annual returns that are incomplete or contain unapproved and/or unexplained amendments or correction fluid will be returned unaudited.
5. Use the checklist provided below. Use a second pair of eyes, perhaps your internal auditor or the Chair, to review your Annual Return for completeness before sending a copy to the auditor.
6. Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation you send to your auditor with the copy Annual Return covers **all** your bank accounts and cash balances. If there are no reconciling items, please state this and provide evidence of the bank balances. If your Body holds any investments, please note their value on the bank reconciliation. The auditor should also be able to agree your bank reconciliation to Line 9 in Section 1. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the Practitioners' Guide*.
7. Please **explain fully** any significant variances in the accounting statements. The auditor wants to know that **you** understand the reasons for the change. Please include a relevant and quantified analysis as shown in the Practitioners' Guide examples and not just a copy of your detailed accounts.
8. Please do not send the auditor any information that you are not specifically asked for. Doing so is not helpful. Please ensure that you enclose all the information that the auditor has asked for. If the auditor has to review unsolicited information, repeat a request for information, receives an incomplete bank reconciliation or explanation of variances this may incur additional costs for which the auditor is entitled to charge additional fees.
9. Please make sure that Section 1 adds up! Also please ensure that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Line 7 of 2014) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Line 1 of 2015).
10. **Do not complete the External Audit Certificate in Section 3.** The external auditor completes this after the external audit work has been completed.
11. **Please deal with all correspondence with the external auditor promptly.** This will help you to meet your statutory obligations and will minimise the cost of the audit to the Body.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean that you may not have met requirements		Done?	
On submission to the external auditor		**Yes**	**No**
Accounts	Do the papers to be sent to the external auditor include an explanation of significant variations from last year to this year?		
	Does the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2015 agree to Line 9?		
Approval	Has the RFO certified Section 3 (Regulation 15 (1)) no later than 30 June 2015?		
	Has the Body approved the accounting statements before 30 June 2015 and has Section 3 been signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting at which approval was given?		
All sections	Have all pink boxes in Sections 1 and 2 been completed and explanations provided where needed?		
	Has all the information requested by the external auditor been sent with this Annual Return? Please refer to your notice of audit and any additional schedules provided by your external auditor.		

If accounts are amended after receipt of external auditor's report on matters arising		Yes	No
Accounts	Have the amended accounting statements been approved and Section 3 re-signed and re-dated as evidence of the Body's approval of the amendments before re-submission to the auditor?		