WETHERBY TOWN COUNCIL
AUDIT PLAN & INTERNAL CONTROLS 2026-27

"It is the council as a whole that is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of their functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk". - Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - A Practitioners' Guide 2014

INTRODUCTION

Wetherby Town Council is a local authority funded largely by public money and is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

In discharging this overall responsibility, Wetherby Town Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk. Therefore, a review of Wetherby Town Council's internal controls and audit plan for 2025/26 has been undertaken by Councillors in consultation with the Clerk at the meeting of the Council held on 12th May 2026.

This document may be reviewed as necessary throughout the year.

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL / RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER (RFO)

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's Proper Officer. The Clerk is also the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and is therefore responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for advising on the day-to-day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

The Clerk's work is supported by a self-employed Finance Assistant who conducts much of the data inputting and day-to-day work relating to the council's financial transactions.

The Council recognises that there are three tiers of audit and has planned accordingly.

CONTROLS / PLAN	REVIEW FOR 2024/25
Internal Controls within the Council.	
The Council has adopted a set of Financial Regulations on 10th May 2023, which are reviewed at least annually. These are based on templates obtained from the National Association of Local Councils.	Council to review and adopt updated model Financial Regulations as issued in May 2026
The RFO works with the Budgets & Governance Committee to prepare a budget for the Council's consideration each autumn. The RFO and Budgets Committee monitors the Council's performance against the agreed budget every month.	• The 2026 -2027 budget was approved at the Full Council meeting on 13th January 2026
Summary financial statements, which include a budget comparison, are presented for the Council's approval each month.	
All payments, including those made under delegated powers, are notified to the Council for formal approval and recorded in the minutes of the relevant meeting as part of the financial report.	
The Council maintains at least one bank account in its own name. Members of the Budgets Committee, who are also bank signatories, can verify bank balances using the online banking facility.	• At the start of the 2025/26 financial year the Council was operating two Unity Trust bank accounts. • Further accounts will be opened during the 2026/27 period in accordance with the council's Reserves & Investment policy.
The RFO carries out monthly bank reconciliations of the Council's bank accounts and petty cash system. A reconciliation is also carried out as part of the preparation of the Council's annual accounts. On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, two members of the Budgets Committee shall verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The	

Councillors shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. The agenda for each Budgets & Governance Meeting now includes a standardised list of checks that are carried out each month, based on suggestions provided by Internal Auditor.	
Payments are authorised by two members of the Council, who also sign the cheque stub (if appropriate) and the corresponding invoice / payment request. Councillors do not sign blank cheques!	
Councillors are kept informed of the overall financial position of the Council via a reserves analysis report. This dissects the bank balances so as to give Members a true understanding of the Council's financial position. The reserves report is included in the financial statements mid-way and at the end of the financial year. The Town Council has adopted a Reserves & Investment Policy.	• Implement Reserves & Investment Policy. Revised policy for approve on 12th May 2026
The Council has 9 employees. • All members of staff have contracts of employment. • The Council's insurance policy includes a fidelity guarantee to protect it from fraud related losses. • The Council has a current subscription to appropriate payroll software which regularly updates in accordance with guidance from HMRC. • The Council is registered as an employer with HMRC and meets RTI requirements through the monthly submission of electronic returns. • Staff are paid monthly via an internet banking payment (see below). • 'Rights to Work' checks are routinely carried out on all new members of staff and have been carried out on existing members of staff.	

Payments made by internet banking are made in accordance with the Council's financial regulations. Invoices and payment requests are checked by two members of the Budgets Committee prior to payment.	
The Council maintains an insurance policy which is reviewed each year prior to renewal.	• The Council last reviewed its insurance policy in 2022 before entering into a new, 3-year agreement brokered by BHIB which runs to 2024. The council's insurance provision will be reviewed during the 2024/25 period. Council reviewed policy in August 2025 and entered into an agreement with Ecclesiastical, which provides a comprehensive cover.
The Council maintains an asset register.	• Asset register approved by Council on 16th May 2023 and scheduled for updated approval on 14th May 2024. • The Council's asset register contains updated valuations on its buildings which are also represented in its current insurance policy • Update and reviewed at ATCM 12th May 2026.
The Council ensures that it follows current best practice in the following ways: • The Council is a member of the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations. • The current Clerk is a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks and has obtained the CILCA qualification. • It receives the Clerks and Councils Direct newsletter. • The Clerk and other members of staff regularly take advantage of training opportunities provided by YLCA and other relevant institutions. • Councillors are advised of and encouraged to take advantage of training opportunities provided by YLCA and other institutions.	• Membership of the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations was renewed in April 2024. • Council's Training Policy is scheduled for update at the Annual Town Council meeting on 13th May 2024. May 2025 and May 2026

Internal Audit	
Wetherby Town Council appoints an Internal Auditor at the start of each financial year. The appointment is recorded in the minutes of the relevant meeting of the Town Council. A letter, including the conditions and duration of the appointment, must be prepared and given to the Internal Auditor. The Internal Auditor is asked to review the Council's financial and other affairs for the current year in accordance with best practice; currently Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - A Practitioners Guide (March 2023 edition).	• The council's internal auditor for the 2025-26 period is: https://account-ant.co.uk/ • Council to acquire a new internal auditor for 26-27
The Council assures itself that the Internal Auditor is competent to carry out the task at hand and: • Understands basic accounting processes. • Understands the role of internal audit in reviewing systems. • Is aware of risk management issues. • Understands the account requirement of the legal framework and powers of local councils.	• The council's internal auditor is a member of the Internal Audit Forum.
The Internal Auditor will be expected to carry out their duties ethically and with objectivity and integrity.	
The Internal Auditor's tests of the Town Council's finance and governance procedures will be in accordance with the current edition of Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - A Practitioners Guide.	• Latest edition to be supplied to internal auditor for 2025/26 audit.
The Internal Auditor will report in his/her own name to the Council.	• Members of the Budgets Committee advised of date and time of auditor visits and encouraged to conduct ad hoc visits at time of audit.
The Internal Auditor has direct access to the Clerk to the Council/RFO and the Mayor.	Name and contact details of Mayor to be provided in the letter of appointment.

The Internal Auditor has no other role within the Town Council. Any change in personal circumstances that may cause a question over the independence requirement must be reported to the Council.	
The Internal Auditor reports in writing to the Town Council. The Council agrees any necessary action as a result of the Internal Auditor's report.	• Report to be circulated to Councillors with the agenda of the meeting at which it is to be considered. • Contents of the report (summarised if necessary), and any agreed action, to be included in the minutes of the meeting at which it is considered. • Report to be displayed on the Council's website.

External Audit	
The Council has opted in to the new Sector Led Body audit regime for the period of 2023/24 – 2027/28. The Council's external audit arrangements therefore meet the standards required under The Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015.	The council's external auditor will continue to PKF Littlejohn LLP for the 2025/26 period.
The Council's accounts are approved in a timely manner in accordance with prescribed deadlines.	
Councillors are provided with a copy of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, with their agenda and other papers for the Annual Meeting of the Council, thereby giving an opportunity for scrutiny to take place prior to the meeting.	
The Council approves the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements contained with the Annual Return.	This plan demonstrates how audit work will provide assurance in relation to the Council's Annual Governance Statement.
Members of the public are kept informed of the existence and progress of the external audit in the following ways: • Summaries in the Council's communications. • Display of the standard notices advertising the public and elector's rights on the public noticeboard and the Council's website. • Publication of the accounts documents and annual return (at each stage) on the Council's website and the public noticeboards in the Town Hall and Garden of Rest.	
The External Auditor's opinion is reported, in full, at a meeting of the Council and recorded in the minutes of that meeting. The Council agrees any necessary action resulting from that opinion.	.

Prepared by D Rickaby, Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the Town Council.

Signature Redacted.
Original can be viewed in the Town Council offices, Wetherby Town Hall.

Signed:

Dated: ***12th May 2026*** .....

Approved at the Town Council Meeting held on 13th May 2026

Signed: Signature Redacted.
Original can be viewed in the Town Council offices, Wetherby Town Hall. **(Mayor of Wetherby)**

Name: **Connor Mulhall** .....