

Denbighshire County Council

Outline Audit Plan 2023

Audit year: 2022-2023

Date issued: March 2023



This document has been prepared as part of work performed in accordance with statutory functions. Further information can be found in our [Statement of Responsibilities](#).

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Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

About Audit Wales

Our aims:

Assure



the people of Wales
that public money is
well managed

Explain



how public money
is being used to
meet people's
needs

Inspire



and empower the
Welsh public sector
to improve

Our ambitions:



Fully exploit our
unique perspective,
expertise and
depth of insight



Strengthen our
position as an
authoritative,
trusted and
independent voice



Increase our
visibility,
influence and
relevance



Be a model
organisation for the
public sector in
Wales and beyond

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Introduction

This Outline Audit Plan specifies my statutory responsibilities as your external auditor and to fulfil my obligations under the Code of Audit Practice. It also sets out details of my audit team and key dates for delivering my audit team's activities and planned outputs. I intend sharing a Detailed Audit Plan later in the year following the completion of my planning work. It will set out my estimated audit fee and the work my team intends undertaking to address the audit risks identified and other key areas of audit focus during 2023.

My audit responsibilities

I complete work each year to meet the following duties:

- I audit the Denbighshire County Council's financial statements to make sure that public money is being properly accounted for.
- Denbighshire County Council has to put in place arrangements to get value for money for the resources it uses, and I have to be satisfied that it has done this.
- Denbighshire County Council needs to comply with the sustainable development principle when setting and taking steps to meet their well-being objectives. The Auditor General must assess the extent to which they are doing this.



Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for
Wales

Audit of financial statements

I am required to issue a certificate and report on your financial statements which includes an opinion on their 'truth and fairness' and an assessment as to whether the Narrative Report and Annual Governance Statement is prepared in line with the CIPFA Code and relevant guidance and is consistent with your financial statements and my knowledge of the Authority.

In addition to my responsibilities for auditing the Council's financial statements, I also have responsibility for:

- certifying a return to the Welsh Government which provides information about Denbighshire County Council to support preparation of Whole of Government Accounts;
- responding to questions and objections about the accounts from local electors (additional fees will be charged for this work, if necessary);
- the audit of the Denbighshire County Council joint committee; and
- the certification of a number of grant claims and returns as agreed with the funding bodies.

I do not seek to obtain absolute assurance on the truth and fairness of the financial statements and related notes but adopt a concept of materiality. My aim is to identify material misstatements, that is, those that might result in a reader of the accounts being misled. The levels at which I judge such misstatements to be material will be reported to you in my Detailed Audit Plan.

I will also report by exception on a number of matters which are set out in more detail in our [Statement of Responsibilities](#).

Performance audit work

I carry out a programme of performance audit work to discharge my duties as Auditor General in relation to value for money and sustainable development.

My local performance audit programme will continue to be delivered through a combination of an Assurance and Risk Assessment Project, bespoke local projects and thematic projects examining risks common to all councils.

Fees and audit team

In January 2023, I published the [fee scheme](#) for the year, approved by the Senedd Finance Committee. This sets out my fee rates and also highlights the impact of the revised auditing standard ISA 315 on my financial audit approach. More details of the revised auditing standard and what it means for the audit I undertake are set out in **Appendix 1**.

I will provide an estimate of your fee in my Detailed Audit Plan in Summer 2023, following completion of my detailed risk assessment.

Your engagement team:

Matthew Edwards	Engagement Director and Audit Director
Mike Whiteley	Audit Manager (Financial Audit)
Carwyn Rees	Audit Manager (Performance Audit)
To be confirmed	Audit Lead (Financial Audit)
Gwilym Bury	Audit Lead (Performance Audit)

The only known threats to independence that I need to bring to your attention relate to Matthew Edwards, (the Engagement Director) and a team member, as both have a relative employed by the Council. As a result, they will not be involved in any work in relation to the relevant services and will only be permitted following a risk assessment.

Audit timeline

We set out below key dates for delivery of our audit work and planned outputs.

Planned output	Work undertaken	Report finalised
Outline Audit Plan 2023	February to March 2023	March 2023
Detailed Audit Plan 2023	March to July 2023	July 2023
Audit of financial statements work: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audit of Financial Statements Report• Opinion on the Financial Statements.	June to November 2023	November 2023
Performance audit work: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assurance and Risk Assessment• Thematic review – commissioning and contract management• Thematic review – financial sustainability in local government• Welsh Housing Quality Standard	Timescales for individual projects will be discussed with you and detailed within the specific project briefings produced for each audit.	

Audit quality

My commitment to audit quality in Audit Wales is absolute.

I believe that audit quality is about getting things right first-time.

We use a three lines of assurance model to demonstrate how we achieve this.

We have established an Audit Quality Committee to co-ordinate and oversee those arrangements. We subject our work to independent scrutiny by QAD¹ and our Chair acts as a link to our Board on audit quality. For more information see our [Audit Quality Report 2022](#).



Our People

The first line of assurance is formed by our staff and management who are individually and collectively responsible for achieving the standards of audit quality to which we aspire.

- Selection of right team
- Use of specialists
- Supervisions and review



Arrangements for achieving audit quality

The second line of assurance is formed by the policies, tools, learning & development, guidance, and leadership we provide to our staff to support them in achieving those standards of audit quality.

- Audit platform
- Ethics
- Guidance
- Culture
- Learning and development
- Leadership
- Technical support



Independent assurance

The third line of assurance is formed by those activities that provide independent assurance over the effectiveness of the first two lines of assurance.

- EQCRs
- Themed reviews
- Cold reviews
- Root cause analysis
- Peer review
- Audit Quality Committee
- External monitoring

¹ QAD is the Quality Assurance Department of ICAEW.

Appendix 1 – the key changes to ISA315 and the potential impact on your organisation

Key change	Potential impact on your organisation
More detailed and extensive risk identification and assessment procedures	<p>Your finance team and others in your organisation may receive a greater number of enquiries from our audit teams at the planning stage of the audit. Requests for information may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• information on your organisation’s business model and how it integrates the use of information technology (IT);• information about your organisation’s risk assessment process and how your organisation monitors the system of internal control;• more detailed information on how transactions are initiated, recorded, processed, and reported. This may include access to supporting documentation such as policy and procedure manuals; and• more detailed discussions with your organisation to support the audit team’s assessment of inherent risk.
Obtaining an enhanced understanding of your organisation’s environment, particularly in relation to IT	<p>Your organisation may receive more enquiries to assist the audit team in understanding the IT environment. This may include information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• IT applications relevant to financial reporting;• the supporting IT infrastructure (eg the network, databases);• IT processes (eg managing program changes, IT operations); and• the IT personnel involved in the IT processes.

Key change	Potential impact on your organisation
	<p>Audit teams may need to test the general IT controls and this may require obtaining more detailed audit evidence on the operation of IT controls within your organisation.</p> <p>On some audits, our audit teams may involve IT audit specialists to assist with their work. Our IT auditors may need to engage with members of your IT team who have not previously been involved in the audit process.</p>
<p>Enhanced requirements relating to exercising professional scepticism</p>	<p>Our audit teams may make additional inquiries if they identify information which appears to contradict what they have already learned in the audit.</p>
<p>Risk assessments are scalable depending on the nature and complexity of the audited body</p>	<p>The audit team's expectations regarding the formality of your organisation's policies, procedures, processes, and systems will depend on the complexity of your organisation.</p>
<p>Audit teams may make greater use of technology in the performance of their audit</p>	<p>Our audit teams may make use of automated tools and techniques such as data analytics when performing their audit. Our teams may request different information or information in a different format from previous audits so that they can perform their audit procedures.</p>