

Responsible Financial Officer Reports (14-20)

14. RFO Report - (for information – bank balances, Town Centre Revitalisation Fund, VAT, Local Government Pay Award 2025/26, and Training)

- Bank balances - as at 30 April 2025 are as follows:

HSBC	35,833.47
Lloyds Debit card	1,876.47
Cornwall Council deposit	854,981.28
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>£892,691.22</u>

- VAT – Now that the end of year accounts have been completed, the VAT partial exemption calculation can be undertaken. This is due by 7 August 2025 when repayment of overclaimed VAT will need to be made as an adjustment to the first quarter return for 2025/26. Repayment due at the end of December 2024 was approx. £10,850. The total will need to come from the current year Public Hall and Guildhall budgets.
- Town Centre Revitalisation Fund – The first payment of £10,000 from the Town Delivery Fund for the Guildhall refurbishment was received in April. Now the project has completed a report must be made to Cornwall Council for the remaining £10,000 to be claimed. We are still awaiting payment from Cornwall Council of the final instalment of £6,250 from the Town Accelerator Fund for the Town Vision – all requested documentation has been submitted.
- Local Government Pay Award 2025/26 – In response to the local government pay claim submitted in January 2025, the National Employers have made the following full and final, one-year (1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026) offer:
 - With effect from 1 April 2025, an increase of 3.20 per cent to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive.
 - With effect from 1 April 2026, the deletion of pay point 2 from the NJC pay spine
 If accepted this is within budget. The Council has one member of staff at pay point 2. All other aspects of the claim were rejected.

On 11 June the government will be announcing the details of its spending review, which may provide councils with a three-year funding settlement. A longer-term settlement would provide more financial planning certainty for councils which in turn could, from 2026 onwards, enable the employers to consider alternatives to the one-year pay offers of recent years. Multi-year pay offers / deals would by necessity require meaningful negotiations and once agreed, would allow time to concentrate efforts on reviewing the pay spine.

- Training - It is a legal requirement for councillors to undertake Code of Conduct training within six months of election, and the Code recommends this is repeated every 2 years.

CALC are delivering face to face training at the Public Hall in Liskeard on Monday 7 July 2025 6.30pm-8.30pm, and online sessions on Tuesday 20 May 2025 10am-12pm, Tuesday 3 June 2025 6.30pm-8.30pm, and Tuesday 24 June 2025 6.30pm-8.30pm. If you have not yet made a booking, please contact the Deputy Town Clerk.

15. Schedule of Payments - To receive and approve the schedule of payments totalling £76,521.74

Attachment: 15. Schedule of Payments

Recommendation: to approve the schedule of payments totalling £76,521.74

16. Budget Monitoring 2024/25 – To receive and accept a final budget report to **31 March 2025** for monitoring purposes

Attachment: 16. Budget Monitoring to 31 March 2025

On target spend should now be at 100%

The following points should be noted on the Administration (101) budget (other budgets monitored within the relevant committees):

- Training (4110) includes £1,208 which was funded by a grant from DWP and therefore is within budget (66.48%)
- Professional Fees (4160) has overspent following payment of the legal fees for the devolution of Castle Park totalling £2,845.
- S137 Expenditure (4170) should include poppy wreaths, but invoices not received by year end.
- Advertising (4180) overspent due to increased costs at the Cornish Times for publishing election notices. It is no longer a legal requirement to publish these in the local press – websites, social media, notice boards etc are sufficient.
- Equipment & IT Purchase (4230) & Equipment & IT M'tnce/Support (4240) includes £305.40 which was funded by a grant from DWP. The ear-marked reserve was fully used as budgeted and there was a net overspend of £2,225 due to unbudgeted additional equipment required (115.34%).
- Elections Expenses (4310) relate to the 2024 by-election with £10,000 covered from the ear marked reserve and a £1,876 overspend.
- Defibrillators (4320) there is a small overspend due to the unbudgeted addition of bleed control kits.
- Mayoral Allowance (4340) was fully paid via payroll so included in the salary line.
- CCTV (4360) £5,000 was transferred to the ear marked reserve at year end (not shown in the report) for dilapidations making the total spend £18,188 (90.94%).

Recommendation: to note and approve the budget monitoring report

17. Internal Auditors Report

Attachment: 17b. Internal Audit Report Year Ended 31 March 2025

a). To review and confirm the independence of the Internal Auditor Hudson Accounting,

The internal auditor must have relevant knowledge of the public sector, and there are two key principles an authority must follow in appointing an internal audit provider: independence and competence.

Independence requires the absence of any actual or perceived conflict of interest. It means that whoever carries out the internal audit role does not have any involvement in, or responsibility for, the financial decision making, management or control of the authority, or for the authority's financial controls and procedures. The Clerk, RFO or Councillors (or close associates such as family members of those individuals) are not considered independent from the council's financial decision making.

The independence of the appointed person or firm should be reviewed every year with regard to; personal independence, financial independence, and professional independence.

Recommendation: to confirm the independence of the Internal Auditor Hudson Accounting

b). To receive, consider and accept the Internal Auditors report

There are no suggested actions within the report.

Extract from the Internal audit Report

The review undertaken obtained a level of assurance which has allowed us to complete the Internal Audit Report element of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return with no qualifications, thus in all significant respects, the control objectives were achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Council.

This is the final year of the Town Council's agreement with Hudson Accounting, who do not wish to renew due to phased retirement. The Council will be seeking a new internal auditor for the 2025/26 financial year. CALC have been contacted for a list of suitable internal auditors.

Recommendation: To accept the Internal Auditor's Report

18. Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025 - To respond to each of the nine assertions of the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 – Page 4).

Attachment: 18. Annual Governance and Accountability Return

The Council must consider and respond individually, 'Yes' or 'No' to each statement, considering the report from the internal auditor, and its own review of the effectiveness of internal controls and risk management arrangements for 2024/25 as undertaken by Council

at its meeting on 15 April 2025. This return must be approved and submitted with the accounting statements and all the additional documentation required to the external auditor, BDO LLP by 30 June 2025.

1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.
Yes, means prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.
Yes, means made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.
Yes, means has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
Yes, means during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.
Yes, means considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.
Yes, means arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.
Yes, means responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.
Yes, means disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.

9. Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.
Yes, means has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.

Recommendation: To approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 as completed by the Council for signature by the Chairman and Clerk

- 19. Accounting Statements 2024/2025** - To consider and approve the Accounting Statements for 2024/2025 signed by the RFO (Section 2 – page 5).
Attachments: 19i. Balance Sheet, 19ii. Income & Expenditure

The Accounting Statements for 2024/2025 within attachment 18, which have been checked by the internal auditor together with other financial records including the final bank reconciliations, are presented for approval. To provide additional information, the more traditional balance sheet and income and expenditure reports have also been provided.

Recommendation: to approve the Accounting Statements 2024/2025 for signature by the Chairman

- 20. Exercise of Public Rights** – To confirm the dates for the statutory 30 working day period when the Authority's records are available for public inspection – commencing Tuesday 3 June to Monday 14 July 2025 inclusive (date of announcement Monday 2 June 2025)

In accordance with requirements, the period for the exercise of public rights, when any interested person may inspect or make copies of the accounting records, question the auditor or make an objection, will commence on Tuesday 3 June 2025 and end on Monday 14 July 2025 inclusive – 30 working days. Full details will be available on the Town Council website <https://www.liskeard.gov.uk/key-documents/financial-information/> from Monday 2 June 2025.

Recommendation: to confirm the dates for the exercise of public rights