

Annual Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2026

Accounting statement 2025-26 for:

Name of body: CALDICOT TOWN COUNCIL

**RESTATED

| | Year ending | | Notes and guidance |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| | 31 March 2025 (£) | 31 March 2026 (£) | |
| Statement of income and expenditure/receipts and payments | | | |
| 1. Balances brought forward | 511,153 | 444,389 | 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/levy | 451,890 | 491,830 | Total amount of income received/receivable in the year from local taxation (precept) or levy/contribution from principal bodies. |
| 3. (+) Total other receipts | 73,356 | 66,172 | Total income or receipts recorded in the cashbook minus amounts included in line 2. Includes support, discretionary and revenue grants. |
| 4. (-) Staff costs | 148,068 | 218,458 | Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include salaries and wages, taxable allowances, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and termination costs. Exclude reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses. |
| 5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments | 0 | 0 | Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on external borrowing (if any). |
| 6. (-) Total other payments | **443,942 | 311,076 | 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 | 444,389 | 472,857 | Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6). |
| Statement of balances⁰ | | | |
| 8. (+) Debtors | 11756 | 32,693 | Income and expenditure accounts only: Enter the value of debts owed to the body at the year-end. |
| 9. (+) Total cash and investments | 442,117 | 446,872 | 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 | 9,483 | 6,708 | Income and expenditure accounts only: Enter the value of monies owed by the body (except borrowing) at the year-end. |
| 11. (=) Balances carried forward | 444,389 | 472,857 | Total balances should equal line 7 above: Enter the total of (8+9-10). |
| 12. Total fixed assets and long-term assets | 440,519 | 440,519 | The asset and investment register value of all fixed assets and any other long-term assets held 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). |

Annual Governance Statement

We acknowledge as the members of the Council, 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, that for the year ended 31 March 2026:

| | Agreed? | | 'YES' means that the Council: | Toolkit |
|---|---------|-----|---|------------|
| | Yes | No* | | |
| 1. In consultation with the community, we have developed a vision and purpose for the Council and used this vision to inform the Council's plans, budget and activities. | | ✓ | Has consulted with the community and focussed its activities to meet the community's needs | A, C |
| 2. We have adopted a Code of Conduct for members and officers and implemented an appropriate training plan for members to ensure all councillors understand their role and responsibilities. | | ✓ | Ensures that councillors understand and are equipped to deliver their roles and responsibilities. | B |
| 3. We have ensured that we electronically publish the information the Council is required to publish by law, on its website at [insert name of website]. | | ✓ | Is transparent about its activities and provides the public with all information required by law | A, C, D, E |
| 4. We have taken all reasonable steps to ensure that the Council complies with relevant laws and regulations when exercising its functions, including employment of staff and payment of allowances to members. | | ✓ | 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 does so | |
| 5. We have adopted standing orders, financial regulations and terms of reference and ensure that these are followed when conducting business including functions delegated to committees. | | ✓ | Has adopted rules and procedures to govern how the Council conducts its business including procurement of goods and services. | B, E |
| 6. We have put in place arrangements for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective financial management including the setting and monitoring of the Council's budget and preparation and approval of the annual accounts • Maintenance and security of accurate and up to date accounting and other financial records • Identifying potential liabilities, commitments, events and transactions that may have a financial impact on the Council. | | ✓ | Calculated its budget requirement in accordance with the law and properly monitors its financial position throughout the year and has prepared and approved its accounts in accordance with legislation | D |
| 7. We have maintained an adequate system of internal control and management of risk, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption including clearly documented procedures for authorising and making payments • assessment and management of risks facing the Council • an adequate and effective system of internal audit and reviewed the effectiveness of these arrangements. | | ✓ | Made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge including arranging 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. | D, E |
| 8. We have taken appropriate action on all matters raised in previous reports from internal and external audit. | | ✓ | Considered and taken appropriate action to address weaknesses /issues brought to its attention by internal and external auditors. | D, E |
| 9. We have provided proper opportunity for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014. | | ✓ | Has given all persons interested the opportunity to inspect the body's accounts as set out in the notice of audit issued by the Auditor General. | E |
| 10. General power of Competence – The Council has resolved to adopt the General Power of Competence set | | ✓ | Meets the eligibility criteria to exercise the general Power of | E |

* Please include an explanation for any 'No' answers

Additional disclosure notes

Include here any additional disclosures the Council considers necessary to aid the reader's understanding of the accounting statement and/or the annual governance statement.

The following information is provided to assist the reader to understand the accounting statement and/or the Annual Governance Statement

1. Expenditure under S137 Local Government Act 1972

Section 137(1) of the 1972 Act permits the Council to spend on activities for which it has no other specific powers if the Council considers that the expenditure is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, the area or any part of it, or all or some of its inhabitants, providing that the benefit is commensurate with the expenditure. Section 137(3) also permits the Council to incur expenditure for certain charitable and other purposes. The maximum expenditure that can be incurred under both section 137(1) and (3) for the financial year 2025-26 was £11.10 per elector.

In 2025-26, the Council made payments totalling £_____ under section 137. These payments are included within 'Other payments' in the Accounting Statement.

2.

**RESTATED

The restated figure required by the auditor for the 24/25 external auditor does not equate to the Box 7 balance of 444,389. I believe the auditor meant the new figure should be 443,942 (instead of 443,952 as per the audited return). The arithmetic works and the Box 7 balance is unchanged.

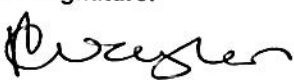

3. See appendix one attached

Trust Funds

| | | | | |
|---|-----|---------|-----|---|
| Trust funds – The Council acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing trust fund(s)/assets. We exclude transactions related to these trusts from the Accounting Statement. 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. | Yes | No ✓ | N/A | Has met all of its responsibilities where it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts. |
|---|-----|---------|-----|---|

Council approval and certification

The Council is responsible for the preparation of the accounting statements and the annual governance statement in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 (the Act) and the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014.

| | |
|--|---|
| Certification by the RFO I certify that the accounting statements contained in this Annual Return present fairly the financial position of the Council, and its income and expenditure, or properly present receipts and payments, as the case may be, for the year ended 31 March 2026. | Approval by the Council I confirm that these accounting statements and Annual Governance Statement were approved by the Council under minute reference: |
| RFO signature:  | Minute ref: EM 29/6/26 item 6 Chair signature:  |
| Name: Anne Vaughan | Name: Robert Shillington |
| Date: 29 June 2026 | Date: 29th June 2026 |

* Please include an explanation for any 'No' answers

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3.

The Council acknowledges its responsibility for the governance matters identified in the 2025–26 Annual Governance Statement.

The External Audit Report also identified issues relating to the Members' Code of Conduct and Caldicot Town Council have also had staffing issues.

The Council is committed to implementing improvements and strengthening its governance and administrative arrangements.

The Council determined the 'No' responses in the 2025–26 Annual Governance from the below and was agreed and approved by council

Each point listed from the toolkit, I was either unable to evidence that each item was in place, or believe them not to be.

1. In consultation with the community, we have developed a vision and purpose for the Council and used this vision to inform the Council's plans, budget and activities.

I believe this council has to answer **NO** to this statement, due to: A1 – no vision and purpose statement available. A2 – no biodiversity plan. A3 – no annual report. C1 – no community engagement strategy. C2 - community engagement strategy not reviewed.

2. We have adopted a Code of Conduct for members and officers and implemented an appropriate training plan for members to ensure all councillors understand their role and responsibilities.

I believe this council has to answer **NO**. B5 – councillor training not recorded (accurately). B17 – the council has NOT maintained the training plan.

3. We have ensured that we electronically publish the information the Council is required to publish by law, on its website.

I believe this council has to answer **NO**. A3 & A4 – no annual report. C1 – no community engagement strategy. C2 - community engagement strategy not review periodically. C5 & C6 – information missing from website (committees etc) as per s55,b,vi, of Local Gov (Democracy) Wales Act 2013. C7 – no social media policy. D2 – councillors’ declarations of interest are not up to date on the website. D5 – terms of reference are not up to date on the website. D7 – I received an invitation to this meeting, not a summons as required. D9 – some minutes are missing on the website and/or have been delayed in the past. D11 – terms of reference are out of date. D12 – no constitution. D13 – no annual business plan. D14 – no FOI scheme. D15 – no data protection and GDPR policy. D17 – no IT security policy. D19 – no data audit. D24 – no continuity plan. D25 – no emergency plan. D26 & D28 – H&S policies and risk assessments all out of date. D31 – no stress management policy. D32 – no stress risk assessment. E3 & E5– no documented accounting procedures, and transfer of documents. E9 – no evidence to support annual return.

4. We have taken all reasonable steps to ensure that the Council complies with relevant laws and regulations when exercising its functions, including employment of staff and payment of allowances to members.

I believe this council has to answer **NO**. B6 – payments to members is incorrect for 2025.

B12 – the council are missing the majority of core employment policies. D26 & D28 – H&S policies and risk assessments all out of date. D31 – no stress management policy. D32 – no stress risk assessment.

5. We have adopted standing orders, financial regulations and terms of reference and ensure that these are followed when conducting business including functions delegated to committees.

I believe this council has to answer **NO**. As we know, standing orders and financial regulations have repeatedly been breached by this council.

For example, standing orders: allowing standing committees to appoint their own chairs, not allowing council to decide the date of the annual meeting, moving and voting on items that were NOT on the agenda, failing to publish draft minutes within the required timeframe.

Financial regulations: failure to present schedules of payments at council meetings, final accounts for 23/24 & 24/25, final budget 26/27, final estimate for 25/26.

E26 – contracts have not been reviewed and are now out of date.

6. We have put in place arrangements for: Effective financial management including the setting and monitoring of the Council's budget and preparation and approval of the annual accounts. Maintenance and security of accurate and up to date accounting and other financial records. Identifying potential liabilities, commitments, events and transactions that may have a financial impact on the Council.

I believe this council has to answer **NO**. D11 – no scheme of delegations. D12 – no constitution describing governance arrangements. D13 – no annual business plan. D17 – no IT security policy. D19 – no data audit. D21 – no evidence of data purging. D24 – no business continuity plan. D35 – no maintenance and repair plans.

Further to this, there is no financial management, no monthly finance information, no final estimates and budgets, no finance meeting since Dec 2024, no finance scrutiny.

7. We have maintained an adequate system of internal control and management of risk, including: measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption including clearly documented procedures for authorising and making payments assessment and management of risks facing the Council an adequate and effective system of internal audit and reviewed the effectiveness of these arrangements.

I believe this council has to answer **NO**. D12 – no constitution. D13 – no annual business plan. D15 – no data protection and GDPR policy. D17 – no IT security policy. D19 – no data audit. D24 – no continuity plan. E3 & E5– no documented accounting procedures, and transfer of documents.

The internal auditor has mentioned this as a high priority.

8. We have taken appropriate action on all matters raised in previous reports from internal and external audit.

I believe this council has to answer **NO**. The internal auditor has stated that it was not possible to confirm if the council had considered the previous audit report. As a high priority, it recommends that council review and confirm the previous audit report.

Last year's internal audit raised an issue in relation to member payments, which, as already mentioned, is incorrect on the website.

9. We have provided proper opportunity for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014.

I believe this council has to answer **NO**. External auditor states: Assertion 9 – The Council did not meet the requirements set out in the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 to provide adequate opportunity for public inspection of the accounts. The Council must allow for an inspection period of 20 working days.

10. General power of Competence - The Council has resolved to adopt the General Power of Competence set

I believe this council has to answer **NO**. 3 criteria:

1. 2/3 elected – currently 10/16 elected, therefore not 2/3 (2/3 = 11).
2. Qualified clerk – I don't believe with a locum this applies.
3. Last 2 sets of accounts must be unqualified.