

# **Transparency Code Requirements**

The [transparency code for smaller authorities](#) came into force on 1 April 2015 and requires smaller councils with an annual turnover not exceeding £25,000, to publish certain financial and administrative information online and make it available to the public. The aim of this is to provide taxpayers with a clear picture of the authority's activities, spending and governance. It also hopes to improve the ability of communities to hold local public bodies to account. All local councils with a turnover not exceeding £25,000 are required to be compliant.

From April 2015, all councils who have an annual turnover not exceeding £25,000 were required to publish the following information online: Compliance with the transparency code is compulsory for all smaller authorities with an annual turnover not exceeding £25,000.

## **Summary of information to be published (fully detailed below)**

- All items of expenditure above £100
- End of year accounts
- Annual Governance Statement
- Internal audit report
- List of Councillor/member responsibilities
- Location of public land and building assets
- Agendas and papers of formal meetings
- Minutes

### **a. all items of expenditure above £100 (see paragraphs 13 – 15 below)**

**13.** Smaller authorities should publish the details of each individual item of expenditure above £100. Publishing a complete list of expenditure transactions will also meet this requirement. Expenditure information should be published for each individual spending transaction above £100 (3) rather than each item bought (4)

*(3) The threshold should be, where possible, the net amount excluding recoverable Value Added Tax*

*(4) For example, it is sufficient to group all items in a stationary order as one item of expenditure.*

**14.** For each individual item of expenditure above £100 the following information must be published:

- a. date the expenditure was incurred,
- b. summary of the purpose of the expenditure, (5)
- c. amount (3)
- d. Value Added Tax that cannot be recovered (3)

*(3) The threshold should be, where possible, the net amount excluding recoverable Value Added Tax*

*(5) This could be the descriptor that authorities use in their accounting system providing it gives a clear sense of why the expenditure was incurred or what it purchased or secured for the local authority.*

**15.** Copies of all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other related documents do not need to be published, but should remain available for inspection during the specified inspection period set out under regulation 14 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 2011/817) , or under any equivalent regulations made under section 32 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The right to inspect can be exercised on giving reasonable notice.

## **b. end of year accounts (see paragraphs 16 and 17 below)**

**16.** Smaller authorities should publish their statement of accounts according to the format included in the Annual Return form. Publication of the relevant page of the completed Annual Return form will meet this requirement. The statement of accounts must be approved and signed by the Responsible Financial Officer and the Chairman of the meeting approving the statement of accounts.

**17.** The statement of accounts should be accompanied by: a. a copy of the bank reconciliation for the relevant financial year, b. an explanation of any significant variances (e.g. more than 10-15 percent, in line with proper practices) in the statement of accounts for the relevant year and previous year, and c. an explanation of any differences between 'balances carried forward' and 'total cash and short term investments', if applicable

## **c. annual governance statement (see paragraphs 18 and 19 below)**

**18.** Smaller authorities should publish their annual governance statement according to the format included in the Annual Return form. Publication of the relevant page of the completed Annual Return form will meet this requirement. The annual governance statement should be signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the smaller authority.

**19.** Where the governance statement contains any negative responses, these should be explained fully, including how any weaknesses will be addressed. As referred to paragraphs 7 and 8, when publishing this information smaller authorities should consider whether the Data Protection Act 1998 imposes any restrictions or constraints on such publication and whether any of the information would fall within an exemption under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and therefore could, or should, be withheld from publication.

## **d. internal audit report (see paragraphs 20 – 22 below)**

**20.** Smaller authorities should publish their annual internal audit report according to the format included in the Annual Return form. Publication of the relevant page of the completed Annual Return form will meet this requirement. The internal audit report should be signed by the person who carried out the internal audit.

**21.** Where the internal audit report contains any negative response to the internal controls objectives, these should be explained fully, including how any weaknesses will be addressed. As referred to paragraphs 7 and 8, when publishing this information smaller authorities should consider whether the Data Protection Act 1998 imposes any restrictions or constraints on such publication and whether any of the information would fall within an exemption under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and therefore could, or should, be withheld from publication.

**22.** Where the response to any internal controls objectives is 'not covered', an explanation of when the most recent internal audit work was completed in this area and when it is next planned should be provided. If coverage is not required, an explanation stating why coverage is not needed should be provided.

## **e. list of councillor or member responsibilities (see paragraph 23 below)**

**23.** Smaller authorities should publish a list of councillor or member responsibilities. The list should include the following information:

- a. names of all councillors or members of the authority
- b. committee or board membership and function (if Chairman or Vice-Chairman) of each councillor or member
- c. representation on external local public bodies (if nominated to represent the authority or board) of each councillor or member.

**f. the details of public land and building assets (see paragraphs 24 – 27 below)**

24. Parish councils and port health authorities should publish details of all public land and building assets. Where this information is included in the authority’s asset and liabilities register, this register may be published in its entirety or as an edited version displaying only public land and building assets.

25. Internal drainage boards should only publish the details of registered land and buildings that have a market value and which appear in their Fixed Assets Register.

26. When publishing the required data, parish councils, port health authorities and internal drainage boards should publish the following information in relation to each land and building asset:

- a. description (what it is, including size/acreage)
- b. location (address or description of location, *e.g. street number, street name, postal town and postcode; or map reference using Ordinance Survey grid reference*)
- c. owner/custodian, *e.g. the authority or board manages the land or asset on behalf of a local charity*
- d. date of acquisition (if known)
- e. cost of acquisition (or proxy value)
- f. present use.

27. Charter trustees will not be required to publish any land or asset information since they are not permitted to own either land or buildings under the Charter Trustees Order (1974) and therefore will not hold any relevant information

**g. Minutes, agendas and meeting papers of formal meetings (see paragraphs 29 and 30 below).**

29. Smaller authorities should publish the draft minutes from all formal meetings (i.e. full council or board, committee and sub-committee meetings) not later than one month after the meeting has taken place. These minutes should be signed either at the meeting they were taken or at the next meeting.

30. Smaller authorities should also publish meeting agendas, which are as full and informative as possible, and associated meeting papers not later than three clear days before the meeting to which they relate is taking place.

[Find out more about the transparency code for smaller authorities including yearly publication deadlines](#)

Date Reviewed	July 2024
Date of next review	July 2026