
Capital planning checklist

We have produced this checklist as a tool that councils may find helpful to assess their capital planning arrangements and identify any areas for improvement. This is informed by our findings, practice guidance, and our sector knowledge.

Exhibit 10: capital planning self-assessment checklist

Theme	Paragraph reference	Questions to consider	Council self-assessment
Strategic context	57 to 59	<p>Does the capital plan set out the strategic context for capital planning?</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• known challenges facing the council;• gaps in the council's knowledge and the actions needed to close them; and• local, regional, and national policies that impact on capital plans.	
Aims and Objectives	37 to 44	<p>Does the capital plan cover both the short and longer term?</p> <p>Does the capital plan include clear aims and objectives. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a long-term ambition for the purpose of capital investment in the council area;• a set of clear objectives that support the achievement of the council's ambition; and• details of how it will support the council's wider objectives.	

Theme	Paragraph reference	Questions to consider	Council self-assessment
Focusing on outcomes	45 to 47	<p>Has the council set out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• what success looks like for the plan overall;• what success looks like for individual projects; and• how it will measure and monitor this.	
Knowing the condition of assets	51 to 56	<p>Is the council's capital plan informed by a recent, accurate and comprehensive knowledge of the condition of assets?</p> <p>Does the council's capital plan include a maintenance plan based on realistic costs?</p> <p>Has the council assessed which assets it needs to successfully deliver its well-being objectives, and how much they will cost?</p> <p>Has the council considered a range of options in response to condition surveys – for example co-location or service re-design.</p>	
Working with others	60 to 66, and 75	<p>Has the council worked with partners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify opportunities to jointly plan and deliver capital projects;• ensure that capital plans are aligned, including identifying mutual priorities that capital plans can help deliver; and• explore the pooling of knowledge, skills and resources to improve capital planning.	

Theme	Paragraph reference	Questions to consider	Council self-assessment
Planning for risk and assessing impact	67 to 70	<p>Does the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• complete impact assessments for all projects;• assess the impact of capital plans overall;• identify the intended socio-economic outcomes for residents in capital plans;• ensure that capital risks are assessed and recorded; and• set out how capital risks will be mitigated in capital plans.	
Understanding resource requirements	41, 54 to 55, 69, and 71 to 75	<p>Does the council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• set out realistic costs for the new assets and maintenance it needs to deliver its objectives;• set out the prudent and affordable level of funding available (both internal and external) over the medium term;• calculate and communicate a capital funding gap based on identified needs and funding available;• set out how the gap will be managed and mitigated against; and• include consideration of non-financial resources in plans, such as capacity and contractor supply.	

Theme	Paragraph reference	Questions to consider	Council self-assessment
Monitoring progress and impact	86 to 88	Does the council: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• regularly report publicly on progress in delivering its capital plan;• regularly report on the impacts and outcomes achieved from capital projects; and• include key financial information, such as comparing actual project costs to planned costs.	
Supporting oversight and scrutiny	89 to 91	Does the council ensure that councillors have access to training and development to enable them to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• take well informed decisions on capital plans and projects; and• effectively scrutinise the progress and VFM of capital plans and projects.	

Source: Audit Wales