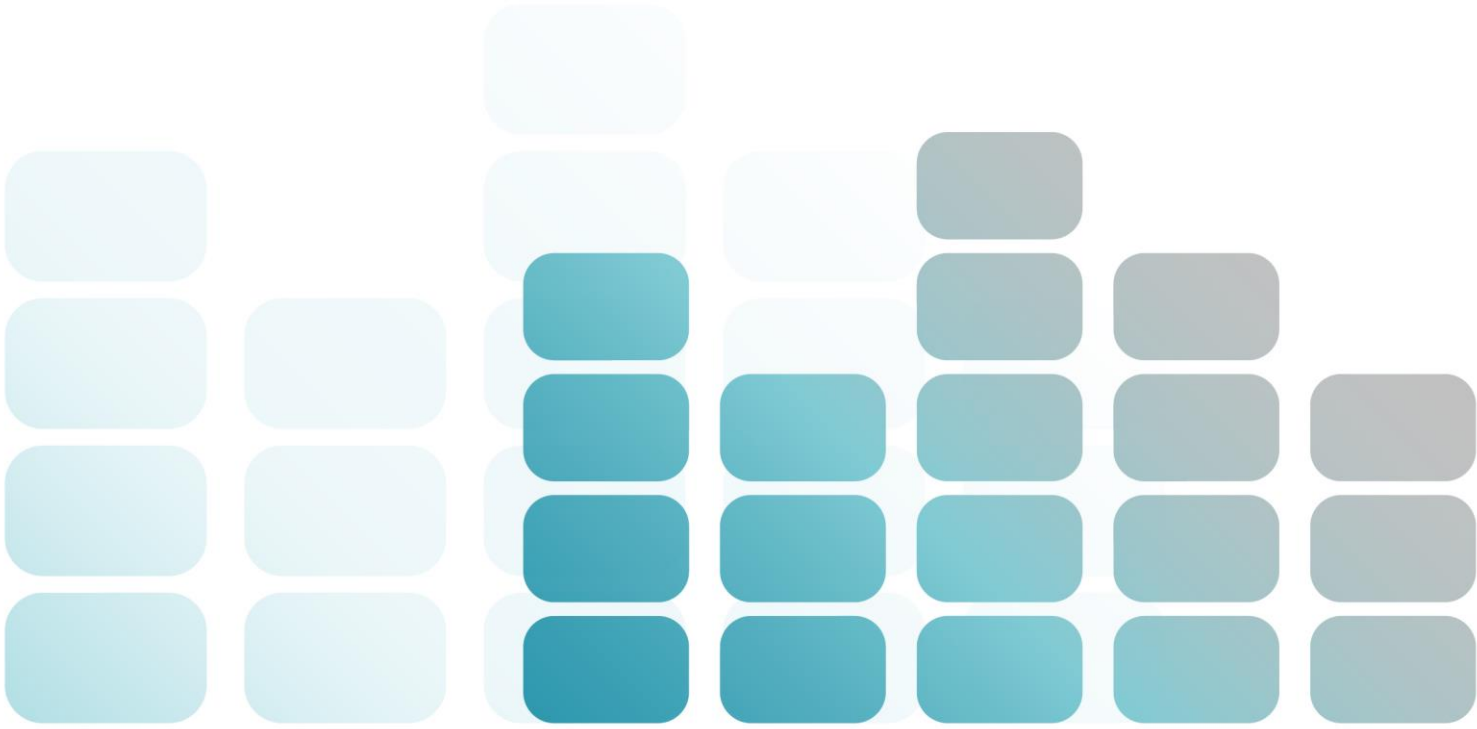


# The City of Edinburgh Council

Annual Audit Plan 2024/25



Prepared for The City of Edinburgh Council  
February 2025

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# Introduction

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## Purpose of the Annual Audit Plan

1. The purpose of this Annual Audit Plan is to provide an overview of the planned scope and timing of the 2024/25 audit of The City of Edinburgh Council's annual accounts. It outlines the audit work planned to meet the audit requirements set out in [auditing standards](#) and the [Code of Audit Practice](#), including supplementary guidance.

## Appointed auditor and independence

2. Michael Oliphant, of Audit Scotland, has been appointed by the Accounts Commission as external auditor of The City of Edinburgh Council for the period from 2022/23 until 2026/27. The 2024/25 financial year is therefore the third of the five-year audit appointment.

3. The appointed auditor and audit team are independent of The City of Edinburgh Council in accordance with relevant ethical requirements, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard. This standard imposes stringent rules to ensure the independence and objectivity of auditors. Audit Scotland has robust arrangements in place to ensure compliance with ethical standards. The arrangements are overseen by the Executive Director of Innovation and Quality, who serves as Audit Scotland's Ethics Partner.

4. The Ethical Standard requires auditors to communicate any relationships that may affect the independence and objectivity of the audit team. There are no such relationships pertaining to the audit of The City of Edinburgh Council to communicate.

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# Audit scope and responsibilities

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## Scope of the audit

**5.** The audit is performed in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, including supplementary guidance, International Standards on Auditing (UK), and relevant legislation. These set out the requirements for the scope of the audit which includes:

- An audit of the financial statements and an opinion on whether they give a true and fair view and are free from material misstatement.
- An opinion on statutory other information published with the financial statements in the annual accounts, the Management Commentary, and the Annual Governance Statement, and an opinion on the audited part of the Remuneration Report.
- Conclusions on The City of Edinburgh Council's arrangements in relation to the wider scope areas: Financial Management, Financial Sustainability, Vision, Leadership, and Governance, and Use of Resources to Improve Outcomes.
- An Annual Audit Report setting out significant matters identified from the audit of the annual accounts and the wider scope areas specified in the Code of Audit Practice.
- Reporting on The City of Edinburgh Council's arrangements for securing Best Value.
- A review of The City of Edinburgh Council's arrangements for preparing and publishing statutory performance information.
- Providing assurance on the Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim, Non-Domestic Rates Return, and the Whole of Government Accounts return.

## Responsibilities

**6.** The Code of Audit Practice sets out the respective responsibilities of The City of Edinburgh Council and the auditor. A summary of the key responsibilities is outlined below.

### Auditor's responsibilities

**7.** The responsibilities of auditors in the public sector are established in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. These include providing an independent opinion on the financial statements and other information

reported within the annual accounts, and concluding on The City of Edinburgh Council's arrangements in place for the wider scope areas.

### **The City of Edinburgh Council's responsibilities**

**8.** The City of Edinburgh Council (the council) has primary responsibility for ensuring proper financial stewardship of public funds, compliance with relevant legislation and establishing effective arrangements for governance, propriety and regularity that enables it to successfully deliver its objectives. The features of proper financial stewardship include:

- Establishing arrangements to ensure the proper conduct of its affairs.
- Preparation of annual accounts, comprising financial statements and other information that gives a true and fair view.
- Establishing arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud, error and irregularities, and bribery and corruption.
- Implementing arrangements to ensure its financial position is soundly based.
- Making arrangements to secure Best Value.
- Establishing an internal audit function.

# Audit of the annual accounts

## Introduction

9. The audit of the annual accounts is driven by materiality and the risks of material misstatement in the financial statements, with greater attention being given to the significant risks of material misstatement. This chapter outlines materiality, the significant risks of material misstatement that have been identified, and the impact these have on the planned audit procedures.

## Materiality

10. The concept of materiality is applied by auditors in planning and performing an audit, and in evaluating the effect of any uncorrected misstatements on the financial statements or other information reported in the annual accounts.

11. Broadly, the concept of materiality is to determine whether matters identified during the audit could reasonably be expected to influence the decisions of users of the financial statements. Auditors set a monetary threshold when determining materiality, although some issues may be considered material by their nature. Therefore, materiality is ultimately a matter of the auditor's professional judgement.

12. The materiality levels determined for the audit of the council and its group are outlined in [Exhibit 1](#).

## Exhibit 1

### 2024/25 Materiality levels for the council and its group

Materiality basis	Value
<p><b>Materiality</b> – based on an assessment of the needs of users of the financial statements and the nature of The City of Edinburgh Council's operations, the benchmark used to determine materiality is gross expenditure based on the audited 2023/24 financial statements. Materiality has been set at 2% of the benchmark.</p>	£53 million

Materiality basis	Value
<p><b>Performance materiality</b> – this acts as a trigger point. If the aggregate of misstatements identified during the audit exceeds performance materiality, this could indicate that further audit procedures are required. Using professional judgement, performance materiality has been set at 65% of planning materiality.</p>	£34 million
<p><b>Reporting threshold</b> – all misstatements greater than the reporting threshold will be reported.</p>	£0.5 million

Source: Audit Scotland

## Significant risks of material misstatement to the financial statements

**13.** The risk assessment process draws on the audit team’s cumulative knowledge of the council, including the nature of its operations and its significant transaction streams, the system of internal control, governance arrangements and processes, and developments that could impact on its financial reporting.

**14.** Based on the risk assessment process, significant risks of material misstatement to the financial statements have been identified and these are summarised in [Exhibit 2, page 8](#). These are the risks which have the greatest impact on the planned audit approach, and the planned audit procedures in response to the risks are outlined in Exhibit 2.

**15.** The risk assessment process is an iterative process. The assessment of risks set out in this Annual Audit Plan and Exhibit 2 may change as more information and evidence is obtained over the course of the audit. Where such changes occur, these will be reported to the council and those charged with governance, where relevant.

## Exhibit 2

### Significant risks of material misstatement to the financial statements

Risk of material misstatement	Planned audit response
<p><b>Fraud caused by management override of controls</b></p> <p>Management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of management's ability to override controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively.</p>	<p>The audit team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the design and implementation of controls over journal entry processing.</li> <li>• Make inquiries of individuals involved in the financial reporting process about inappropriate or unusual activity relating to the processing of journal entries.</li> <li>• Test journals entries, focusing on those that are assessed as higher risk, such as those affecting revenue and expenditure recognition around the year-end.</li> <li>• Evaluate significant transactions outside the normal course of business.</li> <li>• Assess the adequacy of controls in place for identifying and disclosing related party relationships and transactions in the financial statements.</li> <li>• Assess changes to the methods and underlying assumptions used to prepare accounting estimates and assess these for evidence of management bias.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Valuation of property, plant and equipment</b></p> <p>The City of Edinburgh Council disclosed more than £5.7 billion of property, plant, and equipment (PPE) at 31 March 2024, of which £4.4 billion was land and buildings.</p> <p>There is a significant degree of subjectivity in these valuations which are based on specialist assumptions, and changes in the assumptions can result in material changes to valuations and therefore presenting a risk of misstatement.</p>	<p>The audit team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the design and implementation of controls over the valuation process.</li> <li>• Review the information provided to the valuer and assess this for completeness and accuracy.</li> <li>• Evaluate the competence, capabilities, and objectivity of the valuer.</li> <li>• Obtain an understanding of management's involvement in the valuation process to assess if appropriate oversight has occurred.</li> <li>• Review the appropriateness of the key data and assumptions used in the 2024/25 valuation process, and challenge these where required.</li> <li>• Review management's assessment that the value in the balance sheet of assets not subject to a valuation process in 2024/25 is not materially different to current value at the year-end, and challenge this where required.</li> </ul>



Risk of material misstatement	Planned audit response
<p><b>Risk of fraud over expenditure recognition</b></p> <p>In line with Practice Note 10: <i>Audit of financial statements and regularity of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom</i>, most public bodies are net expenditure bodies and therefore the risk of fraud is more likely to occur in expenditure.</p> <p>We have evaluated the council's significant expenditure streams. Some significant expenditure areas, including staff costs, interest payments and depreciation, amortisation and impairment, are not considered areas of risk. However, due to the extent and complexity of the council's other service expenses, we identified there is a risk that expenditure may be misstated.</p>	<p>The audit team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform detailed testing of expenditure transactions, including cut-off testing, focussing on the areas of greatest risk to assess completeness and accuracy of expenditure.</li> <li>• Monitor the budgetary process and reporting.</li> <li>• Carry out substantive testing of accruals and prepayments.</li> </ul>

Source: Audit Scotland

## Key audit matters

**16.** The Code of Audit Practice requires public sector auditors to communicate key audit matters. Key audit matters are those matters, that in the auditor's professional judgement, are of most significance to the audit of the financial statements and require most attention when performing the audit.

**17.** In determining key audit matters, auditors consider:

- Areas of higher or significant risk of material misstatement.
- Areas where significant judgement is required, including accounting estimates that are subject to a high degree of estimation uncertainty.
- Significant events or transactions that occurred during the year.

**18.** The matters determined to be key audit matters will be communicated in the Annual Audit Report. Exhibit 2 outlines the significant risks of material misstatement to the financial statements that have been identified, including those that have greatest impact on the planned audit procedures and require most attention when performing the audit.

## Group audit

**19.** The council prepares group financial statements. The group is made up of ten components, including the council which acts as the parent. Risk assessment procedures will be performed on the group audit to identify if there are any risks of material misstatement to the financial statements, or any components where audit procedures are required for the purposes of the group.

**20.** Where audit procedures are required on a component's financial statements, and the component auditor is different to the council's appointed auditor, group audit instructions will be issued to the component auditor outlining expectations and requirements in performing these audit procedures.

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# Wider scope and Best Value

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## Introduction

**21.** Reflecting the fact that public money is involved, the Code of Audit Practice requires that public audit is planned and undertaken from a wider perspective than in the private sector. The wider scope audit set out by the Code of Audit Practice broadens the audit of the annual accounts to include consideration of additional aspects or risks in four wider scope areas, which are summarised below:

- **Financial Management** – this means having sound budgetary processes. Factors that can impact on the council being able to secure sound financial management include the strength of the financial management culture, accountability, and arrangements to prevent and detect fraud, error and other irregularities, bribery and corruption.
- **Financial Sustainability** – this means looking forward over the medium and longer term in planning the services to be delivered and how they will be delivered effectively. This is assessed by considering council’s medium- to longer-term planning for service delivery.
- **Vision, Leadership and Governance** – this means having a clear vision and strategy, with set priorities within the vision and strategy. This is assessed by considering the clarity of plans in place to deliver the vision and strategy and the effectiveness of the governance arrangements to support delivery.
- **Use of Resources to Improve Outcomes** – this means using resources to meet stated outcomes and improvement objectives through effective planning and working with partners and communities. This is assessed by considering council’s arrangements for ensuring resources are deployed to improve strategic outcomes, meet the needs of service users, and deliver continuous improvement.

**22.** A conclusion on the effectiveness and appropriateness of arrangements the council has in place for each of the wider scope areas will be reported in the Annual Audit Report.

## Best Value

**23.** Under the Code of Audit Practice, the audit of Best Value in councils is fully integrated within the annual audit. As part of the annual audit, auditors

are required to take a risk-based approach to assessing and reporting on whether the council has made proper arrangements for securing Best Value, including follow up of findings previously reported in relation to Best Value.

**24.** The Accounts Commission also reports nationally on thematic aspects of councils' approaches to, and performance in, meeting their Best Value duties. As part of the annual audit, thematic reviews, as directed by the Accounts Commission, are conducted on the council. The thematic review for 2024/25 covers service transformation and involves considering how the council is redesigning services to maintain outcomes and deliver services more efficiently. Conclusions and judgements on the thematic review will be reported in a separate Management Report and summarised in the Annual Audit Report, where required.

### **Significant wider scope and Best Value risks**

**25.** The risk assessment process has identified significant risks in the wider scope areas and Best Value as outlined in Exhibit 3, and this includes the planned audit procedures in response to the risks.

### Exhibit 3

#### Significant wider scope and Best Value risks

Description of risk	Planned audit response
<p><b>Financial sustainability</b></p> <p>The council's budget for 2024/25 was approved with financial balance dependent upon delivery of savings and additional income totalling £28.5 million. In January 2025 the council reported that, despite further underlying pressures of £32.6 million, it was on track to delivering 90% of planned savings. The council is now forecasting a balanced year-end position, with further savings in corporate budgets identified to offset the additional cost pressures which had arisen throughout the year.</p> <p>Financial sustainability remains a risk for the council, with its own financial plan forecasting a £94.2 million gap by 2029/30. Challenges include pressures for frontline services, delivery of almost £48 million of approved savings within the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board and proposals for a significant increase in the level of capital borrowing, which is forecast to increase to a total of £2.879 billion by March 2029.</p>	<p>The audit team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the financial position throughout the year and provide an update in our 2024/25 Annual Audit Report.</li> <li>• Consider the council's progress in developing a longer-term financial plan.</li> </ul>

Source: Audit Scotland

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# Reporting arrangements, timetable and audit fee

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## Audit outputs

**26.** The outputs from the 2024/25 audit include:

- This Annual Audit Plan.
- An Independent Auditor's Report to the council and the Accounts Commission setting out opinions on the annual accounts.
- An Annual Audit Report to the council and the Accounts Commission setting out significant matters identified from the audit of the annual accounts, conclusions from the wider scope and Best Value audit, and recommendations, where necessary.

**27.** The matters to be reported in the outputs will be discussed with the council for factual accuracy before they are issued. All outputs from the audit will be published on Audit Scotland's website, apart from the Independent Auditor's Report, which is included in the audited annual accounts.

**28.** Target dates for the audit outputs are set by the Accounts Commission. In setting the target dates for the audit outputs, consideration is given to the statutory date for approving the annual accounts, which is 30 September 2025 for local government bodies.

**29.** The Independent Auditor's Report and Annual Audit Report are planned to be issued by the target date of 30 September 2025.

## Audit timetable

**30.** Achieving the timetable for production of the annual accounts, supported by complete and accurate working papers, is critical to delivery of the audit to agreed target dates. [Exhibit 4](#) includes a timetable for the audit, which has been agreed with management. Agreed target dates will be kept under review as the audit progresses, and any changes required, and their potential impact, will be discussed with the council and reported to those charged with governance, where required.

## Exhibit 4

### 2024/25 audit timetable

Audit activity	The City of Edinburgh Council target date	Audit team target date	Relevant committee date
Issue of Annual Audit Plan		26 February 2025	27 March 2025
<b>Annual accounts:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration of unaudited annual accounts by those charged with governance</li> </ul>	TBC		24 June 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submission of unaudited annual accounts and all working papers to audit team</li> </ul>	30 June 2025		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Latest date for audit clearance meeting</li> </ul>	22 August 2025	22 August 2025	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issue of draft Letter of Representation, proposed Independent Auditor's Report, and proposed Annual Audit Report</li> </ul>		TBC	16 September 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval by those charged with governance and signing of audited annual accounts</li> </ul>	18 September 2025		18 September 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signing of Independent Auditor's Report and issue of Annual Audit Report</li> </ul>		18 September 2025	
Issue of Best Value Management Report		26 February 2025	27 March 2025
Certification of Non-Domestic Rates Return		31 December 2025	
Certification of Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim		31 December 2025	
Certification of Whole of Government Accounts		31 December 2025	

Source: Audit Scotland

## Audit fee

**31.** The council's audit fee is determined in line with Audit Scotland's fee setting arrangements. The proposed audit fee for the 2024/25 audit is £736,760. In setting the audit fee, it is assumed that the council has effective governance arrangements in place and the complete annual accounts will be provided for audit in line with the agreed timetable. The audit fee assumes there will be no significant changes to the planned scope of the audit. Where the audit cannot proceed as planned, for example, due to incomplete or inadequate working papers, the audit fee may need to be increased.



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# Other matters

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## Internal audit

**32.** The council is responsible for establishing an internal audit function as part of an effective system of internal control. As part of the audit, the audit team will obtain an understanding of internal audit, including its nature, responsibilities, and activities.

**33.** While we are not planning to place formal reliance on the work of internal audit in 2024/25, we will review internal audit reports and assess the impact of the findings on our financial statements and wider scope audit responsibilities.

## Audit quality

**34.** Audit Scotland is committed to the consistent delivery of high-quality audit. Audit quality requires ongoing attention and improvement to keep pace with external and internal changes. Details of the arrangements in place for the delivery of high-quality audits are available from the [Audit Scotland website](#).

**35.** The International Standards on Quality Management (ISQM) applicable to Audit Scotland for 2024/25 audits are:

- ISQM (UK) 1, which deals with an audit organisation's responsibilities to design, implement, and operate a system of quality management (SoQM) for audits. Audit Scotland's SoQM consists of a variety of components, such as: governance arrangements and culture to support audit quality, compliance with ethical requirements, ensuring Audit Scotland is dedicated to high-quality audit through engagement performance and resourcing arrangements, and ensuring there are robust quality monitoring arrangements in place. Audit Scotland carries out an annual evaluation of its SoQM and has concluded it complies with this standard.
- ISQM (UK) 2, which sets out arrangements for conducting engagement quality reviews, which are performed by senior management not involved in an audit, to review significant judgements and conclusions reached by the audit team, and the appropriateness of proposed audit opinions on high-risk audits.

**36.** To monitor quality at an individual audit level, Audit Scotland carries out internal quality reviews on a sample of audits. Additionally, the Institute

of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW) carries out independent quality reviews on a sample of audits.

**37.** Audit Scotland may periodically seek the views of the council on the quality of audit services provided. The audit team would also welcome feedback at any time.

# The City of Edinburgh Council

Annual Audit Plan 2024/25



Audit Scotland, 4th Floor, 102 West Port, Edinburgh EH3 9DN  
Phone: 0131 625 1500 Email: [info@audit.scot](mailto:info@audit.scot)  
[www.audit.scot](http://www.audit.scot)