

Chair's update

Item 7

Chair of the Accounts Commission

Meeting date:
13 August 2026

Purpose

1. This report provides an update on the engagements and work of the Chair of the Accounts Commission since the Commission met last and upcoming engagement before the next meeting.

Engagement and Commission business

Commission business

- Regular meetings with Sarah Watters (Director for the Commission), Helena Gray (Controller of Audit) and Lee Ovens (Executive Assistant)
- 29 June – Local Government Budgets 2026/27 Bulletin sponsors' debrief, with Alison Cumming, Helena Gray, and Blyth Deans
- 29 June – section 102 report on Clackmannanshire Council's late audit – media preparation, with Joanna Mansell
- 11 August – Accounts Commission August meeting preparatory session with Andrew Burns (Deputy Chair), Joe Chapman (Policy Manager), Helena Gray, Sarah Watters and Lee Ovens

Audit Scotland engagement

- Regular meetings with Stephen Boyle (Auditor General), Vicki Bibby (Chief Operating Officer), and Alison Cumming (Executive Director of Performance Audit and Best Value)

External engagement

- 23 June – Place Directors and Community Planning Charter Launch event hosted by Scottish Government and COSLA
- 21 July – meeting with David Martin, Independent Panel Member for forthcoming Accounts Commission recruitment
- 21 July – appraisal with Ellen Leaver, Acting Director for Local Government and Communities, Scottish Government
- 11 August – introductory meeting with Bill Butler, Chair of the new Local Audit Office (for councils in England), and Helena Gray

Forthcoming activities

- Regular meetings with Sarah Watters, Helena Gray and Lee Ovens
- Regular meetings with Stephen Boyle, Vicki Bibby and Alison Cumming
- Date TBC – follow-up visit to Clackmannanshire Council, following their Section 102 report, considered at June's meeting
- 13 August – Future Public Audit Model discussion with the Commission's Sounding Board
- 13 August – Accounts Commission recruitment information session (in person and online)
- 17 August – introductory meeting with Craig Hoy MSP, Convener of the Scottish Parliament's Social Justice, Housing and Local Government Committee, supported by Sarah Watters
- 21 August – Best Value report follow up visit to Inverclyde Council, with Ruth MacLeod (Commission member) and Sarah Watters
- 25 August – Extraordinary Audit Scotland Board meeting
- 03 September – National Self-Evaluation Framework overview, with Alastair Delaney, consultant, and Lesley Brown, Society of Scottish Chief Executives (Solace), and Commission members
- 03 September – Audit Scotland Audit Committee meetings
- 03 September – introductory meeting with the new Board Chair for Audit Scotland, Bruce Cartwright
- 10-11 September – Solace Scotland conference, Oban
- 15 September – Accounts Commission recruitment shortlisting discussion
- 16 September – Accounts Commission September Strategy Seminar

Conclusion

2. The Commission is invited to:

- Note this report and enquire about any areas of interest.