

MEETING: 12 NOVEMBER 2020

REPORT BY: INTERIM CHAIR OF ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

INTERIM CHAIR'S REPORT

Purpose

1. This report provides an update on the engagements of the Interim Chair of the Accounts Commission.

Engagement and Work

2. The engagements and work in the period from 1 to 31 October have been as follows:

Audit Scotland Board and Committee meetings

- No meetings in October 2020

Audit Scotland engagement

- 8 October – Introductory meeting with Audit Scotland, Audit Directors for Local Government
- 1/14/28 October – Catch ups with Fraser McKinlay, Controller of Audit
- 14 October – Jackie Mann, new member of Audit Scotland Board. Post Commission meeting catch up.
- 1/14 October – Catch ups with Diane McGiffen, Chief Operating Officer
- 15 October – Catch up with Stephen Boyle, Auditor General for Scotland
- 21 October – very honoured to be invited by Elaine Boyd, Associate Director of Audit Quality and Appointments (AQA), to join the Shaw Trust Power 100, to hear the announcement of the top 10 for 2020. Congratulations to Elaine who was nominated in the top 100 in the UK earlier this year.
- 26 October – Scottish Commission for Public Audit (SCPA) private business meeting preceded by an informal meeting with Audit Scotland Board
- 27 October – Catch up with Alan Alexander, Chair of Audit Scotland Board
- 27 October – Attended Audit Scotland Management Team meeting to discuss the Commission Support Review update report being prepared for the Audit Scotland Remuneration and Human Resources Committee meeting on 4 November

External engagement

- 1 October – Meeting with SOLACE Scotland (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers in Scotland) with the Controller of Audit. Key areas covered included Best Value Audits and Annual Audits in the context of the pandemic, Council responses to the pandemic and thinking about recovery.
- 5 October – Tony Barrie, Internal Audit Manager, BDO Solicitors, regarding the review of Audit Scotland preparedness for the Board and Auditor General for Scotland changes

- 5 October – Catch up with David Martin, Chief Executive, Dundee City Council about Local Government Benchmarking Framework and future plans
- 6 October – Catch up with Brenda Campbell, Deputy Director for Local Government at Scottish Government to provide an update on Commission work programme and strategy

Commission business, development and support

3. Commission business has been as follows:

- Weekly catch ups with Paul Reilly, Secretary to the Commission, and Jillian Elgin, Executive Assistant
- 2/14/30 October – Best Value Working Group meetings. Updates are shared with Commission Members at each monthly Commission meeting as a standing item on our agenda.
- 1 October – Forward planning meeting with Tim McKay, Interim Deputy Chair, and Paul Reilly
- 6 October – Monthly sponsor catch up with Tim McKay and Local Government Overview team to discuss the approach, timing and emerging messages for the Financial Local Government Overview and the Local Government Overview
- 7 October – Accounts Commission private meeting with Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning
- 7 October – Accounts Commission pre meeting with members
- 8 October – Accounts Commission first meeting in October
- 8 October – Andrea Quinn, commission support review catch up
- 12/30 October – meetings with Paul Reilly and Fraser McKinlay to discuss New Audit Appointments
- 15 October – Paul Reilly, Peter Worsdale, Policy Support to the Accounts Commission, and Craig Flannigan, Joanna Mansell and Elizabeth Sargeant, Communications Team, to discuss Accounts Commission communications, engagement and public profile
- 15 October – Catch up with Tim McKay
- 21 October – Accounts Commission pre meeting with members
- 22 October – Accounts Commission second meeting in October and business update meeting with members
- 27 October – Catch up with Christine Lester, Chair of Performance Audit Committee, and Paul Reilly

Forthcoming activities

4. My forthcoming engagement activities include:

- 2 November – Community Empowerment catch up – Jillian Matthews, Audit Manager and Geraldine Wooley, Commission member
- 2 November – Strategic Scrutiny Group Covid-19 publication – communications approach with Joanna Mansell and Gemma Diamond, Audit Director
- 3 November – Action Tracker Review meeting with Tim McKay, Paul Reilly, Peter Worsdale and Jillian Elgin

- 3 November – Preparatory meeting for November Commission meeting with Fraser McKinlay, Paul Reilly, Tim McKay and Jillian Elgin
- 4 November – Local Government Sector Meeting with private audit firms and Audit Scotland Audit Directors
- 4 November – Audit Scotland Audit Committee and Remuneration and Human Resources Committee meetings (note clash with Audit Committee and Local Government Sector meeting)
- 11 November – Accounts commission pre meeting
- 11 November – Monthly catch up with Diane McGiffen
- 11 November – Forward planning meeting with Paul Reilly and Tim McKay
- 11 November – Sarah Gadsden, Chief Executive, Improvement Service catch up
- 12 November – Accounts Commission first meeting in November
- 12 November – Best Value Working Group
- 12 November – Paul Reilly, Peter Worsdale, Craig Flannigan, Joanna Mansell and Elizabeth Sargeant, Communications Team to discuss Accounts Commission communications and profile

Conclusion

5. The Commission is invited to note this report and enquire about any areas of interest.

Elma Murray
Interim Chair
31 October 2020