

MEETING: 9 JANUARY 2020**REPORT BY: SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSION****AUDIT SCOTLAND COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Purpose

1. This paper updates the Commission on Audit Scotland's communications and engagement strategy for 2020-23.

Background

2. Audit Scotland delivers communications on behalf of the Accounts Commission, Auditor General for Scotland and for Audit Scotland as a corporate entity.
3. Following the Commission meeting in September, members took part in a 'workshop' session with Audit Scotland's Communications Manager, Simon Ebbett, on communications priorities and activities. At that event, he advised that the communications and media environment is dynamic and rapidly evolving, and the political and public service context is volatile. To continue achieving awareness and impact for the Commission's work, we need to ensure our communications approaches remain relevant and effective, and that we maintain and build on our reputation for independent, robust audit and high quality communications.
4. He advised that the current Audit Scotland communications and engagement strategy was due to be refreshed. During 2019, the Audit Scotland Communications Team took this opportunity to lead a fundamental review of Audit Scotland's approaches to communications and engagement. This included internal consultation, external advice and research, and engagement. The workshop session was part of this engagement.
5. Communications by Audit Scotland on behalf of the Commission must reflect and promote the Commission's plans and priorities. To this end, the Audit Scotland communication strategy has been developed alongside the Commission's existing Strategy and supporting Engagement Strategy, and in consultation with the Commission support team and relevant Audit Scotland staff ensuring co-ordination with the forthcoming updating of the Commission's own strategy, which the Commission will consider at its March meeting.

Audit Scotland communications and engagement strategy, 2020-23

6. The revised Audit Scotland communications and engagement strategy attached in the Appendix describes the context for Audit Scotland's communications and engagement, and the strategy's objectives, pillars and workstreams.
7. The Audit Scotland board, of which the Commission Chair is a member, approved this strategy at its 28 January meeting.
8. As part of a current internal audit of the Audit Scotland communications function, BDO are reviewing its monitoring processes and will shortly make specific recommendations to Audit Scotland on how to best support the new strategy.
9. Simon Ebbett is present at today's meeting to discuss the strategy.

Implementation

10. The strategy is supported by an activation plan for the six strands of implementation detailed within, namely: planning and scoping; engagement; outputs and products; dissemination; measuring effectiveness; and learning and development. The Communications Manager is also reviewing the resilience and capacity of the team in order to manage process and resource implications.

Recommendation

11. The Commission is invited to note the attached Audit Scotland communications and engagement strategy.

Paul Reilly
Secretary to Accounts Commission
31 January 2020

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APPENDIX

See separate paper