

MEETING: 8 OCTOBER 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

2. My engagements in the period from 1 to 30 September have been as follows:

Audit Scotland Board and Committee meetings

- 2 September – Audit Committee and Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) meetings. The main items discussed were:
 - RemCo - the Commission Support Review; the RemCo priorities for 2020/21; and our annual suite of Diversity and Equality reports;
 - Audit Cttee - the Risk Register; a range of Internal Audit pieces of work; and an update on our Digital Security.
- 7 September – Audit Scotland Board follow up meeting with Diane McGiffen, Chief Operating Officer: Alan Alexander, Chair of Audit Scotland Board,
- 30 September – Audit Scotland Board Meeting. The main items of substance discussed were our Governance arrangements; a COVID-19 update; the Q1 Corporate Performance; the first draft of our Budget 2021/22 submission; an update on the EU Withdrawal; the New Audit Appts project; the departure of Heather Logan as a Board member.

Audit Scotland engagement

- 3 September – Auditor General catch up
- 9 September – Colin Crosby, new member of Audit Scotland Board. Introductory meeting
- 23 September – Work programme discussion with Auditor General, Paul Reilly, Secretary, Antony Clark, Audit Director and Tim McKay, Interim Deputy Chair
- 21 September – Monthly catch up with Fraser McKinlay, Controller of Audit
- 23 September – New Audit Appointments Steering Group meeting. The main items discussed were our Risk Register; the initial outcomes from the Project Review; and the next stages of work to consult and engage further on the Code of Audit Practice.
- Various catch ups with Diane McGiffen (1 and 28 September).

External engagement

- 16 September – Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning and Tim McKay
- 23 September – Dr Jim McCormick, Associate Director for Scotland, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and soon to be of the Robertson Trust. The meeting with Jim McCormick was to discuss the potential for some engagement as part of our Insight Programme.

Commission business, development and support

3. My Commission business has been as follows:

- Weekly catch ups with the Secretary and Executive Assistant
- 1 September – Preparatory meeting for Commission meeting on 10 September (Secretary, Controller of Audit, Interim Deputy Chair)
- 2 September – Best Value Working Group meeting. Update shared with members at Commission meeting on 24 September
- 3 September – Forward planning meeting with Tim McKay and Paul Reilly
- 3 September – Catch up with Tim McKay
- 7 & 15 September – David Blattman, HR and OD Manager to discuss taking forward the Commission Support Review resourcing requirements
- 9 September – Accounts Commission pre meeting with members
- 10 September – Accounts Commission meeting
- 15 September – Development discussion with Tracey Bray, Human Resources
- 16 September – Risk Register review meeting with Tim McKay and Paul Reilly
- 16 September – Strategic Scrutiny Group post meeting catch up with Mark Roberts, SSG Secretary
- 16 September – Monthly sponsor catch up with Tim McKay and Local Government Overview team
- 17 September – Code of Audit Practice catch up with Elaine Boyd, Associate Director Audit Quality, Fiona Daly, Consultant, Audit Strategy, and Robert Leask, Project Manager, Audit Quality
- 21 September – Moray Council pre meeting with Accounts Commission members Pauline Weetman and Stephen Moore, the Secretary and Brian Howarth, Audit Director
- 21 September – Moray Council, follow up to Best Value Assurance Report publication. Update paper to be provided to members on 30 September
- 21 September – Discussion with Diane McGiffen, Stuart Dennis, Finance Manager and Tim McKay ahead of update at Commission business meeting on 24 September
- 23 September – Catch up with Tim McKay
- 24 September – Accounts Commission meeting and business update meeting with members
- 24 September – Paul Reilly, Peter Worsdale, Craig Flanigan, Joanna Mansell and Elizabeth Sargeant, Communications team to discuss Accounts Commission communications

- 24 September – Martin Walker, Associate Director, Corporate Performance and Risk, discussion on risk
- 28 September – Preparatory meeting for Commission meeting on 8 October (Secretary, Controller of Audit, Interim Deputy Chair)
- Meetings with Andrea Quinn to update and finalise the Commission Support Review report, which has been updated following a change made at the Remuneration Committee, with the final version shared with members and appropriate Audit Scotland colleagues.

Forthcoming activities

4. My forthcoming engagement activities include:

- 1 October – Solace Meeting with Controller of Audit
- 2 October – Forward planning meeting with Interim Deputy Chair and Secretary
- 6 October – Monthly sponsor catch up with Tim McKay and Local Government Overview team
- 6 October – catch-up with Brenda Campbell at Scottish Government
- 6 October – catch-up with David Martin, CEX Dundee City Council about Local Government Benchmarking Framework
- 7 October – Accounts Commission members meeting with Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning
- 8 October – Accounts Commission meeting
- 8 October – Introductory meeting with Audit Scotland, Audit Directors for Local Government.

Conclusion

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

Elma Murray
Interim Chair
30 September 2020