

MEETING: 10 JUNE 2021

REPORT BY: INTERIM CHAIR OF ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

INTERIM CHAIR'S UPDATE REPORT

Purpose

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

Engagement and Audit Scotland business

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

Audit Scotland Board and Committee meetings

- 10 May – Board Development Workshop.
- 12 May – Audit Committee and Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo) meetings. The main items discussed were:
 - Audit Committee – A range of Quality related reports including the 2020 Transparency Report and ICAS related Improvement actions; Q4 Financial performance; Review of risk register; Internal audit reports; A review of the policy on the provision of Non-Audit Services; and a suite of annual assurance reports and governance reports.
 - RemCo – Diversity, equality and inclusion progress update; 2021 Pay review; Annual review of Terms of Reference; Draft RemCo Annual Report; Audit Scotland's pension arrangements; and Review of Auditor General's expenses.
- 19 May – Audit Scotland Board Meeting. The main items of substance discussed were our Governance arrangements; Strategic improvement programme update; a Covid-19 update; Environment, Sustainability and Biodiversity plan 2020/21 to 2024/25; New audit appointments update and work programme update.
- Copies of the key papers from these meetings have been loaded onto the Commission's SharePoint site and brought to members attention.

Audit Scotland engagement

- 11 May – Catch up with Elaine Boyd, Associate Director, Audit Quality and Appointments.
- 12 & 27 May – Catch up with Kathrine Sibbald, Audit Quality Project Manager around future business for the Best Value Working Group and progress with the New Audit Appointments project.
- 12 May - Catch up with Antony Clark, new Interim Controller of Audit and Interim Director of Performance and Best Value.

- 13 & 25 May – Media catch ups and preparation for the publication of the Local Government Overview with Joanna Mansell, Communications Adviser.
- 17 May – Knowledge Café – Scottish budget 2021/22.
- 18 May – Catch up with David Blattman, HR & OD Manager.
- 25 May – Regular catch up with Alan Alexander, Audit Scotland Board Chair.
- 26 May – Monthly catch up with Diane McGiffen, Chief Operating Officer.
- 26 May – New Audit Appointments Steering Group meeting.

External engagement

- 12 May – Introductory meeting with Netta Meadows, new Chief Executive of Scottish Borders Council and Antony Clark, Interim Controller of Audit.

Commission business, development and support

3. Commission business has been as follows:

- Regular catch ups with Paul Reilly, Secretary to the Commission, and Jillian Elgin, Executive Assistant to the Commission.
- 12 May – Accounts Commission pre meeting with Commission members.
- 13 May – Accounts Commission meeting.
- 17 May – Catch up with Tim McKay, Interim Deputy Chair, to discuss ongoing Commission business.
- 20 May – Forward planning meeting with Tim McKay, Paul Reilly, Lucy Carter, Policy Manager for the Commission, and Jillian Elgin to discuss up and coming Commission business.
- 20 May – Best Value Working Group meeting. Updates are shared with Commission members at each monthly Commission meeting as a standing item on our agenda and papers are shared on the Commission SharePoint site.
- 25 May – Communications monthly catch up meeting with Paul Reilly, Lucy Carter, Craig Flannigan and Joanna Mansell, Communications Team, to discuss Accounts Commission communications, engagement, and public profile.
- 26 May – Financial Audit Assurance Committee and Performance Audit Committee pre meeting.
- 27 May – Financial Audit Assurance Committee meeting.
- 27 May – Performance Audit Committee meeting.
- 31 May – Preparatory meeting for June Commission meeting with Paul Reilly and Tim McKay and Antony Clark.

4. Other areas of work have included:

- 3 – 7 May – few days off.

- Preparation and media interviews for Local Government Overview publication.
- Annual report sign off.

Forthcoming activities

5. My forthcoming engagement activities include:

- Weekly catch ups with Paul Reilly and Jillian Elgin.
- 2 June – Audit Scotland Audit Committee.
- 2 June – Audit Scotland Board.
- 3 June – Introductory meeting with Sean Neill, new Director for Local Government.
- 3 June – Meeting with Diane McGiffen, Chief Operating Officer and Stephen Boyle, Auditor General for Scotland.
- 9 June – Accounts Commission pre meeting.
- 9 June – Forward Planning meeting.
- 10 June – Accounts Commission meeting.

Conclusion

6. The Commission is invited to:

- a) Note this report and enquire about any areas of interest.
- b) Consider whether there are any changes that they would wish to see to the format and content of the report for the future.

Elma Murray
Interim Chair
31 May 2021