

MEETING: 7 APRIL 2022

REPORT BY: CHAIR OF ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

CHAIR'S UPDATE REPORT

Purpose

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

Engagement and Audit Scotland business

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

Audit Scotland Board and Committee meetings

- 2 March – Audit Committee and Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (Remco) meetings.
- 15 March – Audit Scotland Board development discussion with Judith Strange, external consultant, in advance of workshop scheduled for 5 April.

Audit Scotland engagement

- 14 March – Monthly catch up with Stephen Boyle, Auditor General for Scotland and Accountable Officer, Audit Scotland.
- 21 March – Joint Work Programme discussion with Stephen Boyle, Tim McKay, Interim Deputy Chair, Patrick McFall, Communications Adviser, Michelle Borland, Business Manager and Gemma Diamond and Mark Roberts, Audit Directors, Performance Audit and Best Value.
- 22 March – Follow-up Audit Scotland Board induction meeting with Martin Walker, Acting Director, Corporate Services.
- 23 March – Recruitment meeting to discuss Audit Scotland Executive Director of Audit Services interviews.
- 23 March – Introductory meeting with Stuart Dennis, Corporate Finance Manager and Paul Reilly, Secretary.

External engagement

- 8 March – Introductory meeting with Kenneth Lawrie, Chair, Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Board, and Chief Executive, Falkirk Council.
- 15 March – Strategic Scrutiny Group meeting. Update will be shared with members at the May Commission meeting.
- 17 March – Introductory session at Local Government Sector forum attended by various Audit Scotland Audit Directors and representatives from the audit firms.

- 21 March – Recruitment meeting with Scottish Government and Paul Reilly to discuss member recruitment.
- 22 March – Introductory meeting with Andrew Kerr, SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) Chair, and Chief Executive, Edinburgh.
- 28 March – Public Sector Reform discussion with Stephen Boyle, Antony Clark, Interim Director of Performance Audit and Best Value, Dr Laura Turney, Head of Public Sector Reform and David Milne, Public Sector Reform and Community Planning team leader, Scottish Government.

3. Commission business has been as follows:

- Regular catch ups with Paul Reilly and Jillian Elgin, Executive Assistant to the Commission.
- 3 March – 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.
- 9 March – Accounts Commission pre-meeting.
- 10 March – Accounts Commission meeting.
- 14 March – Local Government Overview discussion on draft report with Tim McKay, Antony Clark and Local Government Overview team to discuss the approach, timing and emerging messages for the Local Government Overview due for publication in May.
- 15 March – Financial Local Government Overview media preparatory session with Joanna Mansell, Communications Adviser, Brian Howarth, Audit Director, Audit Services, and Blyth Deans, Senior Manager, Performance Audit and Best Value.
- 17 March – Contingency planning exercise with members.
- 17 March – S102 Orkney and Shetland Valuation Joint Board media preparatory session with Joanna Mansell and Mark MacPherson, Audit Director, Performance Audit and Best Value.
- 22 March – Strategy Seminar catch up with Andrea Quinn, facilitator, Geelox, and Paul Reilly.
- 23 March – Catch up with Tim McKay.
- 23 March – 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.
- 29 & 30 March – Accounts Commission Strategy Seminar.

4. Other areas of work have included:

- Preparation and media interviews for Local Government Financial Overview publication.
- Preparation and media interviews for Orkney and Shetland Valuation Joint Board.

- Consultation response on Public Sector Equality Duty in Scotland.
- Covid-19 recovery press release in conjunction with Geraldine Wooley, member.
- Recruitment preparation for new Executive Director of Audit Services.
- Interview for Audit Scotland staff magazine Abacus.

Forthcoming activities

5. My forthcoming engagement activities include:

- 5 April – Audit Scotland Board meeting and Board development session.
- 7 April – Accounts Commission meeting.
- 14 April – Best Value Working Group meeting.
- 14 April – Monthly catch up with Tim McKay.

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.

William Moyes
Chair
29 March 2022