

MEETING: 10 NOVEMBER 2022

REPORT BY: INTERIM CONTROLLER OF AUDIT

INTERIM CONTROLLER OF AUDIT UPDATE REPORT

Purpose

1. This report provides an update on my engagement activity during September and October and forthcoming engagement activity during November.

Engagement

2. Please note below my engagements in September and October:
 - **2 September** – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) pre-Commission Q&A session.
 - **5 – 16 September** – Annual leave.
 - **21 September** – Monthly catch up with the Correspondence team.
 - **30 September** – Attended ‘A Conversation about our learning on system change’. This event was hosted by The Hunter Foundation and The Robertson Trust. It focused on the emerging findings from the Hunter Foundation and BBC Children in Need with a voice-led, place-based programme of support families to flourish through a programme of work called What Matters to You (WM2U). The event focused on the opportunities and barriers for achieving system change that will work for families arising from the WM2U work.
 - **3 October** – Attended Vicki Bibby’s keynote event ‘Leading in a time of transformation’.
 - **3 October** – Meeting with the Local Government Overview (LGO) team and the Accounts Commission Chair to discuss the Issues and Investigations (I&I) Matrix which will determine the scope and approach to the LGO audit.
 - **7 October** – Quarterly engagement meeting with Sarah Gadsden, Chief Executive, Improvement Service (IS). Key discussion points included: the IS’s recent report on [a future operating model for Scottish local government](#), potential IS input into the Accounts Commission’s Best Value ‘end of term’ report, potential joint work promoting the Commission’s suite of [How Councils Work](#) reports, and a general discussion on public service reform and the forthcoming Scottish Leaders’ Forum Conference.
 - **12 October** – Meeting with Philip Whyte, Director, Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) Scotland to discuss IPPR Scotland’s research and policy analysis work on economic growth, skills and public service reform.
 - **14 October** – Meeting with Dr Oliver Escobar, University of Edinburgh, to discuss issues linked with community empowerment and engagement and the Scottish Government’s local governance review.

- **13 October** – Scottish Leaders' Forum (SLF) Conference 2022, Tulliallan Police College. Carol Calder and I hosted a collaborative session on the future of scrutiny. This session drew on the recent SLF [Accountability and Incentives](#) report which I was involved in. It highlighted the progress made over recent years by scrutiny bodies to focus on outcomes but, in the context of the new challenges facing Scotland's public services, it asked questions such as:
 - Does scrutiny really support or inhibit change?
 - How well is it aligned to the ambitions of the National Performance Framework (NPF)?
 - Is scrutiny focusing the right issues?
 - Are the right voices being heard?
 - Does scrutiny need to change further and more radically to reflect the Scottish Government reform agenda?
- **17 – 21 October** – Annual leave.
- **25 October** – I spoke at a conference for public sector technology professionals in Scotland (FutureScot Conference). The title of my presentation was 'Getting digital government right: reducing digital exclusion, promoting collaborative leadership, and raising digital skills'. The presentation focused on the wider opportunities that embracing and embedding digital technology in the planning and delivery of public services will bring to improve outcomes for citizens and communities.
- **25 October** – Quarterly engagement meeting with Sally Loudon, Chief Executive, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). Key discussion points included: potential COSLA input into the Accounts Commission's Best Value 'end of term' report following the conclusion of the recent cycle of Best Value Assurance reports (BVARs), feedback following my input at the Scottish Leaders' Forum Conference, a discussion on the key issues and challenges facing councils in the context of the tight financial position following the Resource Spending Review, and a general discussion on public service reform issues (e.g. the National Care Service).
- **26 October** – Annual Audit Planning Conference. Controller of Audit update and update on the dynamic work programme.
- **27 October** – Shetland BVAR post project review with the team.
- **28 October** – I spoke at the Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA) Scotland Branch Conference – the conference theme is 'Three horizons of recovery', a model of long-term change as a framework for considering NHS Scotland recovers from the pandemic. My presentation focused on the key messages from the NHS in Scotland 2021 annual overview report and linking these with the International Futures Foundation (IFF) [three horizons model of change](#).
- **31 October** – Meeting with Professor Chris Chapman, Chair of Educational Policy and Practice, University of Glasgow, and previously Co-Director of What Works Scotland to discuss mutual areas of interest.

Forthcoming activities

3. My upcoming engagements in November include:

- **1 November** – Attending Kenny Oliver’s keynote event ‘Meeting the challenges of the audit profession’.
- **1 November** – Meeting Paul Johnston, Director-General Communities and Mary McAllan, Director of Covid Recovery and Public Service Reform, Scottish Government, with Gemma Diamond, Audit Director, Performance Audit and Best Value (PABV) to discuss public service reform.
- **2 November** – Recording a podcast with [The Performance Audit Report](#). The podcast will focus on the change role of performance audit and innovative delivery approaches, maximising impact, use of data and visualisations and highlight our recent outputs on Child Poverty, Tackling Climate Change, Ferries and Early Learning and Childcare.
- **2 November** – Meeting the Local Government Overview team with sponsors (Bill Moyes, Tim McKay) to discuss the LGO Financial Bulletin Emerging Messages.
- **2 November** – Pre meeting with Stephen Moore and colleagues ahead of the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee session on Tuesday 8 November on our report [Integration Joint Boards: Financial analysis 2020/21](#).
- **3 November** – Meeting Sarah Skerratt, Chief Executive, The Royal Society of Edinburgh, having taken up her new role at the end of September, to discuss mutual areas of interest.
- **4 November** – Angus BVAR post project review with the team.
- **7 November** – Quarterly engagement meeting with Simon Ebbett, Communications Manager.
- **8 November** – Attending Health, Social Care and Sport Committee informal session with Stephen Moore, Leigh Johnston (Senior Manager) and Chris Lewis (Senior Auditor) to discuss our [Integration Joint Boards: Financial analysis 2020/21](#) report as part of the committee’s pre-scrutiny of the National Care Service Bill to look at the experience of integration of health and social care to date.
- **10 November** – Accounts Commission meeting.
- **11 November** – Speaking at the Society of Local Authority Lawyers and Administrators (SOLAR) Autumn Conference on the subject of ‘Good Governance’. The presentation will focus on why good governance matters and how it supports the delivery of effective outcomes for citizens.
- **15 November** – Strategic Scrutiny Group meeting.
- **16 November** – Meeting the Local Government Overview team with sponsors (Bill Moyes, Tim McKay) to discuss the LGO Financial Bulletin draft report.
- **16 November** – Monthly catch up with Bill Moyes and Paul Reilly.
- **21 November** – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar BVAR post project review with the team.

- **21 November** – Local Government Sector Forum. Controller of Audit update.
- **23 November** – Joint Performance Audit Committee (PAC) / Financial Audit and Assurance Committee (FAAC) pre meeting.
- **24 November** – PAC/FAAC meetings.
- **25 November** – Chairing the launch of the Glasgow Centre for Population Health report on Statistical analysis of educational outcomes among Big Noise Raploch participants in Raploch, Stirling, in my role as Chair of the Evaluation Advisory Board.
- **25 November** – Quarterly engagement meeting with Andrew Kerr, Chair, Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE).
- **29 November** – Attending the ‘Developing a Wellbeing Roundtable Methodology’ workshop – a partnership project between Carnegie UK and Northumbria University which seeks to refine a ‘Wellbeing Roundtable’ approach for developing and embedding wellbeing frameworks.

Antony Clark
Interim Controller of Audit
28 October 2022