

Minutes of the meeting of the Accounts Commission held in the offices of Audit Scotland, 110 George Street, Edinburgh on Wednesday 14 November 2007 at 10.30am.

PRESENT: J Baillie (Chair)
A Alexander
O Clarke
M Docherty
A Faulds
K Geddes
A Kelbie
J King
I Low
I Robertson
D Sinclair

IN ATTENDANCE: C Gardner, Deputy Auditor General and Controller of Audit
D Pia, Director of Public Reporting (Local Government)
L Bradley, Director of Audit Services
C Coull, Secretary

<u>Item No</u>	<u>Subject</u>
1.	Membership
2.	Apologies
3.	Minutes
4.	Financial Audit and Assurance Committee
5.	Chair's Introduction
6.	Committee Membership
7.	Report by the Controller of Audit
8.	Update Report by Secretary
9.	Local Government Act 1992 – Publication of Statutory Performance Information Direction 2007
10.	Standards Commission for Scotland – Guidance Note to Devolved Public Bodies in Scotland
11.	Programme of Meetings 2008

1. Membership

John Baillie welcomed Adrienne Kelbie and Jim King to their first meeting of the Accounts Commission and congratulated them on their appointment.

Isabelle Low congratulated John Baillie on his appointment as Chair of the Commission.

John Baillie expressed his thanks to Isabelle Low for all her work during the period when she was acting as Chair of the Commission.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Jean Couper.

3. Minutes

The minutes of meeting of 10 October 2007 were submitted and approved.

4. Financial Audit and Assurance Committee

The minutes of meeting of the Financial Audit and Assurance Committee of 7 November 2007 were submitted and noted and the recommendations contained therein were approved.

5. Chair's Introduction

John Baillie indicated, that together with the Auditor General for Scotland, he had appeared before the Justice Committee the previous day regarding their enquiry into the effective use of Police Resources. The written submission made jointly by the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission had proved particularly useful and had been well received and he expressed his thanks to all concerned, including Douglas Sinclair and Owen Clarke who had approved the final paper on behalf of the Commission.

He was to attend a media event with journalists on Friday, together with the Auditor General and representatives from Audit Scotland.

6. Committee Membership

There was submitted a note of the current membership of the Committees and it was agreed to continue consideration of this item meantime.

7. Report by the Controller of Audit

There was submitted a report by the Controller of Audit providing an update on a number of matters of current interest:-

- Crerar Report
- Scottish Government Outcomes Approach
- Arrangements for Best Value meetings with councils
- Other external developments
- Audit Scotland developments.

The Commission agreed to note the report.

8. Update Report by Secretary

There was submitted a report by the Secretary advising of:-

- the decisions taken by East Lothian Council on the report by the Controller of Audit on the Departmental Re-organisation and Voluntary Redundancy of the Chief Executive, and
- the decisions taken by Moray Council on the progress report on the audit of Best Value and Community Planning.

Moray Council's Improvement Plan was attached to the report. Following discussion, the Commission asked the Best Value team and the local auditors to monitor the improvement plan and looked forward to the follow-up report in late 2008.

The report was otherwise noted.

9. Local Government Act 1992 – Publication of Statutory Performance Information Direction 2007

There was submitted a report by the Director of Public Reporting (Local Government) setting out the responses to the Commission's consultation paper on proposals for the Statutory Performance Indicator (SPI) 2007 Direction. A draft 2007 Direction was attached to the report. The report also set out the current position on the development of national performance management frameworks for local government, fire and rescue and police services.

Discussion took place in particular on the possible impact of the Scottish Government Outcomes approach on the development of SPIs.

The Commission agreed:-

- i. that the final Direction should include a reference to the current position in relation to the development of the performance management framework for local government, and
- ii. that the 2007 Performance Information Direction be otherwise approved.

10. Standards Commission for Scotland – Guidance Note to Devolved Public Bodies in Scotland

There was submitted a report by the Secretary advising that the Standards Commission was currently revising its guidance note to devolved public bodies and their members and that views on a draft revised guidance note had been requested by 21 December 2007.

Following discussion the Commission agreed to note the proposed revised guidance.

11. Programme of Meetings 2008

With regard to dates to the end of 2007 it was agreed that a meeting of the Performance Audit Committee be held on 28 November and the next meeting of the Accounts Commission be held on 12 December 2007.

With regard to meetings in 2008 it was reported that the Audit Committee of the Parliament had not yet agreed their timetable and, given that the Accounts Commission preferred to retain Wednesdays as the meeting day if possible, it was therefore difficult to plan Accounts Commission meetings. It was agreed that meetings would continue to be held on a Wednesday and that the Chair and Secretary would agree a programme of dates as soon as the dates for the Parliament's Audit Committee became known.