

ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

MEETING 18 OCTOBER 2012

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of the Accounts Commission
held in the offices of Audit Scotland at
18 George Street, Edinburgh, on
Thursday, 13 September 2012, at 10am

PRESENT: John Baillie (Chair)
Michael Ash
Alan Campbell
Sandy Cumming
Colin Duncan
Jim King
Christine May
Bill McQueen
Colin Peebles
Graham Sharp
Douglas Sinclair (Deputy Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE: Barbara Hurst, Director of Performance Audit
Fraser McKinlay, Controller of Audit and Director of Best Value and
Scrutiny Improvement (BVSU)
Paul Reilly, Secretary and Business Manager
Ronnie Nicol, Assistant Director, Performance Audit Group (PAG)
Martin Walker, Assistant Director, BVSU, [Items 7 and 8]
Kathrine Sibbald, Project Manager, BVSU [Items 7 and 8]
Angela Canning, Assistant Director, PAG [Item 9]
Russell Frith, Assistant Auditor General [Item 10]
Antony Clark, Assistant Director, BVSU [Item 11]
Lesley McGiffen, Portfolio Manager, BVSU [Item 12]
Miranda Alcock, Portfolio Manager, PAG [Item 13]

<u>Item No</u>	<u>Subject</u>
1.	Apologies for absence
2.	Declarations of interest
3.	Decisions on taking business in private
4.	Minutes of meeting of 23 August 2012
5.	Chair's introduction
6.	Update report by the Controller of Audit
7.	Statutory report: Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Joint Board – retirement and re-employment of the Chief Fire Officer
8.	Statutory report: Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Joint Board – retirement and re-employment of the Chief Fire Officer
9.	Accounts Commission Single Equality Scheme – draft progress report for the year to 31 March 2012
10.	Audit Scotland Budget 2013/14 and audit charges 2012/13
11.	Community Planning Partnership audit - update
12.	How Councils Work 4: Performance management and improvement
13.	Performance audit: Reducing reoffending
14.	Accounts Commission annual report
15.	Accounts Commission strategy and annual plan
16.	Any other business

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Linda Pollock.

2. Declarations of interest

Colin Duncan declared an interest in item 13: Performance audit: Reducing reoffending, as a family member is employed in criminal justice services.

3. Decisions on taking business in private

It was proposed that items 8-15 should be taken in private as they include draft reports and confidential issues.

4. Minutes of meeting of 23 August 2012

The minutes of the meeting of 23 August 2012 were submitted and approved.

5. Chair's introduction

The Chair reported that—

- On 30 August, he chaired the Commission's regular meeting with strategic scrutiny bodies, at which Bill McQueen was also present.
- On 6 September, he undertook a podcast in relation to the Commission's report on Fife Constabulary, which was published on 13 September.

- On 11 September, he and Graham Sharp met with representatives of Dumfries and Galloway Police Authority and Force to discuss the joint Best Value Audit and Inspection, which was published on 28 June.
- On 12 September, he, Douglas Sinclair and Colin Peebles met with representatives of Strathclyde Police Authority and Force, to discuss the progress report which the Commission considered at its last meeting. The draft findings would be published on 20 September.

6. Update report by the Controller of Audit

The Commission considered a report by the Controller of Audit providing an update on significant recent activity in relation to the audit of local government.

During discussion the Commission:

- Noted that the new Chief Executive of Shetland Islands Council had previously been employed by Kennett District Council.
- Noted advice from the Assistant Auditor General that he would undertake a briefing on welfare reform at the October meeting of the Commission.

Action: Assistant Auditor General

- Agreed that Kenneth Hogg, soon to be Director of Local Government and Communities in the Scottish Government, be invited to a future meeting of the Commission.

Action: Secretary and Business Manager

Thereafter the Commission agreed to note the report.

7. Statutory report: Strathclyde Fire and Rescue joint board retirement and re-employment of the Chief Fire Officer

The Commission considered a paper by the Secretary and Business Manager introducing the Controller of Audit's statutory report on Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Joint Board in relation to the retirement and re-employment of the Chief Fire Officer.

During discussion, the Commission sought clarification and further explanation from the Controller of Audit on a number of points in the report.

Following discussion, the Commission agreed to note the report and to consider in private its findings.

8. Statutory report: Strathclyde Fire and Rescue joint board retirement and re-employment of the Chief Fire Officer [in private]

The Commission agreed that this item be held in private to allow it to consider actions in relation to its findings.

Following discussion, the Commission agreed to make findings as contained in the report to be published in due course.

9. Accounts Commission Single Equality Scheme – draft progress report for the year to 31 March 2012 [in private]

The Commission agreed that this item be held in private to allow it to consider revisions to a draft report.

The Commission considered a report by the Chair of Audit Scotland Diversity and Equality Steering Group seeking consideration and approval of its draft annual report on progress with its Single Equality Scheme.

Following discussion the Commission:

- Approved the draft annual report on its Single Equality Scheme.
- Agreed to have a future briefing on the general and specific duties in the Single Equality Act.

Action: Chair of Audit Scotland Diversity and Equality Steering Group

- Agreed that members notify the Secretary and Business Manager of their interest in working with the Equality and Diversity Steering Group in the development of equality outcomes.
- Commended the Audit Scotland Diversity and Equality Steering Group on its work on its behalf.

10. Audit Scotland Budget 2013/14 and audit charges 2012/13 [in private]

The Commission agreed that this item be held in private to allow it to consider confidential budget issues.

The Commission considered a report by the Assistant Auditor General providing a briefing on Audit Scotland's budget for the financial year 2013/14 and seeking agreement to the proposed audit charges for the 2012/13 audits.

During discussion the Commission:

- Approved the charging proposals for 2012/13 audits.
- Noted the provisional proposals for the following audit years.
- Agreed that the Assistant Auditor General consider how to engage with CIPFA Directors of Finance section in relation to this year's and future year's charging proposals.

Action: Assistant Auditor General

11. Community Planning Partnership audit – update [in private]

The Commission agreed that this item be held in private to allow it to consider issues arising from ongoing discussions with stakeholders.

The Commission considered a report by the Director of Best Value and Scrutiny Improvement providing an update on progress with designing and testing the Accounts Commission's Community Planning Partnership audit framework.

During discussion the Commission noted that:

- All audits would include consideration of the role of the CPPs in the health and social care agenda.
- Make-up of quality and consistency review panels would be considered as part of the review of the audits at the end of the process.

Thereafter the Commission noted the report.

12. How Councils Work 4: Performance audit – update [in private]

The Commission agreed that this item be held in private to allow it to consider revisions to a draft report.

The Commission considered a report by the Director of BVSI seeking approval of the draft of the fourth report in the 'How Councils Work' series.

During discussion the Commission:

- Agreed that the marketing of the report –such as in the press release – emphasise the importance of the report to councillors and to those involved in the strategic delivery of services.
- Agreed further to this end that a letter be issued to chief executives and directors of finance.
- Agreed that the report be promoted internally to local audit teams to feature in their dialogue with councils.

Action: Director of BVSI

Thereafter the Commission agreed to approve the draft report and proposed publication arrangements set out in the Director's report.

13. Performance audit report – Reducing reoffending in Scotland [in private]

The Commission agreed that this item be held in private to allow it to consider revisions to a draft report.

The Commission considered a report by the Director of Performance Audit seeking approval of the draft joint report and proposed revised approach for the key messages on *Reducing reoffending in Scotland*, prepared on behalf of the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland.

During discussion the Commission:

- Agreed that the report be launched on 7 November, to coincide with a conference on promoting integration to be held on that day.
- Noted that the Chair and Deputy Chair had a meeting to be scheduled in October with the new leadership group of COSLA and at this they would raise the report.

Thereafter the Commission approved the draft report and the associated publication arrangements, subject to consideration being given to a number of points raised in

discussion and to further consultation with performance audit sponsors, Bill McQueen and Colin Peebles.

Action: Director of Performance Audit

14. Accounts Commission annual report [in private]

The Commission agreed that this item be held in private to allow it to consider revisions to a draft report.

The Commission considered a report by the Secretary and Business Manager proposing the Commission's draft annual report for 2012.

During discussion, the Commission noted advice from the Chair that the Auditor General and the management team of Audit Scotland had been consulted on the draft annual report. He further advised that the annual report would also be shared with the Board of Audit Scotland for its information.

Following discussion the Commission agreed to approve the draft annual report and the associated publication arrangements, subject to consideration being given to a number of points raised in discussion.

Action: Secretary and Business Manager

15. Accounts Commission strategy and action plan [in private]

The Commission agreed that this item be held in private to allow it to consider revisions to a draft report.

The Commission considered a report by the Secretary and Business Manager proposing the Commission's draft three-year strategy and annual plan.

During discussion, the Commission noted advice from the Chair that the Auditor General and the management team of Audit Scotland had been consulted on the draft strategy and action plan. He further advised that the draft strategy and action plan would also be shared with the Board of Audit Scotland for comment.

Following discussion the Commission agreed:

- To approve the draft strategy and annual plan, subject to consideration being given to a number of points raised in discussion.
- To approve the proposed arrangements for future monitoring and reporting of the strategy and its action plan.
- That publication of the draft strategy and annual plan take place during October or early November 2012.

Action: Secretary and Business Manager

16. Any other business

There was no other business.