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AUDITOR GENERAL PUBLISHES 'ROUTE MAP' OF GOVERNMENT IN SCOTLAND

A major reference work which maps out the responsibilities and accountabilities of public bodies in Scotland is published today by the Auditor General for Scotland, Robert Black.

The report, *How government works in Scotland*, illustrates for the first time since devolution how the organisation of government in Scotland is arranged, and how public servants are held accountable to the new Scottish Parliament and to the electorate. It covers over 200 organisations which play a part in the lives of people in Scotland.

“It is in the public interest that these relationships are as transparent and as well understood as possible,” said Mr Black.

The report highlights the size and complexity of the system, and the challenge for senior officers in ensuring that resources are used efficiently and effectively.

“Those responsible for spending public money must be held fully accountable,” said the Auditor General. “To ensure proper public accountability, public bodies need to have strong corporate governance. They must also have sound systems which provide reliable information on their achievements and their performance.”

The report draws attention to the recent trend towards “cross-cutting” initiatives, where public service delivery is dependent on various public bodies working in partnership.

“In many cases it is no longer sufficient to hold each public body to account only for its own direct spending, because some of its budget will be going into joint ventures and partnerships”, said Mr Black. “Joined-up government is good, but it may require new forms of public accountability.”

The report does not seek to analyse the effectiveness of the accountability mechanisms in place, although the Audit Committee of the Scottish Parliament is likely to take evidence on the report from the Scottish Executive.

For copies of the report and accompanying poster please contact Katie Fleming or James Gillies on 0131 624 9970/1

Notes

1. The Auditor General is responsible for securing the audit of the Scottish Executive and most other public bodies in Scotland, except local authorities. He investigates whether spending bodies achieve the best possible value for money and adhere to the highest standards of financial management. The Auditor General is independent and is not subject to the control of the Scottish Executive or the Scottish Parliament.
2. Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000, under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act, 2000. It provides services to the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland.

