

Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Annual Audit Plan 2016/17



 AUDIT SCOTLAND

Prepared for Highlands and Islands Enterprise

February 2017

Who we are

The Auditor General, the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland work together to deliver public audit in Scotland:

- The Auditor General is an independent crown appointment, made on the recommendation of the Scottish Parliament, to audit the Scottish Government, NHS and other bodies and report to Parliament on their financial health and performance.
- The Accounts Commission is an independent public body appointed by Scottish ministers to hold local government to account. The Controller of Audit is an independent post established by statute, with powers to report directly to the Commission on the audit of local government.
- Audit Scotland is governed by a board, consisting of the Auditor General, the chair of the Accounts Commission, a non-executive board chair, and two non-executive members appointed by the Scottish Commission for Public Audit, a commission of the Scottish Parliament.



About us

Our vision is to be a world-class audit organisation that improves the use of public money.

Through our work for the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission, we provide independent assurance to the people of Scotland that public money is spent properly and provides value. We aim to achieve this by:

- carrying out relevant and timely audits of the way the public sector manages and spends money
- reporting our findings and conclusions in public
- identifying risks, making clear and relevant recommendations.

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Risks and planned work

1. This annual audit plan contains an overview of the planned scope and timing of our audit and is carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs), the [Code of Audit Practice \("the Code"\)](#), and any other relevant guidance. This plan identifies our audit work to provide an opinion on the financial statements and related matters and meet the wider scope requirements of public sector audit. The wider scope of public audit contributes to conclusions on the appropriateness, effectiveness and impact of corporate governance, performance management arrangements and financial sustainability.

Audit risks

2. Based on our discussions with staff, attendance at committee meetings and a review of supporting information we have identified the following main risk areas for Highlands and Islands Enterprise. We have categorised these risks into financial risks and wider dimension risks. The key audit risks, which require specific audit testing, are detailed in [Exhibit 1](#).

Exhibit 1: Key Audit Risks

| Audit Risk | Management assurance | Planned audit work |
|---|--|--|
| Financial statement issues and risks | | |
| <p>1 Risk of management override of controls</p> <p>ISA 240 requires that audit work includes consideration of the risk of fraud, which is presumed to be a significant risk in any audit. This includes consideration of the risk of management override of controls to change the position disclosed in the financial statements.</p> | <p>Owing to the nature of this risk, assurances from management are not applicable.</p> | <p>Detailed testing of journal entries.</p> <p>Review of accounting estimates.</p> <p>Focused testing of accruals and prepayments.</p> <p>Substantive testing of transactions to confirm expenditure and income have been accounted for in the correct financial year.</p> <p>Evaluation of significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business.</p> |
| <p>2 Risk of fraud over income</p> <p>ISA 240 requires auditors to presume a risk of fraud where income streams, are significant (excluding Scottish Government funding). Highlands and Islands Enterprise receives a significant amount of income (£8.9 million in 2015/16) from third parties. The extent of income means that there is an inherent risk of fraud.</p> | <p>Monthly budget monitoring against income budget to identify any large or unusual items.</p> <p>Internal audit review of key controls including income (currently work in progress).</p> | <p>Analytical procedures on income streams.</p> <p>Detailed substantive testing of revenue transactions focusing on the areas of greatest risk.</p> |

| Audit Risk | Management assurance | Planned audit work |
|---|---|---|
| <p>3 Risk of fraud over expenditure</p> <p>ISA 240 and the Code of Audit Practice require auditors to consider the risk of fraud over certain types of public sector expenditure. This includes grants and other claims made by individuals and organisations on the public purse. Highlands and Islands Enterprise incurs significant expenditure on grants (£28.2 million in 2015/16).</p> | <p>Internal audit review of significant transactions, sample of other payments and current review of key controls.</p> <p>Segregation of duties around payment release.</p> <p>Specific controls around creation of new clients.</p> <p>Fraud policy and guidance in place.</p> | <p>Controls testing over expenditure systems, with reliance on internal audit.</p> <p>Substantive testing of grant expenditure.</p> <p>Review action taken to review and clear data matches resulting from the National Fraud initiative exercise.</p> <p>Undertake performance audit work on European funding as part of a national study.</p> |
| <p>4 Estimation and judgements</p> <p>Non-current assets (land and buildings), pensions and investments are revalued annually at 31 March by third party expert valuers/actuaries.</p> <p>There is an inherent risk due to the extent of assumptions used in the calculations and the impact they can have on the financial statements.</p> | <p>Valuations are supported by external professional advisers.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring of forecast outturn by finance team.</p> | <p>Review the work of an expert for the professional valuers (pensions, investments and properties).</p> <p>Focused substantive testing of year-end balances.</p> |
| <p>5 Investment write-offs</p> <p>Highlands and Islands Enterprise's funding for investments and projects can result in the write-off of equity, loans or grants when those companies are in financial difficulty.</p> <p>There is a risk that write-offs are not correctly disclosed in the financial statements, or that they have not been approved appropriately.</p> | <p>Monthly monitoring information on loans and equity is now included in the business monitoring reported presented to senior staff.</p> | <p>Substantively test significant write-offs to ensure that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they have been approved in line with procedures, and • they have been disclosed correctly in the financial statements. |
| Wider dimension risks | | |
| <p>6 Financial sustainability and Financial management (see also paragraphs 25-27 below)</p> <p>In June 2014, Audit Scotland reported on Scotland's Public Finances and identified that financial planning improvements were required by public bodies.</p> <p>The outcome of the EU referendum led to uncertainty over future European funding, which is a significant source of income for Highlands and Islands Enterprise.</p> | <p>HIE management are actively managing use of current European funding and for forward strategies.</p> | <p>Review progress in developing a medium term financial strategy.</p> <p>Undertake performance audit work on European funding as part of a national study.</p> |

| Audit Risk | Management assurance | Planned audit work |
|---|--|--|
| <p>7 Governance and transparency (see also paragraph 28 below)</p> <p>Role of boards</p> <p>In September 2010, Audit Scotland published a report on 'The role of boards'. The report highlighted the need for boards to demonstrate strong leadership and strategic direction.</p> <p>The first phase of Scottish Government's Review of Enterprise & Skills has announced the creation of a new Board to oversee Enterprise Agencies.</p> <p>There is a risk that these changes impact on the Board's ability to fulfil its functions, and provide scrutiny and challenge.</p> | <p>HIE is actively engaging in the Enterprise & Skills review process.</p> | <p>Follow up our 2010 'The role of boards' report.</p> <p>Monitor the Scottish Government's Review of Enterprise & Skills (phase 2) and consider the impact on the organisation.</p> |
| <p>8 Register of Interests</p> <p>The Register of Interests published on the website is not being kept up-to date for all Board Members and Directors.</p> <p>There is a risk that members have roles or interests which are not disclosed resulting in a risk to good governance and transparency.</p> | <p>Action is being taken to update the HIE Board Members' register of interests.</p> | <p>Review the process for completion of the Registers of Interest including review of guidance and assessment of compliance.</p> <p>Compare against the related party disclosures in the 2016/17 financial statements.</p> |
| <p>9 ICT arrangements</p> <p>A recent internal audit report identified a number of areas where Highlands and Islands Enterprise's ICT arrangements could be improved including clarification of the role of Enterprise Information Systems (EIS), service standards, cyber security, business continuity and disaster recovery arrangements.</p> <p>There is a risk that failure to strengthen ICT arrangements, particularly those relating to business continuity, disaster recovery and cyber security may result in disruption to Highlands and Islands Enterprise's systems, including key financial systems.</p> | <p>A detailed action plan will be prepared to address the issues identified.</p> | <p>Review follow-up work resulting from the recent internal audit report on information systems</p> <p>Review internal audit work on Disaster Recovery and Cyber Security.</p> <p>Liaise with management regarding further audit work, including Your Business @ Risk.</p> |

National Fraud Initiative

- 3.** The National Fraud Initiative (NFI) is a data-matching exercise led by Audit Scotland to aid the detection of fraudulent payments. NFI allows public bodies to investigate matches and, if fraud or error has taken place, to stop payments and attempt to recover the amounts involved. It also allows auditors to assess the arrangements that bodies have put in place to prevent and detect fraud, including how they approach the NFI exercise itself.
- 4.** The current data matching exercise collected data in October 2016 and match investigation work began in January 2017. We shall monitor Highlands and Islands Enterprise's participation and progress with NFI. We shall report progress in our Annual Audit Report, which will be presented to the Risk and Assurance Committee in September 2017.

Reporting arrangements

- 5.** Audit reporting is the visible output for the annual audit. All annual audit plans and the outputs as detailed in [Exhibit 2](#), and any other outputs on matters of public interest will be published on our website: www.audit-scotland.gov.uk.
- 6.** Matters arising from our audit will be reported on a timely basis and will include agreed action plans. Draft management reports will be issued to the relevant officers to confirm factual accuracy.
- 7.** We will provide an independent auditor's report to Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Auditor General for Scotland that the audit of the financial statements has been completed in accordance with applicable statutory requirements. We will provide the Accountable Officer and Auditor General for Scotland with an annual report on the audit containing observations and recommendations on significant matters which have arisen in the course of the audit.

Exhibit 2 : 2016/17 Audit outputs

| Audit Output | Target date | Risk and Assurance Committee Date |
|--|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Annual Audit Plan | 28 February 2017 | 7 March 2017 |
| Interim report | 31 May 2017 | 7 June 2017 |
| Annual Audit Report including ISA 260 requirements | 28 August 2017 | 5 Sept 2017 |
| Signed Independent Auditor's Report | 5 Sept 2017 | N/A |

Audit fee

- 8.** The agreed audit fee for the 2016/17 audit of Highlands and Islands Enterprise is £131,510. In determining the audit fee we have taken account of the risk exposure of Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the planned management assurances in place and the level of reliance we plan to take from the work of internal audit. Our audit approach assumes receipt of the unaudited financial statements and complete working papers package on 26 June 2017.

9. Where our audit cannot proceed as planned through, for example, late receipt of unaudited financial statements or being unable to take planned reliance from the work of internal audit, a supplementary fee may be levied. An additional fee may also be required in relation to any work or other significant exercises outwith our planned audit activity.

Responsibilities

Risk and Assurance Committee and Accountable Officer

10. Audited bodies have the primary responsibility for ensuring the proper financial stewardship of public funds, compliance with relevant legislation and establishing effective arrangements for governance, propriety and regularity that enable them to successfully deliver their objectives.

11. The audit of the financial statements does not relieve management or the Risk and Assurance Committee, as those charged with governance, of their responsibilities.

Appointed auditor

12. Our responsibilities as independent auditor are established by the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 and the Code of Audit Practice, and guided by the auditing profession's ethical guidance.

13. Auditors in the public sector give an independent opinion on the financial statements. We also review and report on the arrangements within the audited body to manage its performance, regularity and use of resources. In doing this, we aim to support improvement and accountability.

Audit scope and timing

Financial statements

14. The statutory financial statements audit will be the foundation and source for the majority of the audit work necessary to support our judgements and conclusions. We also consider the wider environment and challenges facing the public sector. Our audit approach includes:

- understanding the business of Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the associated risks which could impact on the financial statements
- assessing the key systems of internal control, and establishing how weaknesses in these systems could impact on the financial statements
- identifying major transaction streams, balances and areas of estimation and understanding how Highlands and Islands Enterprise will include these in the financial statements
- assessing the risks of material misstatement in the financial statements
- determining the nature, timing and extent of audit procedures necessary to provide us with sufficient audit evidence as to whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

15. We will give an opinion on the financial statements as to:

- whether they give a true and fair view of the financial position of Highland and Islands Enterprise and its group and their expenditure and income
- whether they have been properly prepared in accordance with relevant legislation, the applicable accounting framework and other reporting requirements
- the regularity of the expenditure and income.

Materiality

16. Materiality defines the maximum error that we are prepared to accept and still conclude that that our audit objective has been achieved. It helps assist our planning of the audit and allows us to assess the impact of any audit adjustments on the financial statements. We calculate materiality at different levels as described below. The calculated materiality values for Highlands and Islands Enterprise are set out in [Exhibit 3](#).



Exhibit 3: Materiality values



| Materiality level | Amount |
|---|--------------|
| Planning materiality. This is the calculated figure we use in assessing the overall impact of audit adjustments on the financial statements. It has been set at 1% of gross expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2017 based on the latest (2015/16) audited accounts. | £1.1 million |
| Performance materiality. This acts as a trigger point. If the aggregate of errors identified during the financial statements audit exceeds performance materiality this would indicate that further audit procedures should be considered. Using our professional judgement we have calculated performance materiality at 40% of planning materiality. | £0.4 million |
| Reporting threshold. We are required to report to those charged with governance on all unadjusted misstatements in excess of the 'reporting threshold' amount. This has been calculated at 2% of planning materiality. | £20,000 |

17. We review and report on other information published with the financial statements including the Performance Report, Remuneration and Staff report and Governance Statement. Any issues identified will be reported to the Risk and Assurance Committee.

Timetable

18. To support the efficient use of resources it is critical that a financial statements timetable is agreed with us for the production of the unaudited accounts. An agreed timetable is included at [Exhibit 4](#) which takes account of submission requirements and planned Risk and Assurance Committee dates:

Exhibit 4: Financial statements timetable

|  Key stage |  Date |
|---|--|
| Latest submission date of unaudited financial statements with complete working papers package | 26 June 2017 |
| Latest date for final clearance meeting with Chief Financial Officer | 21 Aug 2017 |
| Agreement of audited unsigned financial statements; Issue of Annual Audit Report including ISA 260 report to those charged with governance | 28 Aug 2017 |
| Independent auditor's report signed (following Risk and Assurance Committee meeting) | 5 Sept 2017 |
| Latest date for signing of Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) return | 30 Sept 2017 |

Internal audit

19. Auditing standards require internal and external auditors to work closely together to make best use of available audit resources. We seek to rely on the work of internal audit wherever possible and as part of our planning process we carry out an assessment of the internal audit function. Internal audit is provided by Highlands and Islands Enterprise's in-house internal audit team.

Adequacy of internal audit

20. From our review of internal audit, we have concluded that, overall, the internal audit service operates in accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and has sound documentation and reporting procedures in place. We note, however, that an independent third party review has not been undertaken since 2010 although one is scheduled to take place in 2017/18.

Areas of reliance

21. To support our audit opinion on the financial statements we intend to place formal reliance on the following planned internal audit reviews:

- payroll
- trade payables
- trade receivables
- asset register
- significant transactions
- certificates of assurance/governance statements.

22. In respect of our wider dimension audit responsibilities we also plan to consider other areas of internal audit work including:

- state aid compliance
- information systems
- national fraud initiative (NFI).

Audit dimensions

23. As noted at paragraph 1 above, we are required to meet the wider scope requirements of public sector audit which are outlined in the Code of Audit Practice.

24. Our audit is based on four audit dimensions that frame this wider scope and which are outlined in [Exhibit 5](#) below. As part of our responsibility to report on the four audit dimensions, we have identified specific areas of audit work for 2016/17 and these are outlined in Exhibit 1 above. We shall undertake further work over our five-year audit appointment.

Exhibit 5: Audit dimensions



Financial sustainability

25. As auditors we consider the appropriateness of the use of the going concern basis of accounting as part of the annual audit. We will also comment on the body's financial sustainability in the medium (two to five years) and longer term (longer than five years). We shall review selected aspects over our five-year audit appointment and conclude on the following:

- the effectiveness of financial planning in identifying and addressing risks to financial sustainability in the short, medium and long term
- the appropriateness and effectiveness of arrangements in place to address any identified funding gaps
- whether Highlands and Islands Enterprise can demonstrate the affordability and effectiveness of funding and investment decisions it has made.

Financial management

26. Financial management is concerned with financial capacity, sound budgetary processes and whether the control environment and internal controls are operating effectively.

27. We will review, conclude and report on the following over our five-year appointment:

- whether Highlands and Islands Enterprise has arrangements in place to ensure systems of internal control are operating effectively
- whether Highlands and Islands Enterprise can demonstrate the effectiveness of the budgetary control system in communicating accurate and timely financial performance
- how Highlands and Islands Enterprise has assured itself that its financial capacity and skills are appropriate
- whether Highlands and Islands Enterprise has established appropriate and effective arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption, including their response to the National Fraud Initiative exercise.

Governance and transparency

28. Governance and transparency is concerned with the effectiveness of scrutiny and governance arrangements, leadership and decision-making and transparent reporting of financial and performance information. We will review, conclude and report on the following over our five-year appointment:

- whether Highlands and Islands Enterprise can demonstrate that the governance arrangements in place are appropriate and operating effectively
- whether there is effective scrutiny, challenge and transparency on the decision-making and finance and performance reports
- the quality and timeliness of financial and performance reporting.

Value for money

29. Value for money refers to using resources effectively and continually improving services. We will review, conclude and report on whether Highlands and Islands Enterprise can provide evidence that it is demonstrating value for money in its achievement of performance targets.

30. We will review, conclude and report on the following over our five-year appointment:

- whether Highlands and Islands Enterprise can provide evidence that it is demonstrating value for money in the use of its resources
- whether Highlands and Islands Enterprise can demonstrate that there is a clear link between money spent, output and outcomes delivered
- whether Highlands and Islands Enterprise can demonstrate that outcomes are improving
- whether there is sufficient focus on improvement and the pace of it.

Independence and objectivity

31. Auditors appointed by Audit Scotland must comply with the Code of Audit Practice. When auditing the financial statements auditors must also comply with professional standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council and those of the professional accountancy bodies. These standards impose stringent rules to ensure the independence and objectivity of auditors. Audit Scotland has in place robust arrangements to ensure compliance with these standards including an annual “fit and proper” declaration for all members of staff. The arrangements are overseen by the Assistant Auditor General, who serves as Audit Scotland’s Ethics Partner.

32. The engagement lead for Highlands and Islands Enterprise is Gordon Smail, Assistant Director. Auditing and ethical standards require the appointed auditor, Audit Scotland, to communicate any relationships that may affect the independence and objectivity of audit staff. We are not aware of any such relationships pertaining to the audit of Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

Quality control

33. International Standard on Quality Control (UK and Ireland) 1 (ISQC1) requires that a system of quality control is established, as part of financial audit procedures, to provide reasonable assurance that professional standards and regulatory and legal requirements are being complied with and that the independent auditor’s report or opinion is appropriate in the circumstances.

34. The foundation of our quality framework is our Audit Guide, which incorporates the application of professional auditing, quality and ethical standards and the Code of Audit Practice issued by Audit Scotland and approved by the Auditor General for Scotland. To ensure that we achieve the required quality standards Audit Scotland conducts peer reviews, internal quality reviews and is currently reviewing the arrangements for external quality reviews.

35. As part of our commitment to quality and continuous improvement, Audit Scotland will periodically seek your views on the quality of our service provision. We welcome feedback at any time and this may be directed to the engagement lead.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise

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If you require this publication in an alternative format and/or language, please contact us to discuss your needs: 0131 625 1500 or info@audit-scotland.gov.uk

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