

West of Scotland European Forum

Annual Audit Plan 2020/21



 AUDIT SCOTLAND

Prepared for the West of Scotland European Forum

April 2021

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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 which is carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs), the [Code of Audit Practice](#), and guidance on planning the audit. This plan sets out the work necessary to allow us to provide an independent auditor's report on the annual accounts and meet the wider scope requirements of public sector audit.

2. The wider scope of public audit contributes to assessments and conclusions on financial management, financial sustainability, governance and transparency and value for money.

3. The public health crisis caused by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has had a significant and profound effect on every aspect of Scottish society. Public services have been drastically affected, requiring immediate changes to the way they are provided. The impact on public finances has been unprecedented, which has necessitated both the Scottish and UK governments providing substantial additional funding for public services as well as support for individuals, businesses and the economy. It is likely that further financial measures will be needed and that the effects will be felt well into the future.

4. Public audit has an important contribution to the recovery and renewal of public services. The Auditor General, the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland are responding to the risks to public services and finances from COVID-19 across the full range of audit work including annual audits and the programme of performance audits. Audit Scotland views 2020/21 as a transitional year, leading in future to audit timetables which were possible before COVID-19. The well-being of audit teams and the delivery of high-quality audits remain paramount. Maintaining a pragmatic and flexible approach will enable change at short notice as new issues emerge, or current risks change in significance. Where this impacts on annual audits, an addendum to this annual audit plan may be necessary.

Adding value


5. We aim to add value to the West of Scotland European Forum (WoSEF) through our external audit work by being constructive and forward looking, by identifying areas for improvement and by recommending and encouraging good practice. In so doing, we intend to help WoSEF promote improved standards of governance, better management and decision making and more effective use of resources.

Audit risks

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

Exhibit 1

2020/21 Significant audit risks

	Audit Risk	Source of assurance	Planned audit work
Financial statements risks			
1	<p>Management override of controls</p> <p>ISA 240 requires that audits are planned to consider the risk of material misstatement caused by fraud, which is presumed to be a significant risk in any audit. This includes the risk of management override of controls that results in fraudulent financial statements.</p>	<p>Owing to the nature of this risk, assurances from management are not applicable in this instance.</p>	<p>Detailed testing of journal entries.</p> <p>Focused testing of accruals and prepayments.</p> <p>Evaluation of significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business.</p>
Wider dimension risks			
2	<p>Future direction of WoSEF</p> <p>Uncertainty continues to exist around the future direction of WoSEF now that the UK has left the EU. The formation of a meaningful forward-looking work plan remains challenging.</p> <p>There is a risk that WoSEF does not have a clear strategic plan in place for future years.</p>	<p>A work programme for 2021/22 was approved by the Joint Committee. As part of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the UK will participate in the HORIZON EUROPE programme that will run between 2021 and 2027. The UK will not participate in any other collaborative EU programmes during the 2021-2027 period.</p>	<p>Review of reports to Joint Committee.</p> <p>Ongoing dialogue with officers.</p> <p>Review of related disclosures.</p> <p>Comment and, where appropriate, recommendations in 2020/21 Annual Audit Report.</p>

Source: Audit Scotland

7. As set out in ISA 240, there is a presumed risk of fraud in revenue recognition. There is a risk that income may be misstated resulting in a material misstatement in the financial statements. We have rebutted the risks of material misstatement caused by fraud in revenue recognition in 2020/21 because WoSEF receives revenue by way of member contributions. The simplicity and predictability of these transactions limits the opportunity for manipulation.

8. In line with Practice Note 10, as most public-sector bodies are net expenditure bodies, the risk of fraud is more likely to occur in expenditure. We have rebutted the risk of material misstatement caused by fraud in expenditure in 2020/21 because WoSEF's expenditure is primarily related to employee costs. The controls in place around the payroll system, and the relative simplicity of transactions, limit the opportunity for manipulation.

Reporting arrangements

9. 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.

10. 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 officer(s) to confirm factual accuracy.

11. We will provide an independent auditor's report to WoSEF and the Accounts Commission setting out our opinions on the annual accounts. We will provide WoSEF and the Accounts Commission with an annual report on the audit containing observations and recommendations on significant matters which have arisen during the audit.

Exhibit 2

2020/21 Audit outputs

Audit Output	Target date	Committee Date
Annual Audit Plan	30 April 2021	**
Independent Auditor's Report	15 November 2021	November 2021 (TBC)
Annual Audit Report	15 November 2021	November 2021 (TBC)

Source: Audit Scotland

** Annual Audit Plan circulated to members in April 2021 out with the formal Joint Forum Committee cycle

Audit fee

12. The proposed audit fee for the 2020/21 audit of WoSEF is £2,060 (2019/20 £2,020). In determining the audit fee, we have taken account of the risk exposure of WoSEF, the planned management assurances in place and the level of reliance we plan to take from the work of internal audit.

13. Where our audit cannot proceed as planned through, for example, late receipt of unaudited annual accounts 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 out with our planned audit activity.

Responsibilities

Joint Committee and Executive Director of Finance

14. 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.

15. The audit of the annual accounts does not relieve management or the Joint Committee, as those charged with governance, of their responsibilities.

Appointed auditor

16. Our responsibilities as independent auditors are established by the 1973 Act for local government, and the Code of Audit Practice (including supplementary guidance) and guided by the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard.

17. Auditors in the public sector give an independent opinion on the financial statements and other information within the annual accounts. 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

Annual accounts

18. The annual accounts, which include the financial statements, will be the foundation and source for most 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 West of Scotland European Forum and the associated risks which could impact on the financial statements
- identifying major transaction streams, balances and areas of estimation and understanding how WoSEF 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.

19. We will give an opinion on whether the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of WoSEF as at 31 March 2021 and of the income and expenditure of the WoSEF for the year then ended
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the financial reporting framework.

Statutory other information in the annual accounts

20. We also review and report on statutory other information published within the annual accounts including the management commentary and annual governance statement. We give an opinion on whether these have been compiled in accordance with the appropriate regulations and frameworks in our independent auditor's report.

21. We also review the content of the annual report for consistency with the financial statements and with our knowledge. We report any uncorrected material misstatements in statutory other information.

Materiality

22. We apply the concept of materiality in planning and performing the audit. It is used in evaluating the effect of identified misstatements on the audit, and of any uncorrected misstatements, on the financial statements and in forming our opinions in the independent auditor's report.

23. We calculate materiality at different levels as described below. The calculated materiality values for WoSEF are set out in [Exhibit 3](#).



characteristics



responsibilities



principal activities



risks



governance arrangements

Exhibit 3

Materiality values

Materiality	Amount
Planning materiality – This is the figure we calculate to assess the overall impact of audit adjustments on the financial statements. We have set it at 2% of gross expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2021 based on the latest audited accounts for 2019/20.	£800
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 75% of planning materiality.	£600
Reporting threshold (i.e., clearly trivial) – We are required to report to those charged with governance on all unadjusted misstatements more than the 'reporting threshold' amount. This has been calculated at 5% of planning materiality.	£40

Source: Audit Scotland

Timetable

24. As noted in paragraph 4, Audit Scotland views the 2020/21 audit year as a transitional year, leading in future to a return to pre-covid timetables. Following the extension of the Coronavirus Scotland regulations, Audit Scotland has deemed 30 November 2021 as being a reasonably practicable date for the agreement of the audited accounts. We will agree a more detailed timetable with officers as our wider resource plans are clarified during the year.

Internal audit

25. Internal audit is provided by Glasgow City Council. As part of our planning process we carry out an annual assessment of the internal audit function to ensure that it operates in accordance with the main requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). ISA (UK)610 requires an assessment on whether the work of the internal audit function can be used for the purposes of external audit. This includes:

- the extent to which the internal audit function's organisational status and relevant policies and procedures support the objectivity of the internal auditors
- the level of competence of the internal audit function
- whether the internal audit function applies a systematic and disciplined approach, including quality control.

26. Our review of the internal audit function concluded that it continues to have sound documentation standards and reporting procedures in place, and it complies with PSIAS requirements.

Using the work of internal audit

27. International Auditing Standards require internal and external auditors to work closely together to make best use of available audit resources. We seek to use the work of internal audit wherever possible to avoid duplication. We plan to consider the findings of the work of internal audit as part of our planning process to minimise duplication of effort and to ensure the total resource is used efficiently or effectively.

Audit dimensions

28. Our standard audits are based on four audit dimensions that frame the wider scope of public sector audit requirements. These are financial sustainability, financial management, governance and accountability and value for money which are summarised below:

- **Financial sustainability** – 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 financial sustainability in the longer term. We define this as medium term (two to five years) and longer term (longer than five years) sustainability.
- **Financial management** - Financial management is concerned with financial capacity, sound budgetary processes and whether the control environment and internal controls are operating effectively.
- **Governance and transparency** - 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.
- **Value for money** - Value for money refers to using resources effectively and continually improving services.

29. The Code of Audit Practice includes provisions relating to the audit of small bodies. Where the application of the full wider audit scope is judged by auditors not to be appropriate to an audited body then the annual audit work can focus on the appropriateness of the disclosures in the governance statement and the financial sustainability of the body and its services. In the light of the volume and lack of complexity of the financial transactions, we plan to apply the small body provisions of the Code to the 2020/21 audit of the WoSEF.

Independence and objectivity

30. Auditors appointed by the Accounts Commission or Auditor General must comply with the Code of Audit Practice and relevant supporting guidance. 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 robust arrangements in place to ensure compliance with these standards including an annual “fit and proper” declaration for all members of staff. The arrangements are overseen by the Director of Audit Services, who serves as Audit Scotland’s Ethics Partner.

31. The engagement lead (i.e. appointed auditor) for WoSEF is Stephen O’Hagan, Senior Audit Manager. Auditing and ethical standards require the appointed auditor 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 WoSEF.

Quality control

32. International Standard on Quality Control 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.

33. 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 (and supporting guidance) issued by Audit Scotland and approved by the Auditor General for Scotland. To ensure that we achieve the required quality

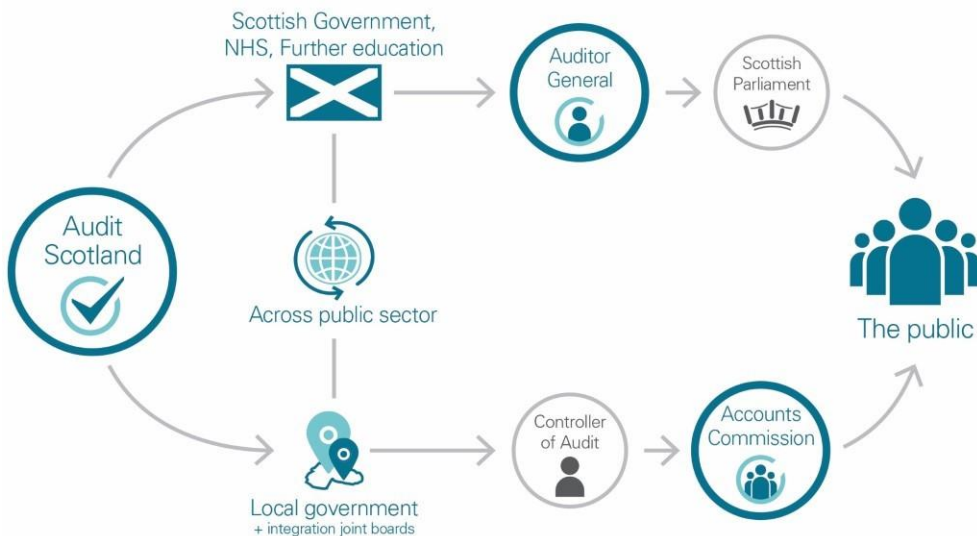
standards Audit Scotland conducts peer reviews and internal quality reviews. Additionally, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (ICAS) have been commissioned to carry out external quality reviews.

34. 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.

Appendix 1: 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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Audit Scotland, 4th Floor, 102 West Port, Edinburgh EH3 9DN
T: 0131 625 1500 E: info@audit-scotland.gov.uk
www.audit-scotland.gov.uk