

News release

For immediate release, 8 December 2022

Crofting Commission governance improves

The Crofting Commission has acted quickly to tackle weaknesses in its governance and leadership arrangements.

Since a critical report by auditors in 2021, the Commission has clarified roles and decision-making responsibilities, established a more formal budget setting process, and concluded an independent review of its workforce needs.

This comes after the Auditor General last year highlighted a breakdown of trust between the board and senior management. He said leadership and governance had to improve significantly for the Commission to effectively oversee the important services it provides Scotland's crofting communities.

Stephen Boyle, Auditor General for Scotland, said:

"The Crofting Commission has acted swiftly to deal with the problems it faced, and the new board now needs to maintain momentum by working effectively alongside the chief executive.

"Like all public bodies, it is a tough time for the Commission. Clear and effective leadership will be crucial to delivering for the rural communities it serves."

For further information contact Patrick McFall Tel: 0131 625 1663 / 07786660171
pmcfall@audit-scotland.gov.uk or media@audit-scotland.gov.uk

Notes to Editor:

- 1.** The Auditor General has prepared the report on the Crofting Commission's audited accounts for 2021/22 under Section 22 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. This allows the Auditor General to bring to the Parliament and the public's attention matters of public interest related to the financial statements of public bodies.
- 2.** Section 22 reports are submitted to Scottish Ministers for laying in the Parliament along with the accounts of the relevant body. While there are statutory deadlines for these reports, the actual timing of publication is determined by when the report is laid in the Scottish Parliament by Scottish Ministers.
- 3.** Crofting is a system of landholding which is unique to Scotland and is an integral part of life in the Highlands and Islands. A croft is a relatively small agricultural land holding which is normally held in tenancy and which may or may not have buildings or a house associated with it. There are around 20,000 crofts across the crofting counties. Crofts range in size from less than half a hectare to more than 50 hectares but an average croft is nearer five hectares.

4. The Auditor General's critical report on the 2020/21 audit of the Crofting Commission is [here](#).

5. Details of the activity undertaken by the Commission to address the auditor's recommendations in the [2020/21 annual audit report](#) are set out in annex one of the [2021/22 annual audit report](#).

6. Commission Board elections saw the appointment of four new commissioners in March 2022. A further two new commissioners were appointed by the Scottish Government in September 2022.

Audit Scotland has prepared this report for the Auditor General for Scotland. All Audit Scotland reports published since 2000 are available at www.audit-scotland.gov.uk

- The Auditor General appoints auditors to Scotland's central government and NHS bodies; examines how public bodies spend public money; helps them to manage their finances to the highest standards; and checks whether they achieve value for money. The Auditor General is independent and is not subject to the control of the Scottish Government or the Scottish Parliament
- 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 Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission for Scotland.