

Scotland Excel

To: Executive Sub-Committee

On: 27 March 2020

Report by The Treasurer

Report on the Annual Audit Plan 2019/20

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Annual Audit Plan 2019/20 for Scotland Excel is submitted for Members' information. It outlines Audit Scotland's planned activities during their audit of the 2019/20 financial year.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Executive Sub-Committee notes the Annual Audit Plan 2019/20 by Audit Scotland (Appendix 1).

3. Background

- 3.1 Based on its analysis of the risks facing Scotland Excel, Audit Scotland has submitted an Audit Plan that outlines its approach to the audit of the 2019/20 annual accounts. This will assess whether the accounts provide a true and fair view of the organisation's financial position, and also whether they have been prepared in accordance with proper accounting practice, i.e. the 2019 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK.
- 3.2 The Audit Plan outlines the responsibilities of the Joint Committee and Treasurer and of Audit Scotland; its assessment of key challenges and risks and the approach and timetable for completion of the audit.
- 3.3 The Annual Audit Plan 2019/20 includes a section on Audit Risks. Within this section, the identified risks are included in the audit plans of many bodies that Audit Scotland work with and their inclusion is not a reflection of any specific risk within Scotland Excel.

Scotland Excel

Annual Audit Plan 2019/20



 AUDIT SCOTLAND

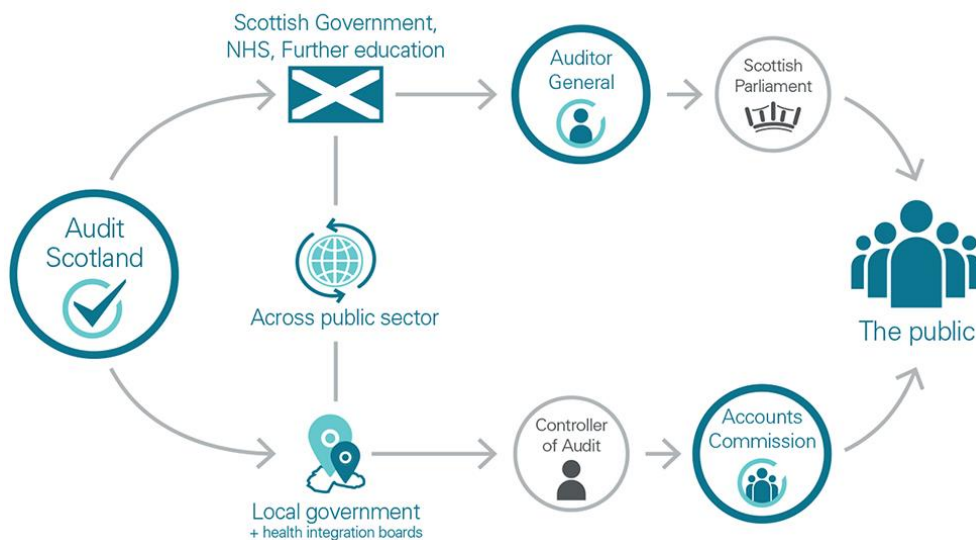
Prepared for Scotland Excel
March 2020



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 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.


Adding value

3. We aim to add value to Scotland Excel 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 Scotland Excel promote improved standards of governance, better management and decision making, and more effective use of resources.


Audit risks

4. Based on our discussions with staff, attendance at committee meetings, and a review of supporting information, we have identified the following significant risks for Scotland Excel. 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 2019/20 Significant audit risks

 Audit Risk	Source of assurance	Planned audit work
Financial statements risks		
<p>1 Risk of material misstatement caused by management override of controls</p> <p>ISA 240 requires that audit work is planned to consider 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>	Owing to the nature of this risk, assurances from management are not applicable in this instance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed testing of journal entries. • Review of accounting estimates. • Focused testing of accruals and prepayments. • Evaluation of significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business.
<p>2 Risk of material misstatement caused by fraud over income</p> <p>As set out in ISA 240, there is a presumed risk of fraud in the recognition of income. There is a risk</p>	Income is closely monitored and discussed at regular budget monitoring meetings. Significant differences from actuals compared to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical procedures on income streams. • Detailed testing of income transactions focusing on whether income is

	Audit Risk	Source of assurance	Planned audit work
	<p>that income may be materially misstated in the financial statements.</p> <p>While the majority of Scotland Excel's income is requisitions from member authorities, a significant amount is generated through projects and other work. The extent and complexity of this other income means that there is an inherent risk of fraudulent or erroneous reporting of income to achieve a desired financial position.</p>	<p>projected income are investigated.</p> <p>The Scotland Excel, "Income Review Board", meets regularly to monitor income generating performance against targets and, identify future income generation opportunities for the organisation. Senior Officers from Scotland Excel meet regularly with chief officers from local authorities to promote the widening activities of the organisation.</p>	<p>processed in the correct accounting year.</p>
3	<p>Risk of material misstatement caused by fraud over expenditure</p> <p>Most public-sector bodies are net expenditure bodies and therefore the risk of fraud is more likely to occur in expenditure. There is a risk that expenditure may be materially misstated in the financial statements.</p> <p>Scotland Excel incurs expenditure on a range of activities. The extent and complexity of expenditure means that there is an inherent risk of fraudulent or erroneous reporting of expenditure to achieve a desired financial position.</p>	<p>Expenditure is closely monitored and discussed at regular budget monitoring meetings. Significant differences from actuals compared to projected expenditure are investigated.</p> <p>An on-going review of Purchase to Pay processes within Scotland Excel is continuing in line with the on-going development and expansion of the Business World system being rolled out by Renfrewshire Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analytical procedures on expenditure streams. Detailed testing of expenditure transactions focusing on whether expenditure is processed in the correct accounting year.
4	<p>Risk of material misstatement caused by accounting for pensions</p> <p>Scotland Excel recognised a net liability relating to its share of Strathclyde Pension Fund of £3.621 million at 31 March 2019. There is a significant degree of subjectivity in the measurement and valuation of the pension fund liability. The valuation is based on specialist assumptions and estimates, and changes can result in material changes to the valuation.</p> <p>Additionally, successful legal action was brought against the UK government in relation to pension schemes for judges and firefighters in 2018/19, on the grounds of age discrimination. The judgements for these pension schemes will impact on Strathclyde Pension Fund as it</p>	<p>Any significant estimates and judgements are clearly explained in the Notes to the Accounts.</p> <p>Where these are required, they are based on the best information available at the time of the estimate and on both a professional and a prudent approach, either by Renfrewshire Council staff, or appointed experts, such as the Pension Fund Actuary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of 'review of the work of Management's expert' for the pension fund actuary. Review of the estimates used, and assumptions made in calculating the pension fund liability.

 Audit Risk	Source of assurance	Planned audit work
had similar arrangements in place. Uncertainty remains over the remedy for the legal judgements. The expected impact of the legal judgements, or remedy if agreed, will need to be reflected in the pension fund liability valuation in 2019/20.		

Wider dimension risks

5 Financial sustainability

The 2019/20 Revenue Estimates highlight increasing operating costs in the medium-term, putting pressures on available resources. Part of these pressures are being mitigated by increasing income and surpluses from projects. However, the extent and timing of project income is not certain and varies year to year.

Even with increases in project income and surpluses, it is likely savings will be required in the medium term to achieve a breakeven position and maintain reserves at an appropriate level.

The Joint Committee agreed the 2019/20 budget in December 2018, noting the requirement for savings over the year. Scotland Excel is projecting a break even position for 2019/20 which includes an over recovery of income against budget. The Joint Committee of Scotland Excel agreed the budget for 2020/21 in December 2019 within which 16% of total income projected is from non-requisition sources.

- Review of budget monitoring reports and future Revenue Estimates and discussions with management on Scotland Excel's medium-term financial position.
- Conclude on financial position and financial sustainability within the Annual Audit Report.

Source: Audit Scotland

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 reports will be issued to the relevant officer(s) to confirm factual accuracy.

7. We will provide an independent auditor's report to the Joint Committee and Accounts Commission, setting out our opinions on the annual accounts. We will provide the Joint Committee and the Accounts Commission with an Annual Audit Report on the audit containing observations and recommendations on significant matters which have arisen during the audit.

Exhibit 2 2019/20 Audit outputs

Audit Output	Target date	Committee Date
Annual Audit Plan	12 March 2020	27 March 2020
Annual Audit Report	4 September 2020	18 September 2020
Independent Auditor's Report	4 September 2020	18 September 2020

Source: Audit Scotland

Audit fee

8. The proposed audit fee for the 2019/20 audit of Scotland Excel is £6,010 (2018/19 £5,880). In determining the audit fee, we have taken account of the risk exposure of Scotland Excel, 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 annual accounts, with a complete working papers package, on 22 June 2020.

9. Where our audit cannot proceed as planned, for example, through 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 out with our planned audit activity.

Responsibilities

Joint Committee and Treasurer

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 Joint Committee, as those charged with governance, of their responsibilities.

Appointed auditor

12. Our responsibilities as independent auditors are established by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and the Code of Audit Practice (including supplementary guidance) and guided by the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard.

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

Audit scope and timing

Financial Statements

14. 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 Scotland Excel 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 Scotland Excel 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 whether the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view in accordance with applicable law and the 2019/20 Code of the state of the state of affairs of Scotland Excel as at 31 March 2020 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with IFRSs as adopted by the European Union, as interpreted and adapted by the 2019/20 Code; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014, and the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

Other information in the annual accounts

16. We also review and report on other information published within the annual accounts including the Management Commentary, Annual Governance Statement, and the Remuneration Report. We give an opinion on whether these have been compiled in accordance with the appropriate regulations and frameworks in our independent auditor's report.

17. We also read and consider any information in the annual accounts other than the financial statements and audited part of the Remuneration Report and report on any uncorrected material misstatements.

Materiality

18. 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.



19. The calculated materiality values for Scotland Excel are set out in [Exhibit 3](#).

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. It has been set at 1% of gross expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2019 based on the 2018/19 audited annual accounts.	£59,000
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.	£44,000
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.	£3,000



Source: Audit Scotland

Timetable

20. To support the efficient use of resources it is critical that the annual accounts timetable is agreed with us to produce the unaudited accounts. We have included an agreed timetable at [Exhibit 4](#).

Exhibit 4

Annual accounts timetable

 Key stage	 Date
Consideration of unaudited annual accounts by those charged with governance	19 June 2020
Latest submission date of unaudited annual accounts with complete working papers package	22 June 2020
Latest date for final clearance meeting with Treasurer or finance officer	2 September 2020
Issue of Letter of Representation and proposed independent auditor's report	18 September 2020
Agreement of audited unsigned annual accounts	18 September 2020
Issue of Annual Audit Report to those charged with governance	18 September 2020
Independent auditor's report signed	23 September 2020

Internal audit

21. Internal audit is provided by the internal audit function at Renfrewshire 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 Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). This has been carried out by the Renfrewshire Council audit team and concluded that the internal audit function at Renfrewshire Council

complies with PSIAS and that appropriate documentation standards and reporting procedures are in place.

Using the work of internal audit

22. 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 do not plan to use the work of internal audit for our financial statements audit work. However, we have considered the findings of the work of internal audit as part of our planning process.

Audit dimensions

23. 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 transparency, and value for money.

24. 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 Annual Governance Statement and the financial sustainability of the body and its services. In light of the nature of operations and arrangements for processing transactions, we plan to apply the small body provisions of the Code of Audit Practice to the 2019/20 audit of Scotland Excel.

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 financial sustainability in the longer term. We define this as medium-term (two to five years) and longer-term (longer than five years) sustainability. We will carry out work and conclude on:

- 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 Scotland Excel can demonstrate the affordability and effectiveness of funding and investment decisions it has made.

Governance and transparency

26. 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 appropriateness of disclosures in the Annual Governance Statement.

Independence and objectivity

27. 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.

28. The engagement lead (i.e. appointed auditor) for Scotland Excel is Mark Ferris, Senior Audit Manager. Auditing and ethical standards require the engagement lead 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 Scotland Excel.

Quality control

29. 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.

30. 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.

31. 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.

Scotland Excel

Annual Audit Plan 2019/20

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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