

**ACCOUNTS COMMISSION**

**MEETING 13 NOVEMBER 2014**

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

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Minutes of the meeting of the Accounts Commission held in the offices of Audit Scotland at 18 George Street, Edinburgh, on Thursday, 9 October 2014, at 10.00am

PRESENT: Douglas Sinclair (Chair)  
Ronnie Hinds (Deputy Chair)  
Alan Campbell  
Sandy Cumming  
Colin Duncan  
Tim McKay  
Christine May  
Stephen Moore  
Linda Pollock  
Colin Peebles  
Graham Sharp  
Pauline Weetman

IN ATTENDANCE: Paul Reilly, Secretary to the Accounts Commission  
Fraser McKinlay, Controller of Audit and Director of Performance Audit and Best Value (PABV)  
Antony Clark, Assistant Director, PABV [Items 7, 9 and 10]  
Fiona Kordiak, Director, Audit Services [Item 10]  
Mark McCabe, Project Manager, PABV [Items 7 and 9]  
Mark MacPherson, Senior Manager, PABV [Items 7 and 9]  
Rebecca Seidel, Project Manager, PABV [Item 10]

<u>Item No</u>	<u>Subject</u>
1.	Apologies for absence
2.	Declarations of interest
3.	Decisions on taking business in private
4.	Minutes of meeting of 25 September 2014
5.	Update report by the Secretary to the Commission
6.	Update report by the Controller of Audit
7.	Orkney Community Planning Partnership
8.	Meeting arrangements 2015
9.	Orkney Community Planning Partnership <i>[in private]</i>
10.	Draft report: Community planning – a national overview <i>[in private]</i>
11.	Commission business matters <i>[in private]</i>

## Introductory remarks

The Chair welcomed Ronnie Hinds, Tim McKay and Stephen Moore to their first meeting of the Commission.

### 1. Apologies for absence

It was noted that no apologies for absence had been received.

### 2. Declarations of interest

The following declarations of interest were made:

- Sandy Cumming, in items 7 and 9, as the former Chief Executive of Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and a Trustee of The Robertson Trust which has business interests in Orkney.
- Linda Pollock, in item 5, as a member of the board of the Care Inspectorate.

Advice was also noted from Fraser McKinlay that he would declare an interest in, and would not be advising the Commission in relation to, item 10 as his brother is Head of Community Planning and Empowerment in the Scottish Government.

### 3. Decisions on taking business in private

It was agreed that items 9 to 11 should be taken in private as they contained draft reports and confidential issues.

### 4. Minutes of meeting of 25 September 2014

The minutes of the meeting of 25 September 2014 were submitted and approved, subject to.

- noting that Colin Peebles was not present at the meeting.
- noting advice from the Secretary that:
  - in relation to item 11 (The impact of welfare reforms on council rent arrears in Scotland), that the Chair would write to council leaders, chairs of audit committees and chief executives in the week beginning 20 October.
  - in relation to item 13 (West Lothian Community Planning Partnership), the report and findings would be published on 23 October.

### 5. Update report by the Secretary to the Accounts Commission

The Commission considered a report by the Secretary to the Commission providing an update on significant recent activity relating to local government and issues of relevance or interest across the wider public sector.

During discussion the Commission:

- noted the following changes to the Commission's committee membership:
  - Ronnie Hinds would be chair and Stephen Moore a member of the Performance Audit Committee.
  - Graham Sharp would be chair and Tim McKay a member of the Financial Audit and Assurance Committee.

- noted advice from the Secretary that:
  - In relation to paragraph 7 (Audit Scotland board), he was working with the Chair on providing clarity to the Commission on the board business in which the Commission would have a direct interest.
  - In relation to paragraph 34 (Islands Framework and devolution of power), more information would follow in this regard when it became available from the UK and Scottish governments.
  - In relation to paragraph 35 (Retrieval of tax arrears), more information would follow in this regard when it became available from the Scottish Government.
  - In relation to paragraph 42 (National Audit Office consultation: draft Code of Practice), it was his view that there was no need for a direct response solely from the Commission to the consultation, but he would keep the Commission informed of a response from Audit Scotland.

Thereafter the Commission agreed to note the report.

#### 6. Update report by the Controller of Audit

The Controller of Audit provided a verbal update on his recent activity including meetings and discussions with stakeholders.

#### 7. Orkney Community Planning Partnership

The Commission considered a report by the Secretary introducing a report, by the Controller of Audit and the Auditor General for Scotland, of the audit of Orkney Community Planning Partnership and seeking direction on how to proceed.

During consideration, the Commission agreed:

- To ensure appropriate prominence in the national overview report to the resources dedicated to support community planning partnerships  
*Action: Director of Audit Services*
- To note the report
- To consider in private how to proceed.

#### 8. Meeting arrangements 2015

The Commission considered a report by the Secretary to the Commission proposing meeting arrangements for the Commission for 2015.

During consideration, the Commission agreed:

- To approve the proposed meeting schedule for meetings of the Commission and its committees in 2015, subject to:
  - Meetings starting at 10.15am, to be preceded with a private business session at 9.30am.
  - The Financial Audit and Assurance Committee meeting first at 10.00am each committee day.
- That these arrangements would start from the first meeting in 2015.
- That the annual strategy seminar take place in late March 2015.

- To continue with a guest speaker session as part of committee days, with scrutiny partners, the Improvement Service, the Children’s Commissioner, the Local Government Boundary Commission, and health sector representatives such as GPs, to be considered for inclusion in the programme of speakers.

*Actions: Secretary*

9. Orkney Community Planning Partnership [in private]

The Commission agreed that this item be held in private to allow it to consider how to proceed in relation to a report by the Controller of Audit.

The Commission discussed how to proceed in relation to the report by the Controller of Audit and Auditor General for Scotland on the audit of Orkney Community Planning Partnership.

Following discussion, the Commission agreed to make findings, to be published in early course.

10. Draft report: Community planning – a national overview [in private]

The Commission agreed that this item be held in private to allow it to consider a draft report.

The Commission considered a report by the Secretary introducing a draft report, in conjunction with the Auditor General, updating the progress of community planning in Scotland.

Following discussion, the Commission agreed:

- to approve the draft report, subject to the drafting team considering a number of points raised in discussion.
- that final sign-off of the report be delegated to the Chair and Deputy Chair.

*Action: Director of Audit Services and Secretary*

- To note advice from the Secretary that, on publication of the report:
  - the Chair would write to the Convener of the Scottish Parliament’s Local Government and Regeneration Committee commending the report in the context of the Committee’s ongoing scrutiny of the Community Empowerment Bill.
  - the Chair would brief the National Community Planning Group on the report at its meeting on 2 December.
  - the Auditor General would give evidence on the report to the Scottish Parliament’s Public Audit Committee at its meeting on 3 December.

11. Commission business matters [in private]

The Commission agreed that the Chair’s update on Commission business matters be held in private to allow it to discuss issues of a confidential nature relating to the operations of the Commission.

The Chair briefed the Commission on matters of interest.