

East of Scotland European Consortium

Annual Audit Plan 2017/18



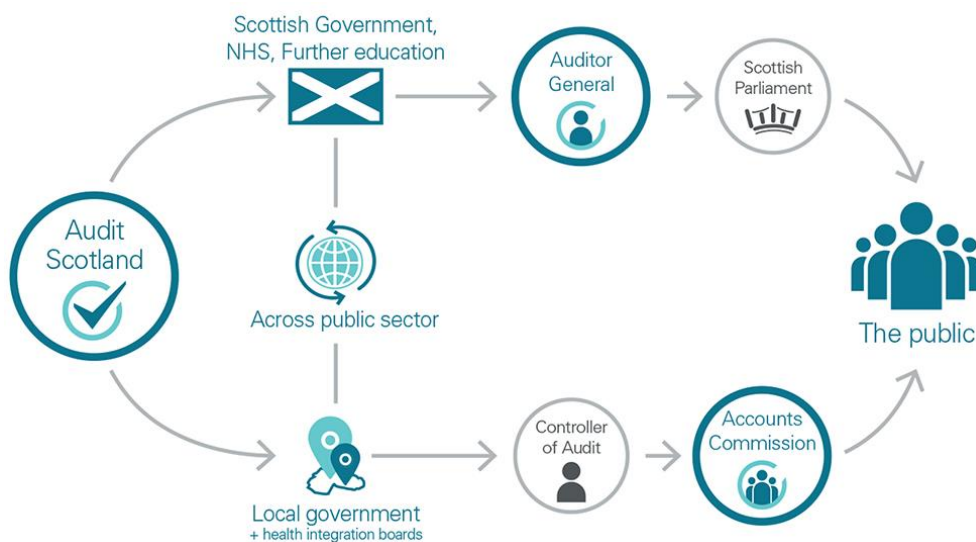
 AUDIT SCOTLAND

Prepared for East of Scotland European Consortium
March 2018

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](#), 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.

2. 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

3. Based on our discussions with staff and a review of supporting information we have identified the following main risk areas for the East of Scotland European Consortium (ESEC). 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

2017/18 Key audit risks

Audit Risk	Source of 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 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 in order to change the position disclosed in the 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>Review of accounting estimates.</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		
<p>2 Financial Sustainability</p> <p>Uncertainty exists around the long term future of the Consortium following the outcome of the EU Referendum in 2016. The continued support of the member Councils may be influenced by the exiting of the UK from the EU in March 2019.</p>	<p>Member councils are required to give at least one financial year's notice of withdrawal from membership.</p> <p>Reserves are sufficient to cover budgeted costs in the short term.</p>	<p>Discussion with officers.</p> <p>Review of Policy Board papers.</p> <p>Review of the Consortium's financial planning and reserves strategy.</p>

Audit Risk	Source of assurance	Planned audit work
<p>The full impact of this on the Consortium is still to be determined.</p> <p>The Consortium has been using reserves to part-fund its running costs in recent years, which is not sustainable in the long-term.</p> <p>There are no issues relating to the Consortium remaining as a going concern for the 12 months to March 2019, and the period immediately after, given the existing member Council commitments to the Consortium and the availability of usable reserves in the short-term.</p> <p>However, the EU Referendum outcome and budget position present a significant risk to the Consortium's ability to continue as a going concern beyond 2019/20.</p>		

Reporting arrangements

- 4.** 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.
- 5.** 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.
- 6.** We will provide an independent auditor's report to ESEC and to the Accounts Commission setting out our opinions on the annual accounts. We will provide ESEC and the Accounts Commission 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

2017/18 Audit outputs

Audit Output	Target date	Audit Committee (or equivalent) Date
Annual Audit Plan	31 March 2018	Policy Board June 2018 (date tbc)
Annual Audit Report including ISA 260 requirements	30 September 2018	Policy Board September 2018 (date tbc)
Independent Auditor's Report	30 September 2018	N/A

Audit fee

7. The proposed audit fee for the 2017/18 audit of ESEC is £4,460 (2016/17: £2,290). The fee has increased to recognise the historically low fee level that is not commercially viable (i.e. it does not cover the audit work required to comply with auditing standards and the Code of Audit Practice). In determining the audit fee we have taken account of the risk exposure of ESEC, 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, with a complete working papers package no later than the 30 June 2018.

8. 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

Policy Board, Treasurer and Angus Council Scrutiny and Audit Committee

9. 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.

10. The audit of the financial statements does not relieve the Treasurer or the Policy Board, as those charged with governance, of their responsibilities. The Policy Board has delegated responsibility for the scrutiny of the unaudited accounts (required by 31 August) to the Angus Council Scrutiny and Audit Committee.

Appointed auditor

11. Our responsibilities as independent auditor are established by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and the Code of Audit Practice (including supplementary guidance) and guided by the auditing profession's ethical guidance.

12. Auditors in the public sector give an independent opinion on the financial statements and other specified information accompanying 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

13. 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 ESEC and the associated risks which could impact on the financial statements
- identifying major transaction streams, balances and areas of estimation and understanding how ESEC 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.

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

- whether they give a true and fair view in accordance with applicable law and the 2017/18 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2017/18 of the state of affairs of ESEC as at 31 March 2018, and of its surplus or deficit on the provision of services for the year then ended
- whether they have been properly prepared in accordance with IFRSs as adopted by the European Union, as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2017/18
- whether they 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.



characteristics



responsibilities



principal activities



risks



governance arrangements

Materiality

15. 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 opinion in the auditor's report.

16. We calculate materiality at different levels as described below. The calculated materiality values for ESEC 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 2016/17 audited financial statements.	£690
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.	£520
Reporting threshold (i.e. clearly trivial) – 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 5% of planning materiality.	£35



17. We review and report on other information published with the financial statements including the management commentary and annual governance statement. Any issue identified will be reported to the Policy Board.

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 Policy Board dates:

Exhibit 4

Financial statements timetable

 Key stage	 Date
Consideration of unaudited financial statements by those charged with governance	By 31 August 2018
Latest submission date of unaudited annual accounts with complete working papers package	30 June 2018
Latest date for final clearance meeting with officers. (This may change depending on the date set for the September Policy Board meeting.)	7 September 2018
Issue of letter of representation and proposed independent auditor's report	14 September 2018
Agreement of audited unsigned annual accounts	By 30 September 2018
Issue of Annual Audit Report including ISA 260 report to those charged with governance	By 30 September 2018
Independent auditor's report signed	By 30 September 2018

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 the Internal Audit section of Angus Council.

Adequacy of Internal Audit

20. A review of the internal audit function at Angus Council was carried out by the Angus Council audit team in early 2018. This concluded that it has sound documentation standards and reporting procedures in place and complies with the main requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

21. Internal audit does not have any 2017/18 planned audit activity directly relating to ESEC.

Audit dimensions

22. Our audit is based on four audit dimensions that frame the wider scope of public sector audit requirements as shown in [Exhibit 5](#).

Exhibit 5

Audit dimensions



Source: Code of Audit Practice

23. ESEC is funded through contributions from member authorities. Expenditure is mainly on staff costs. In consideration of the size and nature of ESEC, and based on our professional judgement, we have concluded that the full application of the wider scope is not appropriate or proportionate.

24. In such circumstances, the Code of Audit Practice requires auditors to undertake annual audit work on the wider scope that enables conclusions to be reached on:

- appropriateness of the disclosures in the annual governance statement;
- financial sustainability of the body and services it delivers over the medium to longer term.

25. We will review of the annual governance statement and assess the financial sustainability of ESEC as part of our financial statements audit. Conclusions on these matters will be reported accordingly in our Annual Audit Report.

Independence and objectivity

26. 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 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 Director of Audit Services, who serves as Audit Scotland’s Ethics Partner.

27. The engagement lead for ESEC is Rachel Browne, 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 ESEC.

Quality control

28. 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.

29. 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 relevant 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, internal quality reviews and is currently reviewing the arrangements for external quality reviews.

30. 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.

Adding Value

31. Through our audit work we aim to add value to ESEC. We will do this by ensuring our Annual Audit Report provides a summary of the audit work done in the year together with clear judgements and conclusions on how well ESEC has discharged its responsibilities and how well it has demonstrated the effectiveness of its arrangements. Where it is appropriate we will recommend actions that support continuous improvement and summarise areas of good practice identified from our audit work.

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