

Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board

Annual Audit Plan 2023/24



 AUDIT SCOTLAND

Prepared for Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board
February 2024

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Introduction

Summary of planned audit work

1. I, Pauline Murray, have been appointed by the Accounts Commission as external auditor of Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board (the Joint Board) for the period from 2022/23 until 2026/27. The 2023/24 financial year is therefore the second of my five-year audit appointment. A brief biography of the audit team is provided at [Appendix 1](#).
2. This document summarises the work plan for my 2023/24 audit. The main elements of the audit include:
 - an audit of the financial statements and an opinion on whether they give a true and fair view and are free from material misstatement
 - an audit opinion on other statutory information published with the financial statements in the annual accounts, including the Management Commentary, the Annual Governance Statement, and the Remuneration Report
 - concluding on the financial sustainability of the Joint Board and a review of the Annual Governance Statement
 - provision of an Independent Auditor's Report expressing my opinions on the different elements of the annual accounts and an Annual Audit Report.

Respective responsibilities of the auditor and Audited Body

3. The [Code of Audit Practice](#) sets out in detail the respective responsibilities of the auditor and the Joint Board. Key responsibilities are summarised below.

Auditor responsibilities

4. My responsibilities as appointed auditor 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.
5. 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 wider scope arrangements in place at the Joint Board. In doing this, we aim to support improvement and accountability.

Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board responsibilities

6. The Joint Board is responsible for maintaining adequate accounting records and internal controls, and preparing financial statements for audit that give a true and

fair view. They are also required to produce other reports in the annual accounts in accordance with statutory requirements.

7. The Joint Board has 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 deliver their objectives.

Adding Value

8. My team and I aim to add value by tailoring audit work to the circumstances of the Joint Board and the audit risks identified; being constructive and forward looking; providing independent conclusions; attending meetings of the Joint Board; and by recommending and encouraging good practice. In so doing, we will help the Joint Board promote improved standards of governance, better management and decision making, and more effective use of resources.

Annual accounts

Introduction

9. The annual accounts are an essential part of demonstrating the Joint Board's stewardship of resources and its performance in the use of those resources.

10. As appointed auditor, I am required to perform an audit of the financial statements, consider other information within the annual accounts, and express a number of audit opinions in an Independent Auditor's Report in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) in the UK, Practice Note 10 from the Public Audit Forum which interprets the ISAs for the public sector, and guidance from Audit Scotland.

11. My team and I focus our work on the areas of highest risk. As part of our planning process, we perform a risk assessment highlighting the audit risks relating to each of the main financial systems relevant to the production of the financial statements.

Materiality

12. The concept of materiality is applied by auditors in planning and performing the audit, and in evaluating the effect of any uncorrected misstatements on the financial statements. I am required to plan my audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement. The assessment of what is material is a matter of professional judgement over both the amount and the nature of the misstatement.

Materiality levels for the 2023/24 audit

13. We assess materiality at different levels as described in [Exhibit 1](#). The materiality values for the Joint Board are set out in [Exhibit 1](#).

Exhibit 1

2023/24 Materiality levels for the Joint Board

Materiality	Amount
Planning materiality – This is the figure we calculate to assess the overall impact of audit adjustments on the financial statements. Materiality has been set based on our assessment of the needs of the users of the financial statements and the nature of the Joint Board's operations. For the year ended 31 March 2024, we have set our materiality at 2% of gross expenditure based on the audited financial statements for 2022/23.	£88,000
Performance materiality – This acts as a trigger point. If the aggregate of errors identified during the financial statements audit exceeds performance materiality, this could indicate that further audit procedures are required. Using our	£66,000

professional judgement, we have assessed performance materiality at 75% of planning materiality.

Reporting threshold – We are required to report to those charged with governance on all unadjusted misstatements more than the ‘reporting threshold’ amount.	£5,000
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Source: Audit Scotland

Significant risks of material misstatement to the financial statements

14. Our risk assessment draws on our cumulative knowledge of the Joint Board, its major transaction streams, key systems of internal control, and risk management processes. It is informed by our discussions with management, attendance at board meetings, and a review of supporting information.

15. Audit risk assessment is an iterative and dynamic process. Our assessment of risks set out in this plan may change as more information and evidence becomes available during the progress of the audit. Where such changes occur we will advise management and, where relevant, report them to those charged with governance.

16. Based on our risk assessment process, we identified the following significant risks of material misstatement to the financial statements. These are risks which have the greatest impact on our planned audit procedures. [Exhibit 2](#) summarises the nature of the risks, management’s sources of assurance over these risks, and the further audit procedures we plan to perform to gain assurance over the risks.

Exhibit 2

2023/24 Significant risks of material misstatement to the financial statements

Significant risk of material misstatement	Management’s sources of assurance	Planned audit response
<p>1. Risk of material misstatement due to fraud caused by management override of controls</p> <p>As stated in ISA (UK) 240, management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of management’s ability to override controls that</p>	<p>Owing to the nature of this risk, assurances from management are not applicable in this instance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make inquiries of individuals involved in the financial reporting process about inappropriate or unusual activity relating to the processing of journal entries and other adjustments. • Test journals at the year-end and post-closing entries and focus on significant risk areas. • Consider the need to test journal entries and other adjustments throughout the year. • Evaluate significant transactions outside the normal course of business.

Significant risk of material misstatement	Management's sources of assurance	Planned audit response
otherwise appear to be operating effectively.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the adequacy of controls in place for identifying and disclosing related party relationships and transactions in the financial statements.

Source: Audit Scotland

17. As set out in ISA (UK) 240: *The auditor's responsibilities relating to fraud in an audit of financial statement*, there is a presumed risk of fraud over the recognition of revenue. There is a risk that revenue may be misstated resulting in a material misstatement in the financial statements.

18. We have rebutted this risk for the Joint Board as most of its funding received is through requisitions and other income from constituent authorities or from Government grants. These income streams are deemed to represent a low fraud risk and we have concluded there is limited opportunity or incentive to manipulate the recognition of income in the financial statements.

19. In line with Practice Note 10: *Audit of financial statements and regularity of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom*, as most public-sector bodies are net spending bodies, the risk of material misstatement due to fraud related to expenditure recognition may in some cases be greater than the risk relating to revenue recognition.

20. We have rebutted this risk as the main expenditure streams of the Joint Board are predominantly staff costs, property costs and supplies and services. These expenditure streams are deemed to represent a low risk of being materially misstated due to fraud and we consider there to be limited incentive and opportunity for the manipulation of expenditure recognition in the financial statements.

21. We have not, therefore, incorporated specific work into our audit plan in these areas over and above our standard audit procedures.

Other areas of audit focus

22. As part of our assessment of audit risks, we have identified other areas where we consider there are also risks of material misstatement to the financial statements. Based on our assessment of the likelihood and magnitude of the risks, we do not consider these to represent significant risks. We will keep these areas under review as our audit progresses.

23. The areas of specific audit focus are:

- Pension liability valuation – there is a significant degree of subjectivity in the measurement and valuation of the pension liability included in the

annual accounts. The valuation is based on specialist and management assumptions and changes in these can result in material changes to the pension liability. We will utilise the work of PwC as auditor expert in assessing the reasonableness of the methodology used and assumptions made by the Joint Board's actuary, Hymans Robertson LLP, in arriving at the IAS 19 pension valuation as at 31 March 2024.

Wider Scope and Best Value

Introduction

24. Reflecting the fact that public money is involved, public audit is planned and undertaken from a wider perspective than in the private sector. The Code of Audit Practice sets out the four areas that frame the wider scope of public sector audit. These are financial management; financial sustainability; vision, leadership and governance; use of resources to improve outcomes. The Code of Audit Practice requires auditors to consider the adequacy of the arrangements in place for the wider scope areas in audited bodies.

25. The Code of Audit Practice includes a provision relating to the audit of less complex audited bodies. In the light of the limited volume and lack of complexity of the financial transactions and its low-risk nature, we plan to apply the less complex audited body provision of the Code to the 2023/24 audit of the Joint Board.

26. 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. We will report on these areas in our 2023/24 Annual Audit Report.

Wider scope risks

27. We have not identified any significant wider scope risks.

28. We may be asked by the Accounts Commission to consider specific risk areas which are impacting the public sector as a whole. We have not been asked to consider specific risks for 2023/24 audits.

Best Value

29. Auditors have a duty to be satisfied that bodies that fall within section 106 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 have made proper arrangements to secure Best Value. We will consider how the Joint Board demonstrates that it is meeting its Best Value responsibilities and we will report our findings as part of our Annual Audit Report.

Reporting arrangements, timetable, and audit fee

Reporting arrangements

30. Matters arising from our audit will be reported on a timely basis and will include agreed action plans. Draft reports will be shared with the relevant officers to confirm factual accuracy.

31. We will provide:

- an Independent Auditor’s Report to the Joint Board and the Accounts Commission setting out our opinions on the annual accounts
- the Joint Board and the Accounts Commission with an Annual Audit Report containing observations and recommendations on significant matters which have arisen during the audit and conclusions on wider scope areas.

32. [Exhibit 3](#) outlines the target dates for our audit outputs set by the Accounts Commission. In determining the target reporting date, due regard is paid to the dates for approving the annual accounts set out in regulations of 30 September 2024.

33. We plan to issue our Independent Auditor’s Report and Annual Audit Report by the target date.

Exhibit 3 2023/24 Audit outputs

Audit Output	Target date	Board Meeting Date
Annual Audit Plan	31 March 2024	4 March 2024
Independent Auditor's Report	30 September 2024	2 September 2024
Annual Audit Report	30 September 2024	2 September 2024

Source: Audit Scotland

34. All Annual Audit Plans and the outputs detailed in [Exhibit 3](#), and any other outputs on matters of public interest, will be published on our website: www.audit-scotland.gov.uk.



Timetable

35. To support an efficient audit, it is critical that the timetable for producing the annual accounts for audit is achieved. We have included a proposed timetable for the audit at [Exhibit 4](#) that has been discussed with management.

36. We will continue to work closely with management to identify the most efficient approach as appropriate and will keep timeframes and logistics for the completion of the audit under review. Progress will be discussed with management and finance officers over the course of the audit.

Exhibit 4

Proposed annual accounts timetable

 Key stage	 Provisional Date
Consideration of the unaudited annual accounts by those charged with governance	3 June 2024
Latest submission date for the receipt of the unaudited annual accounts with complete working papers package.	30 June 2024
Latest date for final clearance meeting with the Treasurer	9 August 2024
Issue of draft Letter of Representation and proposed Independent Auditor's Report	By 15 August 2024
Agreement of audited and unsigned annual accounts	2 September 2024
Issue of Annual Audit Report to those charged with governance.	2 September 2024
Signed Independent Auditor's Report	By 30 September 2024

Source: Audit Scotland

Audit fee

37. In determining the audit fee, we have taken account of the risk exposure of the Joint Board and the planned management assurances in place. Fee levels are also impacted by inflation which increases the cost of audit delivery. The agreed audit fee for 2023/24 is £9,330 as set out in [Exhibit 5](#).

Exhibit 5**Audit fees (including VAT)**

Fee component	Fees (£)
External Auditor Remuneration	21,020
Pooled costs	770
Contribution to Audit Scotland costs	-
Contribution to Performance and Best Value	-
Sectoral Cap Adjustment	(12,460)
Total 2023/24 fee	9,330

Source: Audit Scotland

38. In setting the fee for 2023/24, we have assumed that the Joint Board has effective governance arrangements and will prepare a comprehensive and accurate set of annual accounts for audit in line with the agreed timetable for the audit. The audit fee assumes there will be no major change in respect of the scope of the audit during the year and where our audit cannot proceed as planned, a supplementary fee may be levied.

Other matters

Internal audit

39. The Joint Board has a service level agreement with the internal audit function of the host authority, South Lanarkshire Council.

40. While we are not planning to place formal reliance on the work of internal audit in 2023/24, we will review internal audit reports and assess the impact of the findings on our financial statements and wider scope audit responsibilities.

Independence and objectivity

41. I am independent of the Joint Board in accordance with relevant ethical requirements, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard. This standard imposes stringent rules to ensure the independence and objectivity of auditors.

42. Audit Scotland has robust arrangements in place to ensure compliance with the Ethical Standard including an annual '*fit and proper*' declaration for all members of staff. The arrangements are overseen by the Executive Director of Innovation and Quality, who serves as Audit Scotland's Ethics Partner.

43. The Ethical Standard requires auditors to communicate any relationships that may affect the independence and objectivity of the audit team. I am not aware of any such relationships pertaining to the audit of the Joint Board.

Audit Quality

44. Audit Scotland is committed to the consistent delivery of high-quality public audit. Audit quality requires ongoing attention and improvement to keep pace with external and internal changes. A document explaining the arrangements for providing assurance on the delivery of high-quality audits is available from the [Audit Scotland website](#).

45. The International Standards on Quality Management (ISQM) applicable to Audit Scotland for 2023/24 audits are:

- ISQM (UK) 1 which deals with an audit organisation's responsibilities to design, implement and operate a system of quality management (SoQM) for audits. Our SoQM consists of a variety of components, such as: our governance arrangements and culture to support audit quality, compliance with ethical requirements, ensuring we are dedicated to high-quality audit through our engagement performance and resourcing arrangements, and ensuring we have robust quality monitoring arrangements in place. Audit Scotland carries out an annual evaluation of our SoQM and has concluded that we comply with this standard.

- ISQM (UK) 2 which sets out arrangements for conducting engagement quality reviews, which are performed by senior management not involved in the audit to review significant judgements and conclusions reached by the audit team, and the appropriateness of proposed audit opinions of high-risk audit engagements.

46. To monitor quality at an individual audit level, Audit Scotland also carries out internal quality reviews of a sample of audits. Additionally, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW) carries out independent quality reviews.

47. Actions to address deficiencies identified by internal and external quality reviews are included in a rolling Quality Improvement Action Plan which is used to support continuous improvement. Progress with implementing planned actions is regularly monitored by Audit Scotland's Quality and Ethics Committee.

48. Audit Scotland may periodically seek your views on the quality of our service provision. The team would also welcome feedback more informally at any time.

Appendix 1: Your audit team

The audit team involved in the audit of the Joint Board have significant experience in public sector audit.

Pauline Murray

Senior Audit Manager

pmurray@audit-scotland.gov.uk

Pauline has over 15 years of public sector audit experience and has delivered external audit services to a range of bodies including local authorities, health boards and central government bodies.

David Meechan

Senior Auditor

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David has over 22 years of public sector audit experience in planning and delivering audits. David will manage the team and work alongside the Senior Audit Manager to deliver the audit.

49. The local audit team is supported by a specialist technical accounting team, all of whom have significant experience of public bodies and work with accounting regulatory bodies.

Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board

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Audit Scotland's published material is available for download on the website in a number of formats. For information on our accessibility principles, please visit:

www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/accessibility

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