

West of Scotland European Forum

**Report to Members and the Controller of Audit
on the 2009/10 Audit**

October 2010



 **AUDIT SCOTLAND**



West of Scotland European Forum

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Key Messages

Introduction

In 2009/10 we audited the West of Scotland European Forum's financial statements and governance arrangements. This report sets out our main findings, summarising key outcomes from the 2009/10 audit.

Key outcomes from 2009/10 audit

We have given an unqualified opinion on the financial statements of the West of Scotland European Forum for 2009/10.



October 2010



Financial statements

Audit Opinion

1. We have given an **unqualified** opinion on the financial statements of the West of Scotland European Forum (the Forum) for 2009/10. The financial statements:
 - give a true and fair view, in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and the 2009 SORP, of the financial position of West of Scotland European Forum as at 31 March 2010 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended
 - have been properly prepared in accordance with the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.
2. We are also satisfied with disclosures made in the statement on the system of internal financial control.
3. The Forum's unaudited financial statements were submitted to the Controller of Audit by the deadline of 30 June. Audited accounts were finalised prior to the target date of 30 September 2009 and are now available for presentation to members and publication. The financial statements are an essential means by which the Forum accounts for its stewardship of the resources made available to it and its financial performance in the use of those resources.

Statutory objection

4. Citizens have the right to make a statutory objection under section 101(2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. No objections were received in relation to the West of Scotland European Forum's 2009/10 financial statements.

Accounting issues

5. Local authority bodies in Scotland are required to follow the *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom – a Statement of Recommended Practice* (the SORP). No major changes were introduced by the 2009 SORP. We were satisfied that the Forum prepared the accounts in accordance with the 2009 SORP.
6. During our audit, we identified that an element of expenditure on the Brussels' office has not been correctly treated as a prepayment. Our review indicated that this has been a consistent issue in previous years and the effect on the current year's expenditure is negligible, although a correction would increase the accumulated surplus and prepayment in the balance sheet by £3,100. We have asked the Forum's staff to correct this issue as part of next year's financial statements.



Pension Disclosures

7. Staff within the West of Scotland European Forum are Glasgow City Council employees and the council is an admitted body of the Strathclyde Pension Fund. The Forum staff pension costs are reflected in the council's financial statements and no separate disclosures are required within the Forum's statements.

Group Accounts

8. West of Scotland European Forum is disclosed within Glasgow City Council's group financial statements as a non-material interest in a joint committee.

Prevention and detection of fraud and irregularities

9. The Forum does not have in place its own arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption, but complies with the relevant policies of Glasgow City Council.

Legality

10. Each year we request written confirmation that the Forum's financial transactions accord with relevant legislation and regulations. There are no additional legality issues arising from our audit which require to be brought to members' attention.



Use of resources

Financial results

11. In 2009/10, the West of Scotland European Forum's total income amounted to £135,319, comprising of contributions from participating authorities (£134,750) and interest on balances (£569).
12. The total expenditure during the year was £120,225, compared with £109,469 in 2008/09.

Reserves and balances

13. The accumulated surplus held by the Forum as at 31 March 2010 was £117,863, compared to £102,769 in 2008/09. These funds are invested within Glasgow City Council and the Forum receives interest on the balances held.
14. In our 2008/09 report to members we noted that the Forum engages Mr Bill Miller as consultant representing its interests in Brussels. We considered that there was a case for re-advertising these services and subjecting them to a test of competitiveness. The Forum subsequently reviewed its arrangements and terminated Mr Miller's contract. It was also decided not to re-tender the contract at this time and to carry out work to consider how the EU representation function could be restructured.
15. A draft report on lobbying/representation has been recently issued to officers for consultation and will be also circulated to elected members. The report does not make provision for any Brussels based staff/consultants – instead a major cut in participating authorities' contributions is being recommended. The Forum's lease agreement for the Brussels office expires in 2015 and efforts are being made to identify a new occupier to reduce the Forum's financial obligations over the next five years.

Going concern

16. Auditing standards require auditors to consider an organisation's ability to continue as a going concern when forming an opinion on the financial statements. The West of Scotland European Forum has considered it appropriate to adopt a going concern basis for the preparation of the financial statements.



Governance and accountability

Overview of arrangements in 2009/10

17. The Forum has a responsibility to put in place arrangements for the conduct of its affairs, ensure the legality of activities and transactions and to monitor the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements in practice. As auditor I have responsibility to report on the Forum's corporate governance arrangements and review the Statement on the System of Internal Financial Control.
18. In accordance with the Forum's minute of agreement, financial transactions are processed through Glasgow City Council's financial systems. It is the responsibility of the council's management to maintain adequate financial systems and associated internal controls, both for the purpose of giving an opinion on the statements of accounts, and in order to report on the adequacy of such systems and controls.
19. My review of these systems was conducted as part of the audit of Glasgow City Council and supplemented by specific audit work on the Forum's financial statements. My conclusions are that Glasgow City Council's financial systems are adequate for the purpose of producing the financial statements. No areas of concern were identified relating to the transactions.
20. The statement on the system of internal financial control states that reasonable assurance can be placed upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the Forum's internal financial control system. The statement complies with accounting requirements and is not inconsistent with the findings of our audit.



Final Remarks

21. The members of the West of Scotland European Forum are invited to note this report. We would be pleased to provide any additional information that members may require.
22. The co-operation and assistance given to us by the relevant officers within Glasgow City Council, is gratefully acknowledged

