

Address:
110 George Street
Edinburgh
EH2 4LH

Telephone:
0845 146 1010

Website:
www.audit-scotland.gov.uk



Press release

For immediate release, Thursday 13 May 2010

Accounts Commission to hold public hearing at Shetland Islands Council

The Accounts Commission for Scotland met today to consider the latest Controller of Audit's report on Shetland Islands Council. The Commission decided that it will hold a public hearing.

In December 2009 the Commission considered issues arising from the audit of the council's 2008-09 accounts. Serious concerns were raised and the Commission asked for further audit work and a report on this.

The Controller of Audit published her report last week. It is based on work carried out in recent months and focuses on how the council is being run and arrangements made for the departure of the council's former chief executive earlier this year.

The Commission accepted and considered the Controller of Audit's report today and decided to hold a public hearing.

John Baillie, Chair of the Accounts Commission, said: "The Commission is particularly interested to hear first hand from the council and other relevant parties to gather further evidence and understand better the council's situation."

The Hearing will be a public meeting and will be held in a venue on the Shetland Islands within the next few months. Further details regarding the dates, timespan, venue, invitations and representations will be announced in due course, once arrangements have been put in place.

In due course after the Hearing the Commission will publish its findings which may include recommendations to the council and/or Scottish Ministers.

For further information contact Anne McCubbin tel: 0131 625 1653 amccubbin@audit-scotland.gov.uk

Notes to editors

1. The Controller of Audit's report is available at http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/work/local_statutory.php
2. In December 2009 John Baillie, Chair of the Accounts Commission, said: "Shetland Islands Council's accounts have been qualified for the fourth year in a row. This is serious in itself, but even more concerning given that the qualifications may be symptoms of deeper problems at the council. Bearing in mind the council's duties to deliver Best Value to local people we have decided to seek further evidence from Audit Scotland on how the council is being run."
3. The Accounts Commission for Scotland considers whether local authorities, fire & rescue services and police forces spend public money properly and effectively.
4. Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000, under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act, 2000. It provides services to the Accounts Commission for Scotland.

(The Audit Commission is an entirely separate body that operates only in England.)
5. Best Value is the duty placed on local authorities to demonstrate their on-going commitment to providing better services to local people.