

Audit Scotland's annual statement on efficiency, effectiveness and economy for 2021-22

1. The Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, section 32(1)(b) requires listed public bodies to publish a statement in relation to efficiency, effectiveness and economy as soon as possible after the end of the financial year.

2. The following statement sets out the steps that Audit Scotland has taken in 2021/22 to improve its efficiency, effectiveness and economy in the exercise of its functions. Further information on this and our audit work is contained in our Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 which is on our website at <http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk>

Introduction

3. Audit Scotland is a statutory body that supports the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission in making sure public money in Scotland is used properly, efficiently and effectively by undertaking audits and investigations of Scottish public bodies.

4. To ensure objectivity in our work, Audit Scotland is independent of the Scottish Government and ministers. The independence, quality and timeliness of audit are essential to the public interest.

5. Maintaining our independence from those we audit limits our ability to share services. However, where sharing is possible, we have done so.

COVID-19 statement

6. The continued impact of the Covid-19 pandemic led to significant organisational, audit and financial implications in 2021/22. From the onset of the pandemic Audit Scotland has adopted a safety-first approach which has meant prioritising the health, safety and wellbeing of our colleagues and the quality of the audit.

Efficiency, effectiveness and economy improvements during 2021/22

7. The Scottish Commission for Public Audit (SCPA), established under Section 12 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000, examines our proposals for the use of our resources and expenditure and reports on them to the Parliament. Our budget proposals can be found on the Scottish Parliament's website at <https://www.parliament.scot>

8. In 2021/2022, we delivered £1.6 million of efficiency savings against a target of £0.9 million. This was 4.6 per cent of our budget.

9. Included in the savings of £1.6 million is £0.6 million of non-cash pension expenditure, which is non-recurring.

10. The majority of the balancing £1.0 million in savings came from staff costs, travel & subsistence and firms expenses. Staff cost savings are due to the

timing of recruitment and are not recurring. A large element of the travel & subsistence and firms expenses savings will be recurring as we look to continue to deliver elements of audit work remotely where appropriate.

11. Audit Scotland continues to work with other scrutiny bodies to make sure that the scrutiny of local government is better targeted and more proportionate to the identified risks.

12. Sharing services and resources within the public sector allows economy of scale cost and efficiency savings. Where sharing does not impact our independence, we have done this. For example:

- We use the Public Contracts Scotland portal to procure services for Audit Scotland, the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission where it is beneficial to do so.
- We are part of the Scottish Government Procurement Shared Services initiative which was set up to provide professional assistance to smaller bodies which don't have a procurement department. This assistance helps improve our procurement knowledge which in turns leads to increased procurement efficiency and effectiveness and legislative compliance.
- We use competitive contracts secured by Scottish Procurement, leading to savings on our utility costs, computer accessories and managed print services.
- We have a shared lease car contract with the Care Inspectorate
- See also our annual statement on sustainable economic growth.