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Press release

Strictly embargoed until 00:01 hours, Thursday 19 November 2009

Preparations for Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games progressing but major challenges ahead

The organisers of the Commonwealth Games are making progress in a number of key areas but now need to put in place an overall programme plan, ensure costs are under control and continue to identify and manage other risks.

An Audit Scotland report published today, *Progress report on planning for the delivery of the XXth Commonwealth Games 2014*, says the main organisers (Commonwealth Games Scotland, the Scottish Government, Glasgow City Council and Glasgow 2014 Ltd) need to continue to actively identify and manage the risks through to 2014 and beyond.

The particular challenges for the Games organisers include: the immovable deadline; the complexities caused by the number of partners involved; and the importance of establishing contingency arrangements, such as in the event of poor weather.

The report says the organisers are making progress in developing plans for their specific areas of responsibility, such as building the venues, security, ticketing and sponsorship. However, delivering the Games is complex and although there is almost five years to go before the Games take place it is vital that these separate plans are pulled together very soon so that they are properly managed and coordinated.

The report highlights that the top risk is that costs could rise. Indeed, earlier this week it was announced that the Games budget has been increased by £81 million from £373 million to £454 million.

Over and above the Games budget, a further £269 million is being spent on developing 15 venues that will be used for the Games and around £1.6 billion is being spent on improving transport infrastructure. These projects were planned before the bid and are not a cost of the Games. In addition, private developers are expected to meet the costs of constructing the Athletes' Games Village.

Caroline Gardner, Deputy Auditor General, said: "The Commonwealth Games is a major event for Scotland and attention to detailed planning at this stage is an essential part of contributing to its success. Our report highlighted a potential shortfall in the budget as a risk. Earlier this week the Games budget was increased to £454 million. In the current economic climate public sector finances are already under pressure and it is essential that the organisers keep costs under control. They need to continue to monitor and review the budget assumptions regularly."

The report includes lists of the venues and transport projects, with planned completion dates matched against recent information. Although there has been some slippage, all the Games related venues and transport infrastructure projects are currently on course to be delivered in time for the Games.

John Baillie, Chair of the Accounts Commission, said: "Although a key feature of the bid was that 70% of the infrastructure, including venues, was already in place, delivering a high quality Commonwealth Games to a fixed deadline presents major challenges for the four main organisers. It is crucial that risks are well managed as plans progress towards hosting the Games in 2014."

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Notes to editors

1. This is Audit Scotland's first report in a series on the Commonwealth Games 2014. The bulk of the audit work for this report was carried out between June and August 2009.

2. A project that featured in the partners' bid document has now been cancelled - the Glasgow Airport Rail Link (GARL). However, the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) issued a response to a letter from the Scottish Government explaining the decision to cancel the GARL which stated "Whilst, at the time of the bid, the GARL formed part of the overall transport solution for the Games the Federation does not consider this as critical to the successful delivery of the Games and accordingly we accept the decision by the Government for the reasons they have stated."

3. Audit Scotland reports are available at www.audit-scotland.gov.uk

4. Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000, under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act, 2000. Audit Scotland has prepared this report jointly for the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission for Scotland:

- The Auditor General is responsible for securing the audit of the Scottish Government and most other public bodies in Scotland, except local authorities. He investigates whether spending bodies achieve the best possible value for money and adhere to the highest standards of financial management. The Auditor General is independent.
- The Accounts Commission for Scotland operates independently of both central and local government. The Commission checks whether local authorities, fire and police boards spend public money properly and effectively.