



Crofting Commission

Planning report to the Audit and Finance Committee on the audit for the year ending 31 March 2020

Issued on 10 January for the meeting on 23 January 2020

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Introduction

The key messages in this report

Audit quality is our number one priority. We plan our audit to focus on audit quality and have set the following audit quality objectives for this audit:

- A robust challenge of the key judgements taken in the preparation of the financial statements.
- A strong understanding of your internal control environment.
- A well planned and delivered audit that raises findings early with those charged with governance.

I have pleasure in presenting our planning report to the Audit and Finance Committee of the Crofting Commission ("the Commission") for the year ending 31 March 2020 audit. I would like to draw your attention to the key messages of this audit plan:

Audit Plan

We have updated our understanding of the Commission including discussion with management and review of relevant documentation from across the Commission. Based on these procedures, we have developed this plan in collaboration with the Commission to ensure that we provide an effective audit service that meets your expectations and focuses on the most significant areas of importance and risk to the Commission.

Key Risks

We have taken an initial view as to the significant audit risks the Commission faces. These are presented as a summary dashboard on page 11.

Audit Dimensions

The Code of Audit Practice sets our four audit dimensions which set a common framework for all public sector audits in Scotland. Our planned audit work is risk based and proportionate. Our initial assessment builds upon our work in prior years, and in particular the conclusions from our 2018/19 audit where we applied the full wider scope audit. We have also considered the Commission's key priorities and risks as well as any risks identified by Audit Scotland. Given the areas for improvement highlighted in our 2018/19, we have concluded that it remains appropriate to apply the full wider scope requirements. The following specific risks have been identified.

Financial sustainability – There is a risk that the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and associated workforce plan are not sufficiently robust to allow the Commission to plan for the medium to longer term. We will assess the progress being made in developing these.

Financial management – There is a risk that the budget setting process is not sufficiently robust to allow the Board to fully understand the financial implications of decisions. We will assess the budget setting process and consider the actions taken in response to our 2018/19 recommendations.

Governance and transparency – There is a risk that the boundary between operational and strategic matters for Commissioners is not clear. There is also a risk of inconsistent messages being given to staff due to the lack of a 'one Commission' culture.

We will follow up on the recommendations made in our 2018/19 annual audit report in relation to performance evaluation and training needs of the SMT and the annual appraisal process for Commissioners. We will also assess the progress made in reviewing processes for dealing with alleged and perceived inappropriate behaviour highlighted in the staff surveys.

Introduction (continued)

The key messages in this report (continued)

Audit Dimensions (continued)

Value for Money – There is a risk that, in the absence of agreed actions and clear business cases to underpin decision making, the Commission's performance could decline further.

We will review the Commission's performance, its reporting and monitoring and the actions taken to improve the performance of the Commission. We will also specifically follow up on our 2018/19 recommendation to standardise the use of business cases.

Should any further risks emerge during the year, we will provide an update to the Audit and Finance Committee.

Regulatory Change

IFRS 16, Leases, will apply from 2020/21, and will require disclosure in the 2019/20 financial statements of the expected impact on transition.

We would suggest that the Audit and Finance Committee receives an update from management on the implementation of the new standard. We will report specifically on the scope of our work this year, and recommendations for 2020/21.

Our Commitment to Quality

We are committed to providing the highest quality audit, with input from our market leading specialists, sophisticated data analytics and our wealth of experience.

Adding value

Our aim is to add value to the Commission through our audit work by being constructive and forward looking, by identifying areas of improvement and by recommending and encouraging good practice. In this way, we aim to help the Commission promote improved standards of governance, better management and decision making and more effective use of resources.

We have also shared our recent research, informed perspectives and best practice from our work across the wider public sector on pages 24 to 27 of this paper.

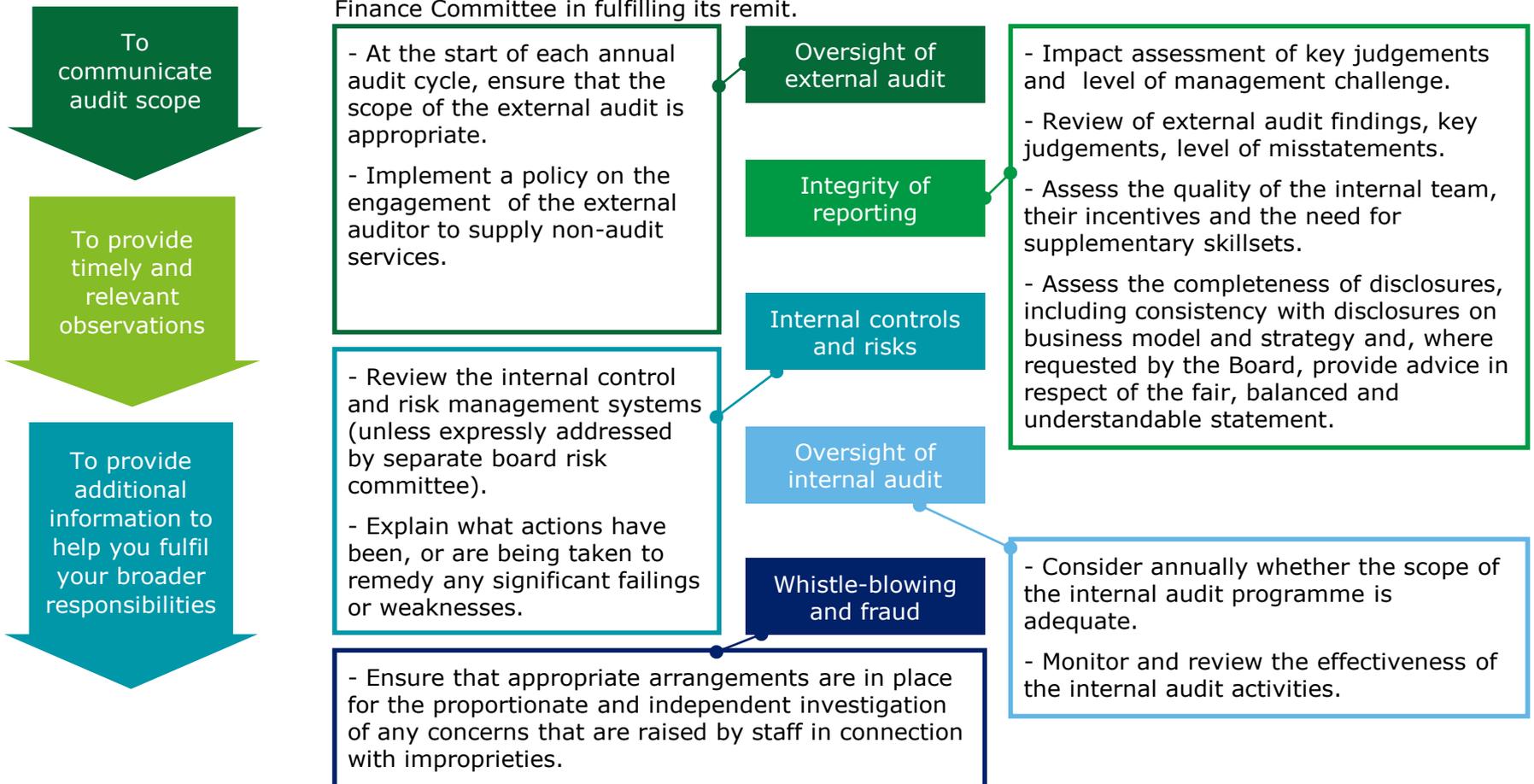
Pat Kenny
Audit Director

Responsibilities of the Audit and Finance Committee

Helping you fulfil your responsibilities

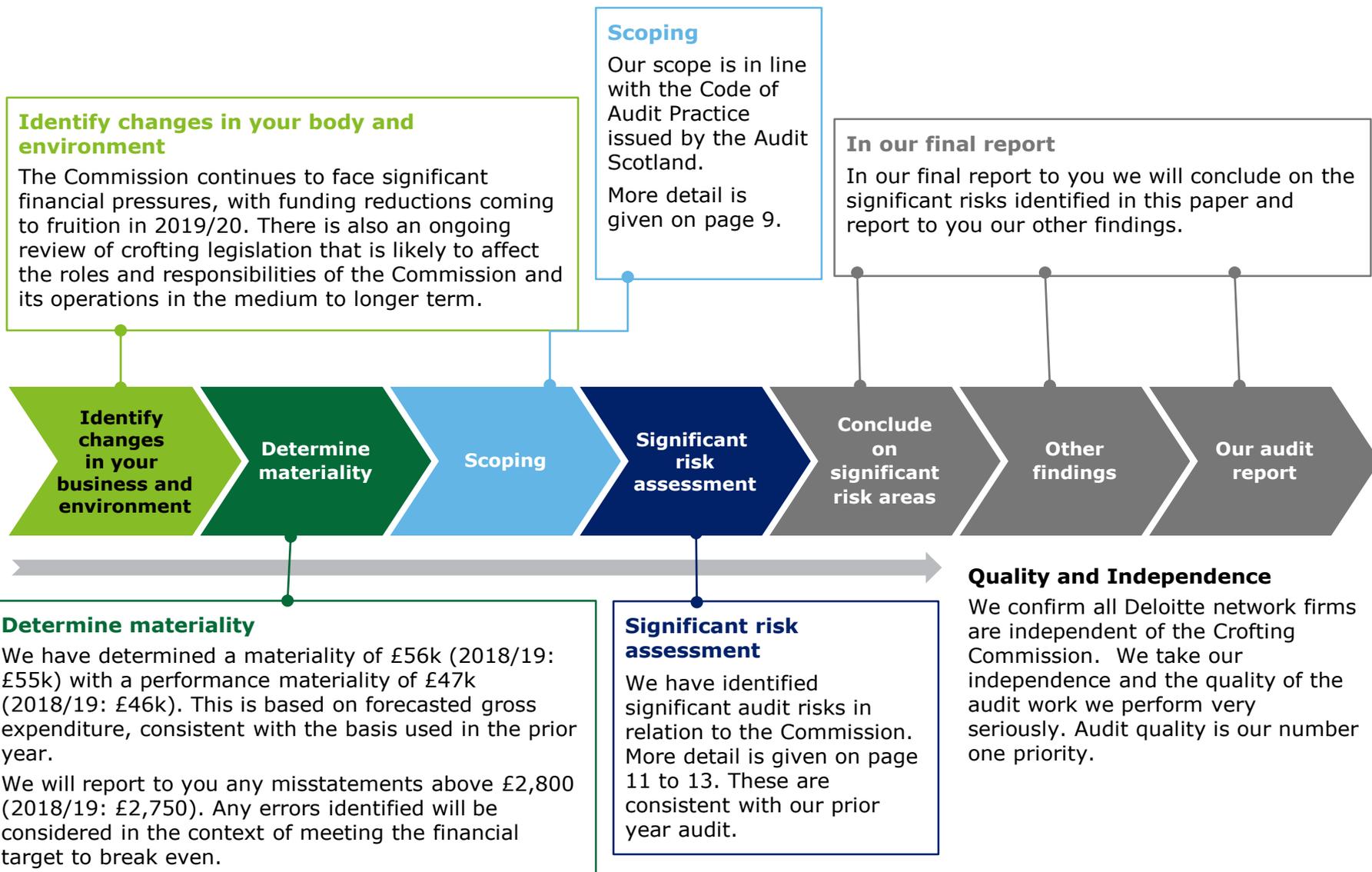
Why do we interact with the Audit and Finance Committee?

As a result of regulatory change in recent years, the role of the Audit and Finance Committee has significantly expanded. We set out here a summary of the core areas of Audit and Finance Committee responsibility to provide a reference in respect of these broader responsibilities and highlight throughout the document where there is key information which helps the Audit and Finance Committee in fulfilling its remit.



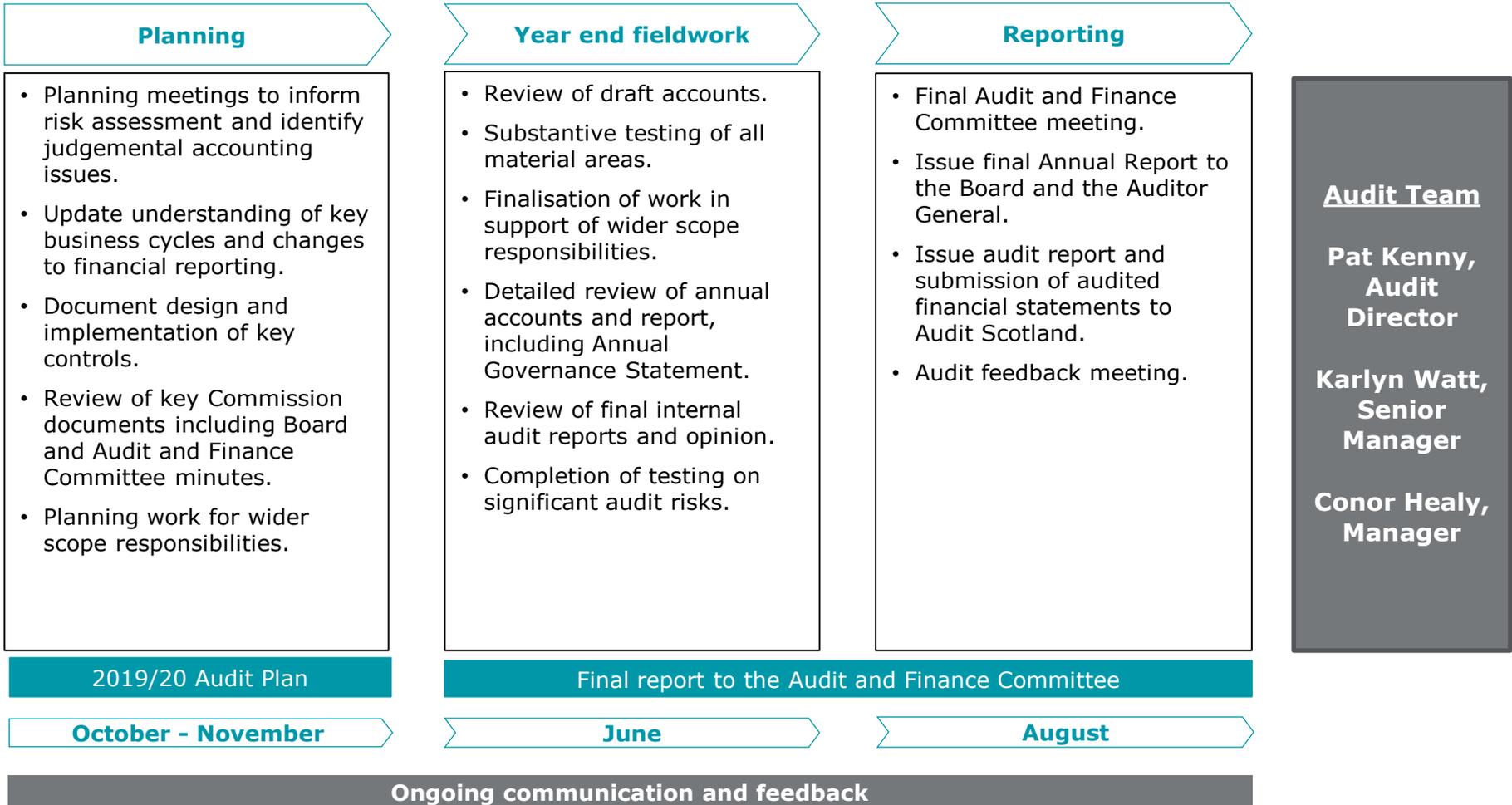
Our audit explained

We tailor our audit to your body and your strategy



Continuous communication and reporting

Planned timing of the audit



Materiality

Our approach to materiality

Basis of our materiality benchmark

- The Audit Director has determined materiality as £56k (2018/19: £55k) and a performance materiality of £47k (2018/19: £46k), based on professional judgement and risk factors specific to the Commission, the requirement of auditing standards and the financial measures most relevant to users of the financial statements.
- We have used 2% (2018/19: 2%) of forecasted gross expenditure as the benchmark for determining materiality and applied 85% (2018/19: 85%) as performance materiality.
- This approach to determining materiality is consistent with our prior year materiality calculation.

Reporting to those charged with governance

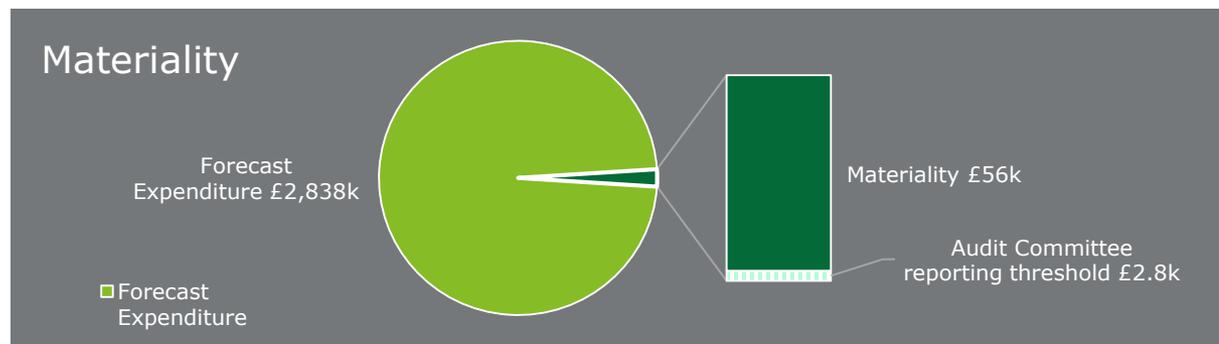
- We will report to you all misstatements found in excess of £2,800 (2018/19: £2,750).
- We will report to you misstatements below this threshold if we consider them to be material by nature.

- Our approach to determining the materiality benchmark is consistent with Audit Scotland guidance which states that the threshold for clearly trivial above which we should accumulate misstatements for reporting and correction to audit committees must not exceed £250k.

Our annual audit report

We will:

- Report the materiality benchmark applied in the audit of the Commission;
- Provide comparative data and explain any changes in materiality, compared to prior year, if appropriate; and
- Explain any normalised or adjusted benchmarks we use, if appropriate.



Although materiality is the judgement of the audit director, the Audit and Finance Committee must satisfy themselves that the level of materiality chosen is appropriate for the scope of the audit.



Scope of work and approach

Our key areas of responsibility under the Code of Audit Practice

Core audit work	Planned output	Timeline
Perform an audit of the annual accounts and express specified audit opinion	Annual audit plan Independent auditor's report	23 January 2020 12 August 2020
Consider and report on the audit dimensions	Annual audit plan Annual audit report	23 January 2020 12 August 2020
Provide information on cases of fraud	Fraud Returns	30 November 2019 28 February 2020 31 May 2020 30 August 2020

Scope of work and approach (continued)

Our approach

Liaison with internal audit

The Auditing Standards Board’s version of ISA (UK) 610 “Using the work of internal auditors” prohibits use of internal audit to provide “direct assistance” to the audit. Our approach to the use of the work of Internal Audit has been designed to be compatible with these requirements.

We will review their reports and meet with them to discuss their work. We will discuss the work plan for internal audit, and where they have identified specific material deficiencies in the control environment we consider adjusting our testing so that the audit risk is covered by our work.

Using these discussions to inform our risk assessment, we can work together with internal audit to develop an approach that avoids inefficiencies and overlaps, therefore avoiding any unnecessary duplication of audit requirements on the Commission's staff.

Approach to controls testing

Our risk assessment procedures will include obtaining an understanding of controls considered to be ‘relevant to the audit’. This involves evaluating the design of the controls and determining whether they have been implemented (“D&I”).

The results of our work in obtaining an understanding of controls will be collated and the impact on the extent of substantive audit testing required will be considered.

Promoting high quality reporting to stakeholders

We view the audit role as going beyond reactively checking compliance with requirements: we seek to provide advice on evolving good practice to promote high quality reporting.

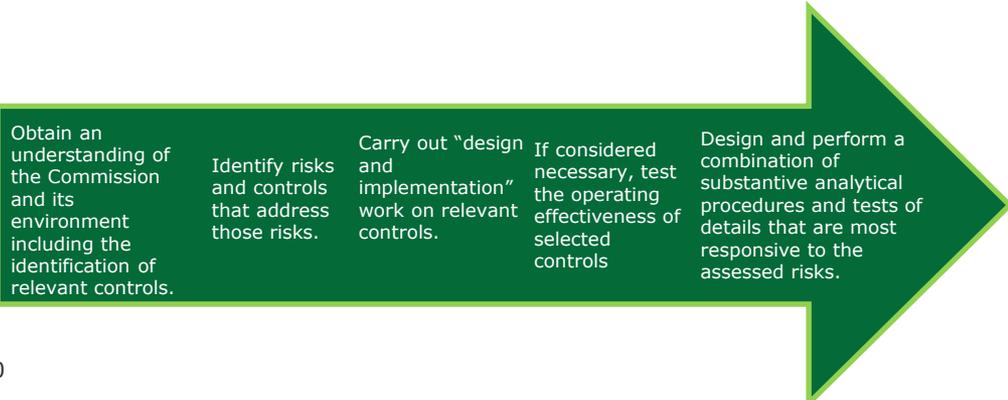
We have also designed and continually update International Financial Reporting Standards (“IFRS”) disclosure checklists in conjunction with the requirements of the FReM to support the Commission in preparing high quality drafts of the Annual Report and financial statements, which we would recommend the Commission complete during drafting.

We will continue to review an early draft of the annual report ahead of the typical reporting timetable to feedback any comments to management and the Audit and Finance Committee.

Audit Scotland has published good practice guides in relation the Annual Report and the Governance Statement to support the Commission in preparing high quality drafts of the Annual Report and financial statements, which we would recommend the Commission consider during drafting.

Statutory Other Information

In addition to the financial statements, we are required to consider whether the Performance Report and Governance Statement is consistent with the financial statements and has been prepared in accordance with applicable requirements. In performing this work, we will refer to the Financial Reporting Council report issued in December 2018 following an audit quality thematic review of auditors’ work on other information which identified a number of instances when insufficient work was performed to ensure that good practice is followed.



Obtain an understanding of the Commission and its environment including the identification of relevant controls.	Identify risks and controls that address those risks.	Carry out “design and implementation” work on relevant controls.	If considered necessary, test the operating effectiveness of selected controls	Design and perform a combination of substantive analytical procedures and tests of details that are most responsive to the assessed risks.
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Significant risks Dashboard



Risk	Material	Fraud risk	Planned approach to controls testing	Level of management judgement	Slide no.
Operating within the expenditure resource limits			Design and implementation		12
Management override of controls			Design and implementation		13



Some degree of management judgement



Limited management judgement

Significant risks (continued)

Risk 1 – Operating within the expenditure resource limits

Key focus for management

Risk identified

Under Auditing Standards there is a rebuttable presumption that the fraud risk from revenue recognition is a significant risk. In line with the prior year, we do not consider this to be a significant risk for the Commission as there is little incentive to manipulate revenue recognition with the majority of income being from the Scottish Government which can be agreed to confirmations supplied.

We therefore consider the fraud risk to be focused on how management operate within the expenditure resource limits set by the Scottish Government. There is a risk that the Commission materially misstates expenditure in relation to year end transactions, in an attempt to align with its tolerance target or achieve a breakeven position. The significant risk is therefore pinpointed to accruals and prepayments made by management at the year end and invoices processed around the year end as this is the area where there is scope to manipulate the final results. Given the financial pressures across the whole of the public sector, there is an inherent fraud risk associated with the recording of accruals and prepayments around year end.

Our response

We will evaluate the results of our audit testing in the context of the achievement of the target set by the Scottish Government.

Our work in this area will include the following:

- evaluate the design and implementation of the controls around the monthly monitoring of financial performance;
 - obtain independent confirmation of resource limits allocated to the Commission by the Scottish Government;
 - perform focused testing of accruals and prepayments made at the year end; and
 - performing focused cut-off testing of invoices received and paid around the year end.
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Significant risks (continued)

Risk 2 – Management override of controls

We will use computer assisted audit techniques, to support our work on the risk of management override

Risk identified

In accordance with ISA 240 (UK) management override is a significant risk. This risk area includes the potential for management to use their judgement to influence the financial statements as well as the potential to override the Commission's controls for specific transactions.

The key judgements in the financial statements are those which we have selected to be the significant audit risk around expenditure recognition. This is inherently the areas in which management has the potential to use their judgement to influence the financial statements.

Planned audit challenge

In considering the risk of management override, we plan to perform the following audit procedures that directly address this risk:

Journal testing

- We will test the design and implementation of controls over journal entry processing.
- Using our analytics tool, we will risk assess journals and select items for detailed follow up testing. The journal entries will be selected using computer-assisted profiling based on areas which we consider to be of increased interest.
- We will test the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger, and other adjustments made in the preparation of financial reporting.

Accounting estimates and judgements

- We will test the design and implementation of controls over key accounting estimates and judgements.
- We will review accounting estimates for biases that could result in material misstatements due to fraud. This will include both a retrospective review of 31 March 2019 estimates and a review of the corresponding estimates as at 31 March 2020.

Significant and unusual transactions

- We will obtain an understanding of the business rationale of significant transactions that we become aware of that are outside of the normal course of business for the entity, or that otherwise appear to be unusual, given our understanding of the entity and its environment.

Wider scope requirements

Audit dimensions

The Code of Audit Practice sets our **four audit dimensions** which set a common framework for all public sector audits in Scotland. Our planned audit work is risk based and proportionate. Our initial assessment builds upon our work in prior years, and in particular the conclusions from our 2018/19 audit where we applied the full wider scope audit. We have also considered the Commission's key priorities and risks as well as any risks identified by Audit Scotland. We have set out below our identified audit risks in relation to the audit dimensions and proposed response. In addition, we will follow up the progress made in relation to our previous years recommendations.

Audit dimension	Conclusions from previous years	2019/20 Audit Risks
<p>Financial sustainability looks forward to the medium and longer term to consider whether the body is planning effectively to continue to deliver its services or the way in which they should be delivered.</p>	<p>As reported in our 2018/19 annual audit report, the financial position of the Commission is extremely challenging given the 3.6% reduction in funding in 2019/20. We recommended that the Commission develop a MTFP linked to the Scottish Government Medium-Term Financial Strategy ('MTFS') and quantifying any medium-term funding gap, setting out actions to address this. The Commission's workforce plan needs to be enhanced and it should be linked to the MTFP.</p>	<p>There is a risk that the MTFP and associated workforce plan are not sufficiently robust to allow the Commission to plan for the medium to longer term.</p> <p>We will assess the progress being made in developing the MTFP.</p>
<p>Financial management is concerned with financial capacity, sound budgetary processes and whether the control environment and internal controls are operating effectively</p>	<p>We concluded in 2018/19 that the Commission has effective financial management processes in place. However, there is room for improvement in the budget setting process and the understanding of financial implications of decisions. We recommended that the Commission consider whether giving finance a more strategic role in the organisation would help to address some of the issues identified in relation to financial sustainability, financial management and value for money.</p>	<p>There is a risk that the budget setting process is not sufficiently robust to allow the Board to fully understand the financial implications of decisions.</p> <p>We will assess the budget setting process and consider the actions taken in response to our 2018/19 recommendations.</p>

Wider scope requirements (continued)

Audit dimensions (continued)

Audit dimension	Conclusions from previous years	2019/20 Audit Risks
<p>Governance and transparency is concerned with the effectiveness of scrutiny and governance arrangements, leadership and decision making, and transparent reporting of financial and performance information.</p>	<p>In 2018/19 we concluded that the Commission has a good attitude to openness and transparency and has strong governance and scrutiny arrangements in place. However, improvements in observing the boundary between operational and strategic matters and training and development for Commissioners were needed.</p> <p>We also concluded that the Commission has competent and dedicated leadership. However, the SMT need to develop a 'one Commission' culture. SMT need to ensure consistency in performance management, improve the processes in place for managing organisational change, and improve communication with staff.</p> <p>Given the findings of the 2018 and 2019 staff surveys, we recommended that the Commission review its processes for dealing with alleged and perceived inappropriate behaviour, and should consider conducting an initial independent review to look into these concerns.</p>	<p>There is a risk that the boundary between operational and strategic matters for Commissioners is not clear. There is also a risk of inconsistent messages being given to staff due to the lack of a 'one Commission' culture.</p> <p>We will follow up on the recommendations made in our 2018/19 annual audit report in relation to performance evaluation and training needs of the SMT and the annual appraisal process for Commissioners. We will also assess the progress made in reviewing processes for dealing with alleged and perceived inappropriate behaviour highlighted in the staff surveys.</p>
<p>Value for money is concerned with using resources effectively and continually improving services.</p>	<p>An increase in regulatory applications, combined with staffing and IT issues, resulted in the Commission's performance declining substantially in 2018/19, with complaints received increasing by 120% in the year. We recommended that the Commission prepare a clear and concise annual Improvement Plan. This Improvement Plan should be informed by self-assessments, staff surveys, stakeholder surveys and national reports.</p> <p>We also recommended that the Commission needs to move to the regular use of business cases to underpin decision making.</p>	<p>There is a risk that, in the absence of agreed actions and clear business cases to underpin decision making, the Commission's performance could decline further.</p> <p>We will review the Commission's performance, the it's reporting and monitoring and the actions taken to improve the performance of the Commission. We will also specifically follow up on our 2018/19 recommendation to standardise the use business cases.</p>

Maintaining audit quality

Responding to challenges in the current audit market

This is a time of intense scrutiny for our profession with questions over the role of auditors, market choice and the provision of non-audit services by an audit firm. We welcome the debate and are engaging fully with all parties who have an interest in the current audit market reform initiatives, so that our profession, our people, our clients and most importantly, the public interest, are served to the highest standards of audit quality and independence.

The role of audit

- Public confidence in audit has weakened over recent years and the expectation gap has widened with differences between what an audit does and what people think it should do (largely in areas of internal controls, fraud, front half assurance and long term viability).
- Deloitte fully supports an independent review into the role of auditors.
- The Government's Brydon Review will consider UK audit standards and how audits should evolve.

Would it be better to have audit only firms?

- Deloitte believes that multidisciplinary firms have more knowledge, greater access to technology and a deeper talent pool. The specialist input from industry, valuation, controls, pensions, cyber, solvency, IT and tax services are critical to an effective audit.
- Our investment in audit innovation, training and technology is greater because of the multidisciplinary model.

Is the current audit market uncompetitive?

- We recognise that the competition for large, complex clients is fierce, but we wholeheartedly support greater choice being available to stakeholders.
- There are barriers to entry in the listed market that are significant including the required global reach, unlimited liability, and the high cost of tendering.
- The audit profession has engaged with the Competition and Markets Authority with ideas on how to provide greater choice in the market, and responded to the CMA's suggested market remedies.

Independence and conflicts from other services

- Legislation and the FRC's Ethical Standard restrict the services we may provide to audit clients
- Deloitte invests heavily in systems, processes and people to check for potential conflicts.
- We have governance arrangements in place to assess any areas of potential conflict, including where required to protect the public interest.
- Fees for non-audit services to audit clients have fallen since 2008 (17% to 7.3% of firm revenue).

Deloitte

- Our Impact Report and Transparency Report are available on our website <https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/about-deloitte-uk/articles/annual-reports.html>

Purpose of our report and responsibility statement

Our report is designed to help you meet your governance duties

What we report

Our report is designed to establish our respective responsibilities in relation to the financial statements audit, to agree our audit plan and to take the opportunity to ask you questions at the planning stage of our audit. Our report includes:

- Our audit plan, including key audit judgements and the planned scope;
- Key regulatory and corporate governance updates, relevant to you.

What we don't report

As you will be aware, our audit is not designed to identify all matters that may be relevant to the Commission.

Also, there will be further information you need to discharge your governance responsibilities, such as matters reported on by management or by other specialist advisers.

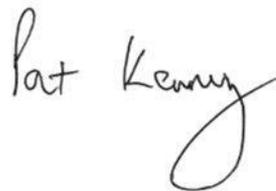
Finally, the views on internal controls and business risk assessment in our final report should not be taken as comprehensive or as an opinion on effectiveness since they will be based solely on the audit procedures performed in the audit of the financial statements and the other procedures performed in fulfilling our audit plan.

Other relevant communications

We will update you if there are any significant changes to the audit plan.

This report has been prepared for the Audit and Finance Committee, as a body, and we therefore accept responsibility to you alone for its contents. We accept no duty, responsibility or liability to any other parties, since this report has not been prepared, and is not intended, for any other purpose. Except where required by law or regulation, it should not be made available to any other parties without our prior written consent.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss our report with you and receive your feedback.



Pat Kenny, CPFA

for and on behalf of Deloitte LLP

Glasgow

10 January 2020

Appendices



Fraud responsibilities and representations

Responsibilities explained



Your Responsibilities:

The primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with management and those charged with governance, including establishing and maintaining internal controls over the reliability of financial reporting, effectiveness and efficiency of operations and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.



Our responsibilities:

- We are required to obtain representations from your management regarding internal controls, assessment of risk and any known or suspected fraud or misstatement.
- As auditors, we obtain reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error.
- As set out in the significant risks section of this document, we have identified the risk of fraud in relation to operating within the expenditure resource limit and management override of controls as a key audit risk for your organisation.



Fraud Characteristics:

- Misstatements in the financial statements can arise from either fraud or error. The distinguishing factor between fraud and error is whether the underlying action that results in the misstatement of the financial statements is intentional or unintentional.
- Two types of intentional misstatements are relevant to us as auditors – misstatements resulting from fraudulent financial reporting and misstatements resulting from misappropriation of assets.

We will request the following to be stated in the representation letter signed on behalf of the Board:

- We acknowledge our responsibilities for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.
- We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
- We are not aware of any fraud or suspected fraud that affects the entity or group and involves:
 - (i) management;
 - (ii) employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - (iii) others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.
- We have disclosed to you all information in relation to allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the entity's financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.



Fraud responsibilities and representations (continued)

Inquiries

We will make the following inquiries regarding fraud:



Management:

- Management's assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated due to fraud, including the nature, extent and frequency of such assessments.
- Management's process for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud in the entity.
- Management's communication, if any, to those charged with governance regarding its processes for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud in the entity.
- Management's communication, if any, to employees regarding its views on business practices and ethical behaviour.
- Whether management has knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity.
- We plan to involve management from outside the finance function in our inquiries.

Internal audit and Local Counter Fraud Specialist



- Whether internal audit and the Commission's local counter fraud specialist has knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity, and to obtain its views about the risks of fraud.

Those charged with governance



- How those charged with governance exercise oversight of management's processes for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud in the entity and the internal control that management has established to mitigate these risks.
- Whether those charged with governance have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity.
- The views of those charged with governance on the most significant fraud risk factors affecting the entity.



Independence and fees



As part of our obligations under International Standards on Auditing (UK), we are required to report to you on the matters listed below:

Independence confirmation We confirm the audit engagement team, and others in the firm as appropriate, Deloitte LLP and, where applicable, all Deloitte network firms are independent of the Commission and will reconfirm our independence and objectivity to the Audit and Finance Committee for the year ending 31 March 2020 in our final report to the Audit and Finance Committee.

Fees The audit fee for 2019/20 in line with the fee range provided by Audit Scotland is £17,910 as analysed below:

	£
Auditor remuneration	14,240
Audit Scotland fixed charges:	
Pooled costs	2,960
Audit support costs	710
Total proposed fee	17,910

There are no non-audit services fees proposed for the period.

Non-audit services In our opinion there are no inconsistencies between the FRC's Ethical Standard and the Commission's policy for the supply of non-audit services or any apparent breach of that policy. We continue to review our independence and ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place including, but not limited to, the rotation of senior partners and professional staff and the involvement of additional partners and professional staff to carry out reviews of the work performed and to otherwise advise as necessary.

Relationships We have no other relationships with the Commission, its directors, senior managers and affiliates, and have not supplied any services to other known connected parties.

Our approach to quality

AQR team report and findings

We maintain a relentless focus on quality and our quality control procedures and continue to invest in and enhance our Audit Quality Monitoring and Measuring programme. In July 2019 the Financial Reporting Council ("FRC") issued individual reports on each of the seven largest firms, including Deloitte, on Audit Quality Inspections providing a summary of the findings of its Audit Quality Review ("AQR") team for the 2018/19 cycle of reviews.

We greatly value the FRC reviews of our audit engagements and firm wide quality control systems, a key aspect of evaluating our audit quality. We have further transformed our internal review processes including a new focus for reviewing in progress audits, developing our Audit Quality Indicators ('AQI') which are monitored and reported to the firm's executive, and on enhanced remediation procedures.

Whilst we are pleased that overall our quality record, as measured by external inspections, has improved from 76% to 84%, we remain committed to continuous improvement and achieving as a minimum the 90% benchmark across all engagements. We are however, extremely disappointed one engagement received a rating of significant improvements required during the period. This is viewed very seriously within Deloitte and we have worked with the AQR to agree a comprehensive set of swift and significant firm wide actions. We are also pleased to see the impact of our previous actions on impairment, group audits and contingent liability disclosures reflected in the audits under review and there being limited or no findings in those areas. These continue to be a focus in our training, internal coaching and internal review programmes.

We invest continually in our firm wide processes and controls, which we seek to develop globally, to underpin consistency in delivering high quality audits whilst ensuring engagement teams exercise professional scepticism through robust challenge.

All the AQR public reports are available on its website.
<https://www.frc.org.uk/auditors/audit-quality-review/audit-firm-specific-reports>

The AQR's 2018/19 Audit Quality Inspection Report on Deloitte LLP

"We assessed 84% of the firm's audits that we reviewed as requiring no more than limited improvements, compared with 76% in 2017/18. Of the FTSE 350 audits we reviewed this year, we assessed 75% as achieving this standard compared with 79% in 2017/18. We note that our inspection results show only modest improvements in audit quality."

"We had no significant findings arising from our firm-wide work on internal quality monitoring, engagement quality control reviews and independence and ethics."

"Our key individual review findings related principally to the need to:

- Exercise greater professional scepticism in the audit of potential prior year adjustments and related disclosures in the annual report and accounts.
- Strengthen the extent of challenge of key estimates and assumptions in key areas of judgement, including asset valuations and impairment testing.
- Improve the consistency of the quality of the firm's audit of revenue.
- Achieve greater consistency in the audit of provisions and liabilities."

"The firm has enhanced its policies and procedures during the year in a number of areas, including the following:

- Through the firm's global audit quality programmes, there has been an increased focus on consistency of audit work across the audit practice. For certain account balances, standardised approaches have been adopted, further use has been made of centres of excellence and delivery centres and new technologies embedded into the audit process to support and enable risk assessments, analytical procedures and project management activities.
- Further methodology updates and additional guidance and training for the audit practice covering group audits, accounting estimates, financial services (including the adoption of IFRS 9) provisions and contingencies and the evidencing of quality control procedures (including EQCR) on individual audits.
- Increased support for audit teams throughout the audit cycle including coaching programmes for teams and greater use of diagnostics to monitor progress.
- Continued focus on the approach to the testing of internal controls. The firm provided additional training and support to audit teams adopting a controls-based audit approach, increased focus on reporting to Audit Committees on internal controls and on the wording of auditor's reports."

Sector developments



Accounting standards

IFRS 16 - Leases

Background

The new standard is being implemented in 2020/21 and will require adjustments to recognise on balance sheet arrangements currently treated as operating leases.

For 2019/20, the Commission will need to include disclosures on the expected impact of the standard, but not make any adjustments in the financial statements in respect of IFRS 16. However, many organisations have identified previously unidentified leases (or arrangements that contain a lease, such as service contracts) as part of their transition project, and so there may be some 2019/20 impact.

Separate to the financial reporting impact, but potentially more critical, budgets for 2020/21, particularly capital budgets, will need to reflect the impact of the new standard (and require submissions well ahead of year-end).

In the Central Government context relatively small effects from standards can have a significant impact against performance metrics and targets, and so it is important to clearly understand the impact of the standards.

The FRM adaptation to IFRS 16 will bring into scope intra-government agreements, such as Memorandum of Terms of Occupation (MOTO's), which are not legally enforceable and which do not necessarily have a clear end-date. It will therefore be necessary to determine appropriate lease and valuation terms, using estimates and professional judgements and ensuring that there is appropriate justification for parameters used.

Next steps

We recommend that management review the impact of IFRS 16, including calculating any adjustments that will be required as at 31 March 2020 for transition. We would suggest that the Audit and Finance Committee receive reporting from management on the implementation of the new standard, and we will report specifically on the findings from our audit work in this area.

State of the State

The view from citizens, leaders and the frontline of public services

Background and overview

Now in its eighth year, The State of the State brings together Deloitte and Reform to make an annual assessment of government and public services in the UK. As Brexit negotiations and parliamentary wrangling continues, The State of the State looks beyond the headlines to explore the UK's public sector from the view of citizens, public sector leaders and the frontline of public services.

The State of the State finds that the public want greater spending on services and perceptions of social inequality have grown. It finds that investment in skills could make a significant difference to some of the UK's pervasive economic issues including productivity and regional disparity. And it finds frontline public sector professionals are too often hampered by out-of-date technology and working environments.

But amid these challenges, The State of the State finds much to be positive about. Our research shows that public sector leaders are enthused by the prospect of increased spending, public support is strong for government action on big issues like climate change and the thriving public sector ethos at the frontline remains one of the UK's core strengths.



The State of the State 2019-20

The view from citizens, leaders and the frontline of public services

Next steps

A summary of the key conclusions are provided on the next page. The full report is available at <https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/thestateofthestate>

State of the State (continued)

The view from citizens, leaders and the frontline of public services

Key conclusions

Combining the three perspectives in our research offers real insight into issues at the heart of a new domestic agenda. Our key observations are:

- **The public and the public sector want to know what post-austerity looks like.** Public service leaders are best placed to make their own devolved decisions, but many want direction from national governments on the shape of post-austerity, sector-wide reform. At the frontline, professionals want that reform to include greater use of mobile technology to reduce their administrative burden and boost their productivity.
- **Infrastructure and skills investment should be deployed to tackle economic inequalities.** The public think that economic inequalities in the UK are getting worse and public sector leaders believe transport infrastructure investment could tackle them if deployed with purpose. Our research also suggests that a range of the UK's economic and social challenges converge around skills – and so investment in skills provision could make a substantial difference to the UK's post-Brexit future.
- **The UK has an opportunity to consolidate its environmental leadership.** Public concerns on climate change have spiked in the past year, support for government intervention is strong and the UK has a window of opportunity to consolidate its environmental leadership when Glasgow plays host to the COP26 summit in 2020.
- **Resolving the social care crisis needs political will.** As the Queen's Speech recognised, underfunding in the social care system continues to blight lives and exacerbate demand on the NHS. Leaders across the public services want to see social care rise as a political priority and our survey finds it may be emerging as a priority for the public. Our research suggests that cross-party political leadership may be the best route to new funding arrangements – perhaps considering systems around the world as a starting point for UK options.
- **The UK could set the global gold standard in public administration.** Brexit may be dominating a substantial part of Civil Service capacity, but it has enhanced government capability and stimulated cross-departmental working. Leaving the EU is an era-defining challenge for government departments but beyond Brexit, the UK will be in a strong position to set the global gold standard for public administration, exporting UK expertise, experience of successful transformation and digital know-how.

What does climate change mean for business?

New website – learning, interviews and resources

Background

Climate change is likely to drive some of the most profound changes to businesses in our lifetimes.

Impacts on products and services, supply chains, loss of asset values and market dislocation are already being caused by more frequent and severe climate-related events.

Discover how to think through the challenges and futureproof your business.

The time to act is now!

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What does climate change mean for business?

Understanding the role of finance professionals

Climate change is likely to drive some of the most profound changes to businesses in our lifetimes.

Impacts on products and services, supply chains, loss of asset values and market dislocation are already being caused by more frequent and severe climate-related events. These effects are now compounded by the accelerating pace of policy and regulatory change as humanity recognises the challenge we face and the drastic and rapid actions we all must take in order to protect our planet and our own livelihoods.

Discover how to think through the challenges and futureproof your business through [learning](#), [interviews](#) and [resources](#).

The time to act is now!

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Next steps

Deloitte and the ICAEW have launched a site to support considering what climate change means for finance professionals at www.deloitte.co.uk/climatechange



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