
WEST OF SCOTLAND EUROPEAN FORUM

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 March 2021

WEST OF SCOTLAND EUROPEAN FORUM

Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 March 2021

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❖ Management Commentary

The West of Scotland European Forum (WSEF) was set up in 2007. Its purpose is to develop positive links between the communities of the region and the institutions of the European Union. In this task it follows on from the work previously undertaken by the West of Scotland European Consortium (WSEC). In addition to the local authorities who are members of WSEF, there are a number of other organisations in the region who participate in Forum activities.

Covering a geographically diverse region stretching from the Southern Uplands to the Highlands and Islands, this varied territory covered by forum members includes the Clydeside conurbation, the City of Glasgow, and several important industrial areas.

In 2020/21 the Forum continued to work within its “Smarter Working” framework that had been agreed in 2010. Work focused on 2 main issues – the delivery of the 2014-2020 Scottish EU funding programmes and the proposed UK Shared Prosperity Fund which is intended to replace EU Structural Fund programmes in the UK following “Brexit”. In carrying out these tasks the Forum continued its long standing collaboration with The Industrial Communities Alliance (ICA). It also cooperated closely with other Scottish stakeholders in promoting the opportunities provided to seek support from a number of European Territorial Cooperation programmes.

In 2020/21 the Forum continued to operate in an environment of considerable policy uncertainty, notwithstanding the formal departure of the UK from the EU in January 2020. From that date until the end of December 2020 the UK was in a transition phase. This provided an element of continuity in respect of the arrangements for the delivery of existing EU funding programmes for the 2014-20 period. Only limited progress was however made in 2020/21 by the UK Government in elaborating its proposals for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. In March 2021 the UK Government announced the establishment of a UK Community Renewal Fund for 2021/22 as transitional step between EU Structural Funds and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which is intended to be in place for 2022/23. The development and implementation of both these funds will continue to be a priority issue for the Forum in 2021/22.

The Forum continued its work on promoting the case for continuing Scottish/UK access to certain EU collaborative programmes in the 2021-27 EU funding period. As part of the EU UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, UK organisations will be able to apply for support in 2021-27 under the EU Horizon Europe Programme. This was not however extended to other EU funding programmes.

The accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis. The Forum began a review of its future role in 2020/21 in the light of the conclusion of the transition period referred to above and of the EU UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement that was agreed on 24th December 2020. It agreed an outline work programme for 2021/22. With respect to the longer term role and remit of the Forum, it remitted this matter to the incoming councils to be elected in May 2022.

In respect of its financial affairs, 2020/21 marked the third year in which the Forum sought to achieve a general balance in its budget having run down its accumulated reserves in a managed fashion over the preceding years. This objective was substantially met in 2020/21 and the maintenance of the balance will protect the organisation in light of the current economic climate.

It should be noted that the Forum’s activities were heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated lockdowns. Communication by email was continued throughout the year and from November 2020 onwards, the Forum was able to resume a regular cycle of meetings using video conferencing. In terms of the impact on the Forum’s finances, the restrictions on travel and in person meetings generated some modest savings to the Forum budget.

Financial results

In 2020/21 total income was £42,048 and total expenditure was £41,463, resulting in a surplus for the year of £585 leaving a balance of funds carried forward of £42,020.

Councillor Tony Buchanan
Chair of West of Scotland European Forum

Martin Booth BA CPFA MBA
Executive Director of Finance

❖ **Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts**

1. The lead authority's responsibilities

The lead authority is required:

- To make arrangements for the proper administration of the Forum's financial affairs and to ensure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs (section 95 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973). In Glasgow City Council, that officer is the Executive Director of Finance.
- To manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of the resources and safeguard its assets.
- To ensure the Annual Accounts are prepared in accordance with legislation (the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014 and the coronavirus (Scotland) act 2020), and so far as is compatible with that legislation, in accordance with proper accounting practices (section 12 of the Local Government Scotland Act 2003); and
- To approve the Annual Accounts for signature.

I confirm that these Annual Accounts were approved for signature by the Forum at its meeting on the 8 March 2022

Councillor Tony Buchanan
Chair of West of Scotland European Forum

2. The Executive Director of Finance responsibilities

The Executive Director of Finance is responsible for the preparation of the Forum's Annual Accounts, in accordance with proper practices, as required by legislation and as set out in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code).

In preparing these Annual Accounts, the Executive Director of Finance has:

- Selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- Made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;
- Complied with legislation; and
- Complied with the Code.

The Executive Director of Finance has also:

- Kept adequate accounting records, which were up to date; and
- Taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

I certify that the Annual Accounts give a true and fair view of the financial position of West of Scotland European Forum as at 31 March 2021 and the transactions for the year then ended.

Martin Booth BA CPFA MBA
Executive Director of Finance

❖ Movement in Reserves Statement for the Year ended 31 March 2021

The Code requires reserves to be summarised as usable and unusable. The balance in WOSEF is the sole usable reserve and represents the accumulated surplus of the organisation.

The balance held by the Forum stands at £42,020 as at 31 March 2021, an increase of £585 from last year, due to the surplus on the provision of services in the year.

	Total Reserves £
Balance at 1 April 2019	42,519
Movement in reserves during 2019/20:	
Surplus or (Deficit) on the Provision of Services	(1,084)
Other Comprehensive Income and (Expenditure)	0
Increase or (Decrease) in the year	(1,084)
Balance at 31 March 2020	41,435
Movement in reserves during 2020/21:	
Surplus or (Deficit) on the Provision of Services	585
Other Comprehensive Income and (Expenditure)	0
Increase or (Decrease) in the year	585
Balance at 31 March 2021	42,020

❖ Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31 March 2021

2019/20 Net Exp. £	Service	Note	2020/21 Net Expenditure £
43,122	Gross expenditure	3	41,463
(41,798)	Gross income	3	(41,798)
1,324	Cost of Services		(335)
(240)	Interest and investment income		(250)
(240)	Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure		(250)
1,084	(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services		(585)
0	Other Comprehensive (Income) and Expenditure		0
1,084	Total Comprehensive (Income) and Expenditure		(585)

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement – shows income and expenditure incurred in the year relating to the provision of WOSEF services, and other unrealised gains and losses. In total, this reflects the movement in the overall WOSEF reserves shown in the Balance Sheet.

❖ **Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2021**

31 March 2020 £		Note	31 March 2021 £
42,855	Net short-term debtors	6	44,741
42,855	Current Assets		44,741
(1,420)	Short-term creditors	7	(2,721)
(1,420)	Current Liabilities		(2,721)
41,435	Net Assets / (Liabilities)		42,020
41,435	Usable Reserves		42,020
0	Unusable Reserves		0
41,435	Total Reserves		42,020

Balance Sheet – represents the value of the assets and liabilities of WOSEF as at 31 March 2021. The net assets (assets less liabilities) are matched by the total Usable and Unusable Reserves.

The unaudited accounts were issued on 28 June 2021 and the audited accounts were authorised for issue on

Martin Booth BA CPFA MBA
Executive Director of Finance

❖ Notes to the accounts

The main objective of these notes is to provide further explanation for certain aspects of the core Financial Statements.

1. Statement of accounting policies

- 1.1 The Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021 have been compiled on the basis of recommendations made by the Local Authority (Scotland) Accounts Advisory Committee (LASAAC) and have been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 (the Code). The Code is based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) with interpretation appropriate to the public sector. The statements are designed to give a 'true and fair view' of the financial performance and position of the Forum.
- 1.2 The accounting concepts of materiality, accruals, going concern and primacy of legislative requirements have been considered in the application of accounting policies. In this regard the materiality concept means that information is included where the information is of such significance as to justify its inclusion. The accruals concept requires the non-cash effects of transactions to be included in the financial statement for the year in which they occur, not in the period in which the cash is paid or received. The going concern concept assumes that the Forum will not significantly curtail the scale of its operation. Wherever accounting principles and legislative requirements are in conflict, the latter shall apply.
- 1.3 Suppliers' invoices received up to 31 March 2021 have been included in the accounts. In addition, various items of expenditure have been accrued in accordance with the Code where the goods or services were received prior to 31 March 2021. Salaries and wages earned to 31 March 2021 are included in the accounts for 2020/21 irrespective of when the actual payments were made.
- 1.4 Income includes all sums due in respect of subscriptions from member authorities and other organisations and interest earned on fund balances for the year ended 31 March 2021.
- 1.5 There were no complex transactions or potential future uncertainties requiring critical judgements or estimations of uncertainty in preparing the 2020/21 accounts.
- 1.6 Events after the balance sheet date are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the statement of accounts is authorised for issue. Two types of events may be identified:
 - Those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period – the Financial Statements are adjusted to reflect such events; and

- Those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period – the Financial Statements are not adjusted to reflect such events, but where this would have a material effect, the nature and estimated financial impact of such events is disclosed in the notes.

2. New standards issued but not yet adopted

The Code requires the disclosure of information relating to the impact of an accounting change that will be required by a new standard that has been issued but not yet adopted. This applies to the adoption of the following new or amended standards within the 2021/22 Code:

- Amendments to IFRS3 Business Combinations.
- Amendments to IFRS9, IAS39, IFRS7, IFRS4 and IFRS16: Interest Rate Benchmark Reform.

The Code requires implementation from 1 April 2021 therefore there is no impact on the 2020/21 annual accounts.

Overall, these new or amended standards are not expected to have a significant impact on the Annual Accounts.

3. Income and expenditure statement

The table below provides a detailed breakdown of income and expenditure of the Forum during 2020/21:

2019/20 Net Exp. £		Note	2020/21 Net Expenditure £
Income			
(240)	Interest		(250)
(41,798)	Contributions from participating local authorities	4	(41,798)
(42,038)	Total income		(42,048)
Expenditure			
13,050	Employee costs		13,403
Administration costs:			
26,000	Subscriptions		26,000
1,258	Travel and operational costs		-
794	Miscellaneous		-
2,020	Audit fee	10	2,060
43,122	Total expenditure		41,463
1,084	(Surplus) or deficit for year		(585)
(42,519)	(Surplus) brought forward		(41,435)
(41,435)	Accumulated (surplus) or deficit		(42,020)

4. Local authority subscriptions

The majority of income received by WOSEF is derived from contributions received from the local authorities and other organisations who are members of the Forum.

A detailed breakdown of each member's contribution to the Forum in respect of 2020/21 and the previous year is shown in the table below:-

<i>Annual Subscription 2019/20 £</i>	Local Authority	Annual Subscription 2020/21 £
2,176	East Ayrshire Council	2,176
2,004	South Ayrshire Council	2,004
2,552	Renfrewshire Council	2,552
1,822	West Dunbartonshire Council	1,822
2,004	East Dunbartonshire Council	2,004
2,552	North Ayrshire Council	2,552
1,632	East Renfrewshire Council	1,632
10,880	Glasgow City Council	10,880
1,632	Argyll and Bute Council	1,632
5,440	South Lanarkshire Council	5,440
5,440	North Lanarkshire Council	5,440
1,632	Inverclyde Council	1,632
1,632	Strathclyde Partnership for Transport	1,632
400	Other contributions	400
41,798	Total	41,798

5. Employee benefits

The staff member of the Forum is a Glasgow City Council employee and the council is an admitted body of the Strathclyde Pension Fund.

In accordance with International Accounting Standard 19 (IAS 19) – Employee Benefits, the council is required to disclose certain information concerning assets, liabilities, income and expenditure, of the pension scheme. The Forum's staff pension costs are reflected in the figures disclosed in Glasgow City Council's financial statements.

The Code requires that employee benefits are recognised in the accounts when they are earned rather than when they are paid. As a result, there is a requirement to consider notional entitlements to annual leave earned but not taken as at 31 March. The employee working on the Forum's activities is contracted to Glasgow City Council and therefore any notional liability has been included within the accounts of Glasgow City Council who holds the contract of employment.

6. Short-term debtors

The net short-term debtors figure of £44,741 for 2020/21 is comprised of the following:-

31 March 2020 £	Short-term debtors	31 March 2021 £
42,855	Balance held by GCC on behalf of WOSEF	44,741
42,855	Total sundry debtors	44,741

7. Short-term creditors

The short-term creditors figure for 2020/21 of £2,721 (2019/20 £1,420) comprises the following:-

31 March 2020 £	Short-term creditors	31 March 2021 £
1,347	Accrued audit fees	2,060
73	Accrued travel expenses	-
-	Pay accrual	661
1,420	Total sundry creditors	2,721

In previous years the accrual for pay costs has been off-set against the balances of funds held by Glasgow City Council on WOSEF' behalf. This is inconsistent with the Code which requires balances to only be off-set under certain conditions which have not been met in this case. The resulting adjustment involves compensating amendments to both short-term creditors and the balances held by Glasgow City Council on behalf of WOSEF. Therefore this has no impact on the net assets position in the balance sheet or the value of reserves held.

8. Remuneration Report

West of Scotland European Forum is a Joint Committee comprised of several local authorities and other organisations. Given that Glasgow City Council (GCC) is the lead authority, the senior management are deemed to be from GCC. Details of remuneration paid to senior management at GCC is available in the remuneration report included within GCC's financial statements. The employee working on the project does not earn more than £50,000. No remuneration was paid to the members of the Forum.

9. Related Parties

Glasgow City Council is the administering body responsible for WOSEF. The related party transactions between WOSEF and Glasgow City Council are shown in the table below:

2019/20 Net Exp/(Inc) £	Debtor/(Creditor) at 31 March 2020 £	Related Party transactions and balances	2020/21 Exp £	2020/21 Inc £	Debtor/(Creditor) at 31 March 2021 £
		Related bodies			
(10,880)	42,855	Glasgow City Council	0	10,880	44,741

10. Auditor remuneration

WOSEF incurred fees of £2,060 (2019/20 £2,020) for the statutory inspection of the financial statements by Audit Scotland. Fees payable in respect of other services provided by the appointed auditor were £nil (2019/20 £nil).

11. Events after the balance sheet date

There were no material events between 31 March 2021 and the date of signing that require to be reflected in the Financial Statements.

Annual Governance Statement

Scope of responsibility

The West of Scotland European Forum Joint Committee is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for. Under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, the Forum also has a statutory duty to make arrangements to secure best value, which is to ensure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised, and to ensure public funds and assets are used economically, efficiently and effectively.

In discharging these responsibilities, elected members and senior officers must ensure proper arrangements for the governance of the Forum's affairs and facilitate the effective exercise of its functions, which includes the management of risk and stewardship of the resources at its disposal.

WOSEF's financial management arrangements complies with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit and the role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016) by virtue of the adoption by Glasgow City Council of a Local Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) Framework: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government.

The Code is regularly reviewed and evidences the Council's commitment to achieving good governance and demonstrates how it complies with recommended standards.

The Forum relies on the Council which has embedded a system of risk management and internal control. While providing reasonable assurance, these systems cannot, however, provide absolute assurance or certainty in entirely eliminating the risk of the Council failing to achieve its aims and objectives; incurring material errors; losses; fraud or breaches of laws and regulations.

The Joint Committee's Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Forum is directed and controlled. Through the framework it is accountable to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Forum to monitor the achievement of its objectives against its plans and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services and outcomes. The governance framework will be continually updated to reflect best practice, new legislative requirements and the expectations of stakeholders.

The Forum has responsibility for ensuring the continuing effectiveness of its governance framework and system of internal control. The main features of the Forum's governance arrangements are as follows:-

- A formal document outlining the Forum's objectives, membership, lead and support authority arrangements, budgetary processes and meeting frequency
- The Forum is supported by a Steering Group of officers from the member councils and other bodies
- Compliance with Glasgow City Council's Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations
- Regular meetings of WOSEF
- A budget setting process which includes the agreed local authority and other bodies contributions to the annual running costs of the organisation
- The regulation of employee matters through the Council's Code of Conduct for employees

Review of Effectiveness

The Council's governance arrangements, including changes made in response to Covid-19, operated across 2020/21 and were regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework. The governance framework is continually reviewed to reflect best practice, new legislative requirements and the expectations of stakeholders. The effectiveness of the framework, including the system of internal control, is considered at least annually and is informed by:

- (a) The work of the members of the Corporate Management Team, including statutory officers, who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment. Throughout 2020/21, arrangements continued to operate to ensure that officers were clear on their role and responsibilities and that officers were compliant with the CIPFA Statements on "The Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government" and "The Role of the Head of Internal Audit in Public Service Organisations 2019".
- (b) Oversight by the Director of Governance and Solicitor to the Council, who was the Council's Monitoring Officer for 2020/21. Following their retirement in April 2021, the role of Monitoring Officer is fulfilled by the Director of Legal and Administrative Services.
- (c) The Head of Audit and Inspection's annual report and the work of the Internal Audit section. The latest external quality review of the section was completed in April 2021 and reported to the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on [5 May 2021](#). This report concluded that the section conforms with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards 2017 (PSIAS). The Internal Audit section continues to hold BSi quality accreditation under ISO9001:2015 and Audit Scotland continue to use the work of the section in the execution of their annual audit plan. Following its

introduction in 2019/20, Internal Audit continue to present a register of all outstanding audit recommendations to the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.

- (d) Observations made by external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.
- (e) The completion of a self-assessment questionnaire by Service Directors and Managing Directors/Chief Executives of subsidiaries and relevant associates. This questionnaire is aligned to the principles contained in the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government, and requires assessments to be made of the extent to which arrangements within each Service/organisation comply with these principles. The responses to the questionnaires are confirmed on a sample basis by Internal Audit, as part of a rolling programme of corporate governance reviews.
- (f) The completion of signed statements of internal control by all Service Directors and the Managing Directors/Chief Executives of subsidiaries and relevant associates. Such statements were received for 2020/21, declaring that “There are, in my opinion, no significant matters that require to be raised in this Certificate, which is provided to support Glasgow City Council's Statement of Internal Control for the financial year 2020/21, as it is my opinion that the procedures which have been designed to ensure proper governance and financial control are operating adequately”.
- (g) The exercising, by the two Scrutiny Committees, of respective remits including scrutiny of the performance of Services, subsidiaries and relevant associates, including financial management, statutory and other performance, and outcomes set through the GCPP Community Plan, which are relevant to partnership working and monitoring internal financial control, corporate risk management and corporate governance, and receiving and considering summaries of internal and external audit reports. In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, all Committees are required to undertake an annual evaluation of effectiveness. An independent assessment is required in year three of the Council and arrangements are progressing for these reviews to be completed by senior officers independent of the Committee to be reviewed.

Senior officers have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by Internal and External Audit and plans to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the systems are in place.

Governance Developments and Future Activity

Following publication of a [Best Value Assurance Report](#) on the Council by Audit Scotland, on behalf of the Accounts Commission, the Council approved its [BVAR Action Plan](#) in September 2018. Updates on the BVAR Action Plan were presented to Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee

on [13 March 2019](#) and [11 September 2019](#). The final update was presented on [11 March 2020](#) and noted that the majority of the specific agreed actions were complete with those actions forming part of longer-term ongoing plans, for example, homelessness and Thriving Places, continuing to progress, with oversight by, and reports to, existing governance structures, including the Corporate Management Team and City Administration Committee.

Since presentation of an interim report on governance and accountability arrangements and the associated action plan to Full Council on [13 September 2018](#), both were remitted to the Short Life Working Group who, in 2019/20, agreed the updated action plan. A follow up report on progress against all actions was presented to the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on [10 February 2021](#) and further progress reports will be provided.

The following activity is planned, in relation to the governance framework, in 2021/22:

- Progression of the Renewal Programme to drive service reform and support economic and social recovery, including the new Community Action Plan.
- Continued implementation of the recommendations arising from the review of governance and accountability arrangements and the Best Value Assurance Report.
- Relaunch of the Corporate Asset Management Framework.
- Continuation of the Council Family Review.
- Review of the Corporate Risk Management and Business Continuity Policies and Frameworks.
- Continuation of the review of the ALEO Governance Framework.
- Progressing implementation of a new pay and grading scheme.

Update on significant governance issues previously reported

Internal Audit has continued to find elements of non-compliance with expected Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity controls. In 2019/20, the Council defined its ICT business continuity (BC) requirements and an overarching service restoration plan was put in place but there remains an ongoing disconnect between BC plan assumptions for ICT recovery times, and the provisions for Disaster Recovery (DR) in DR plans. Whilst it is recognised that the inherent resilience of the corporate network and key applications has been enhanced in recent years, gaps continue to be identified between BC plan requirements and application level DR plans. There is also still inadequate formal DR plan testing taking place.

Significant Governance Issues

Where the audit opinion arising from an audit states that the control environment has been assessed as unsatisfactory the concerns highlighted are reported here and in the Annual Governance Statement. During 2020/21 there were no unsatisfactory opinions issued relating to the Council's assurance.

Other significant Internal Audit work

Internal Audit carried out two investigations one concerning potential money laundering and one of fraud. Both investigations did not relate to any areas which would affect the Forum.

The Internal Audit Plan approved by the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee (FASC) on [11 March 2020](#) was materially changed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Amendments to the Plan were reported to FASC on [30 September 2020](#) and all required fieldwork has been completed.

Internal Audit Opinion

The Council has a system of internal control designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. Internal controls cannot eliminate the risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

Based on the audit work undertaken, the assurances provided by Service Directors and Managing Directors/Chief Executives of subsidiaries and relevant associates, and excluding the significant issues noted above, it is the Head of Audit and Inspection's opinion that reasonable assurance can be placed upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance and control environment which operated during 2020/21 in the council and its subsidiaries and relevant associates.

Certification

It is our opinion that reasonable assurance can be placed upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of governance and internal control that operate in the West of Scotland European Forum and that the arrangements in place for the whole of 2020/21, both business as usual governance arrangements and those in place in response to Covid-19, were fit for purpose.

We will continue to review and enhance, as necessary, our governance arrangements.

Councillor Tony Buchanan
Chair of West of Scotland European Forum

Martin Booth BA CPFA MBA
Executive Director of Finance



Independent auditor's report to the members of West of Scotland European Forum and the Accounts Commission

Reporting on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements in the annual accounts of West of Scotland European Forum for the year ended 31 March 2021 under Part VII of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The financial statements comprise the Movement in Reserves Statement, Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, Balance Sheet and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs) as adopted by the European Union, and as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 (the 2020/21 Code).

In my opinion the accompanying financial statements:

- give a true and fair view in accordance with applicable law and the 2020/21 Code of the state of affairs of the body as at 31 March 2021 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with IFRSs as adopted by the European Union, as interpreted and adapted by the 2020/21 Code; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014, and the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)), as required by the Code of Audit Practice approved by the Accounts Commission for Scotland. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report. I was appointed under arrangements approved by the Accounts Commission on 10 April 2017. The period of total uninterrupted appointment is five years. I am independent of the body in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. Non-audit services prohibited by the Ethical

Standard were not provided. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern basis of accounting

I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the body's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Risks of material misstatement

I report in a separate Annual Audit Report, available from the [Audit Scotland website](#), the most significant assessed risks of material misstatement that I identified and my judgements thereon.

Responsibilities of the Executive Director of Finance and West of Scotland European Forum Joint Committee for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Responsibilities, the Executive Director of Finance is responsible for the preparation of financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with the financial reporting framework, and for such internal control as the Executive Director of Finance determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Executive Director of Finance is responsible for assessing the West of Scotland European Forum's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless deemed inappropriate.

The West of Scotland European Forum Joint Committee is responsible for overseeing the financial reporting process.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities outlined above to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

Procedures include:

- obtaining an understanding of the applicable legal and regulatory framework and how the body is complying with that framework;
- identifying which laws and regulations are significant in the context of the West of Scotland European Forum;
- assessing the susceptibility of the financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur; and
- considering whether the audit team collectively has the appropriate competence and capabilities to identify or recognise non-compliance with laws and regulations.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the body's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

Irregularities that result from fraud are inherently more difficult to detect than irregularities that result from error as fraud may involve collusion, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. The capability of the audit to detect fraud and other irregularities depends on factors such as the skilfulness of the perpetrator, the frequency and extent of manipulation, the degree of collusion involved, the relative size of individual amounts manipulated, and the seniority of those individuals involved.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor's report.

Reporting on other requirements

Statutory other information

The Executive Director of Finance is responsible for the statutory other information in the annual accounts. The statutory other information comprises the Management Commentary, Annual Governance Statement and Statement of Responsibilities.

My responsibility is to read all the statutory other information and, in doing so, consider whether the statutory other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a

material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this statutory other information, I am required to report that fact. I have nothing to report in this regard.

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the statutory other information and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon except on the Management Commentary and Annual Governance Statement to the extent explicitly stated in the following opinions prescribed by the Accounts Commission.

Opinions prescribed by the Accounts Commission on Management Commentary and Annual Governance Statement

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Management Commentary for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and that report has been prepared in accordance with statutory guidance issued under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003; and
- the information given in the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and that report has been prepared in accordance with the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016).

Matters on which I am required to report by exception

I am required by the Accounts Commission to report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit.

I have nothing to report in respect of these matters.

Conclusions on wider scope responsibilities

In addition to my responsibilities for the annual accounts, my conclusions on the wider scope responsibilities specified in the Code of Audit Practice, including those in respect of the Best Value, are set out in my Annual Audit Report.

Use of my report

This report is made solely to the parties to whom it is addressed in accordance with Part VII of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and for no other purpose. In accordance with paragraph 120 of the Code of Audit Practice, I do not undertake to have responsibilities to members or officers, in their individual capacities, or to third parties.

Stephen O'Hagan CPFA

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