

Title of report	Audit and Assurance Committee report
Public/Confidential	Public
Summary/purpose of report	To make recommendations from the Audit and Assurance Committee
Recommendations	<p>The Audit and Assurance Committee recommends</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the Council accepts that the Assurance report presents a true and fair view of the SSSC's performance towards achievement of strategic objectives, financial management and risk identification and management. In particular that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. operational performance as measured by strategic key performance indicators give confidence that the SSSC was delivering as forecasted to meet its strategic objectives as agreed with the Sponsor Department b. financial performance was consistent with forecasted spend and presents no cause for concern relating to year-end outturn of approved budget c. operational delivery and financial expenditure were consistent. 2. the Council takes sufficient assurances that the SSSCs corporate control arrangements represent good practice in the areas reported 3. the Council notes that there were no internal audit reports due for this quarter.
Author	Alan Baird Chair Audit and Assurance Committee
Responsible Officer	Lorraine Gray, Chief Executive

Link to Strategic Plan	<p>The information in this report links to:</p> <p>Outcome 1: People who use services are protected by ensuring the regulated workforce is fit to practise.</p> <p>Outcome 2: The SSSC supports and enhances the development of the registered workforce to deliver high standards of practice and drive improvement.</p> <p>Outcome 3: Our workforce planning activities support employers, commissioners and policy makers to deliver a sustainable, integrated and innovative workforce.</p> <p>Outcome 4: The social work, social care and early years workforce is recognised as professional and regulated and valued for the difference it makes to people’s lives.</p>
Link to Risk Register	<p>Risk 3: We fail to meet corporate governance, external scrutiny and legal obligations.</p>
Impact assessments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An Equalities Impact Assessment was not required. 2. A Data Protection Impact Assessment was not required. 3. A Sustainability Impact Assessment was not required.
Documents attached	<p>Appendix 1: Assurance report as at June 2021 including the Strategic Risk Register</p> <p>Appendix 2: Draft minutes of the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting of 03 August 2021</p> <p>Confidential Appendix 3: Draft Minutes of the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting of 03 August 2021 at item 17 of the Agenda.</p>
Background papers	<p>None</p>

INTRODUCTION

1. As set out in the Executive Framework Document and Scheme of Delegation, accountability for strategic oversight remains with the SSSC Council and the responsibility for oversight and scrutiny of achievement of operational key performance indicators, monitoring of Financial Performance and Strategic Risk Management is delegated from the SSSC Council to the Audit and Assurance Committee.
2. This report records the recommendation of the Audit and Assurance Committee to SSSC Council following the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting of 3 August 2021.

ASSURANCE REPORT

3. The Audit and Assurance Committee of 3 August 2021 reviewed the assurance report relating to the activities of the SSSC. Appendix 1 is a copy of the assurance report that was brought to the Committee. Appendix 2 is the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting to satisfy Council that the Committee has discharged its responsibilities. The Committee highlights the following areas:
4. Committee noted Executive Management Team had made changes to assessment of risks 1, 3 and 7.
5. Committee was updated on the changes to the budget forecast for 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24. Dilapidation fees relative to the possible expiry of the lease of the headquarters building would adversely affect the budget and a number of cost saving measures, such as reconsideration of filling non urgent posts were put in place. It was noted that there was ongoing dialogue with Scottish Government. Lynn Murray has provided an update.
6. Post meeting update:
Lynn Murray agreed to update Council on the accounting treatment of dilapidation costs following advice from external auditors. Surveyors prepared a report estimating the cost of dilapidations at the end of the lease in April 2023. As the report was prepared during 2020/21 the auditors asked SSSC to create a provision for £524,000, which will reduce the balance on the general reserve. Payment will still be expected at the end of the lease unless otherwise agreed in the lease negotiations, assuming we remain in Compass House and Quadrant House.
7. Maree Allison reported on the external matters which were impeding the SSSCs ability to meet its indicator regarding the period of time between a worker obtaining work in the sector and becoming registered with the SSSC. Scottish Government was continuing to allow workers 12 months to register following employment in the sector. This would also delay the proposed 'get registered' campaign. This indicator will be reviewed.

8. The Regulation directorate was looking at ways to continue to encourage the workforce to engage with the Fitness to Practise process, although there had been improvement in these figures.
9. Development and Innovation directorate has met its target relating to percentage of workforce who had gained their qualifications. Evidence continued to be ingathered to assist in targeting learning resources and also to provide further information to be included in future reports. The Workforce Skills report will be included with the Chief Executives report to this Council meeting.
10. Noted that work had begun on the SSSC response to the National Care Service consultation and a Members' discussion session and Special Council meeting will take place in order to formulate and approve the SSSC's response.
11. Noted from HR metrics that staff absences were down in this reporting period as well as staff turnover.
12. The next staff survey would provide feedback from staff on working from home.

BUDGET UPDATE

13. As noted in the attached assurance report, adjustments have been made to current and future years budgets, the dilapidation costs relating to the headquarters building lease having impacted as a significant cost to the organisation.
14. A review of fees is proposed and this will include consultation with the workforce. There has been only one increase in fees, in 2017, but it was agreed then to review the position in 2018/19. The review is taking place now, having been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

FRAUD AND CORRUPTION ASSURANCE REPORT

15. There were no incidences of fraud or corruption detected during the quarter 1 April to 30 June 2021.

HORIZON SCANNING

16. Committee was alerted to three matters, these being an announcement by Scottish Government to launch the Social Covenant Steering Group, Audit Scotland's report on Fraud and regulatory bodies and Audit Scotland's blog on cyber-crime. Links will be shared with Council Members.

PRIVATE ITEM

17. The Committee considered a private report which referred to an ongoing employment tribunal matter involving the Nursing and Midwifery Council. There is no action required of Council at this time.

CONSULTATION

18. This report refers to internal matters of governance, therefore no consultation has been carried out in the writing of this report.

RISKS

19. This report relates to matters discussed at the Audit and Assurance Committee earlier in the cycle and any risks were reported direct to the Committee.

IMPLICATIONS

Resourcing

20. There are no specific resource implications arising from this report.

Compliance

21. There are no specific compliance implications arising from this report. The Council must ensure that its governance processes and documents are fit for purpose and accurately reflect the practices in place.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Equalities

22. An Equalities Impact Assessment was not required. This report forms the recommendations from the Audit and Assurance Committee and relates to matters of internal governance which have no direct impact on people using social services and carers. However, the fact that the SSSC is well governed and transparent provides confidence in our work.

CONCLUSION

23. The Audit and Assurance Committee is assured that it was presented with a fair view of the current operational performance, financial performance and risks facing the organisation.