Item 5

WEST OF SCOTLAND ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

For the Year Ended 31 March 2026

WEST OF SCOTLAND ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE

Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 March 2026

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Management Commentary

- The West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) was set up in 1997 as a Joint Committee and currently has 12 Local Authority members. Glasgow City Council is the lead authority, responsible for the management and administration of the service.
- WoSAS also provides curatorial archaeological advice service to the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority, as well as carrying out specific archaeological advice contract work for a number of other public sector clients including Transport Scotland and the Forestry Commission and has previously received grant aid from the former Historic Scotland for specific projects.
- The primary purpose of the Archaeology Service is to provide planning related archaeological advice to its member councils to allow them to discharge their duties in respect of Scottish Government planning guidance for the treatment of archaeological remains in the planning process. The service plays a key role in identifying for its member councils and other clients any potential archaeological issues arising from development and land-use changes. For this purpose, the service curates a detailed Historic Environment Record which contains the most up to date information on archaeological matters within the services area of operation.
- The Service covers a large, geographically diverse region and uses the Historic Environment Record (HER) as the key tool for the service in its own work. Selected data from the record is made available online to the public through both a Geographical Information System (GIS) based interface and a searchable database. The system provides spatial information to the Local Government Improvement Service on behalf of its members so they can continue to comply with the statutory requirements of the INSPIRE (Scotland) Regulations 2009 and takes direct enquiries from the public. Additionally, any archaeological fieldwork undertaken by private sector developers is overseen by the service to ensure that the implementation of archaeological conditions attached to planning consent adheres to the relevant regulations.
- During the report period, the service dealt with 1,828 new casework items, approximately 3.5% fewer than in the previous reporting year. The new casework items comprised consultation on 735 planning applications, monitoring 615 Weekly Lists of Planning Applications, and 478 other casework items. Achievements against the agreed Performance Indicators for each of these categories of work for the reporting period to 31st March 2026 are set out below.

Casework Type	Performance Indicator (As set out in WoSAS Service Level Agreement)	Performance Standard	Performance 2024-25	Performance 2025-26	Direction of Travel
Planning Application Consultations	Applications to be actioned within 21 calendar days of receipt.	80%	89.6%	89.3%	↓
Monitoring Weekly Lists	Lists to be monitored and actioned within 14 calendar days of receipt.	90%	97.4%	99.0%	↑
Other Work Areas	Casework to be actioned within 21 calendar days of receipt.	80%	94.4%	91.2%	↓

- Compared to the last reporting period, the number of planning applications which required detailed assessment for potential archaeological issues increased slightly to stabilise after a two year fall. However, the number of requests for assistance or consultation responses in the five categories of casework aggregated into "Other Work Areas", which had increased markedly in the last reporting period, returned to the level seen in previous years.

- Alterations to the host authority's timetable for the implementation of its new staff salary structure, and of the continuing phased introduction of the provisions of the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). In all of this, the Service will have to adapt and accommodate any changes in the way in which our work is carried out in response to the requirements of the member Councils.

- In the coming period, throughout any transition in working practices in the planning system, the service will continue to monitor, identify, and handle archaeological issues arising through the planning process on behalf of its member Councils and clients and will continue to give advice to the public and to make Historic Environment Record information available to them through the Service website at www.wosas.net, and through the Improvement Service's Spatial Hub and on the Pastmap portal in partnership with Historic Environment Scotland.

Financial Results

- In 2016, the Joint Committee implemented a Reserves Policy in line with recommendations from Audit Scotland. It was agreed that the adopted policy should be subject to an annual review. The purpose of the policy and the associated reviews is to build and maintain a sufficient and prudent level of financial reserves. Reviews are planned to be undertaken annually by the Service Manager, in conjunction with an Account Manager from Glasgow City Council, and are based on several factors, including projections of future income/expenditure, an analysis of key risks (including financial risks), the level of financial liabilities and the economic outlook. The most recent review, presented to the joint committee in August 2024, recommended a reserve level of £103,000.

- The balance of usable reserves at 1 April 2025 was £169,650. In 2025/26 total expenditure was £191,816 (2024/25 £153,941) and total income was £175,362 (2024/25 £174,671) resulting in a deficit for the year of £16,454 compared to a £14,028 budgeted deficit. The difference between the 2025/26 budgeted deficit and the 2025/26 actual year-end deficit is due to external fee income lower than anticipated partially offset by reduced employee costs following a delay in recruitment. This results in the balance of usable reserves at 31 March 2026 of £153,196. This represents 149% of the £103,000 reserve level recommended by the reserve policy review. The reserve policy is due to be reviewed and will be considered at the next Committee meeting.

- The member authority contributions continue to be frozen which is facilitated by the level of reserves held by the service. The current charging policy for the service was developed through analysis of costs and usage by each member authority. This highlighted fixed and variable costs for different types of work and together with the usage information produced a contribution rate for each authority. Usage continues to be monitored to ensure the contributions remain relevant.

Councillor Richard Bell Leader of the Administration	Susanne Millar Chief Executive	Robert Emmott BSc (Hons) CPFA Executive Director of Financial Services
xx September 2026	xx September 2026	xx September 2026

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 its financial affairs and to ensure that the proper officer of the council has responsibility for the administration of those affairs (section 95 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973). In this council, that officer is the Executive Director of Financial Services.

- Manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets.

- Ensure the Annual Accounts are prepared in accordance with legislation (the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014 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

- Approve the Annual Accounts for signature.

These Annual Accounts were approved for Signature by the Services at its meeting on the 18th September 2026.

Councillor Richard Bell
Leader of the Administration
xx September 2026

2. The Executive Director of Financial Services Responsibilities

The Executive Director of Financial Services is responsible for the preparation of the joint committee'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 the Annual Accounts, the Executive Director of Financial Services has:

- Selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently,
- Made judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis,
- Complied with legislation; and
- Complied with the Code (in so far as it is compatible with legislation).

The Executive Director of Financial Services 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 financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of West of Scotland Archaeology Service as at 31 March 2026 and the transactions for the year then ended.

Robert Emmott BSc (Hons) CPFA
Executive Director of Financial Services
xx September 2026

Movement in Reserves Statement for the Year ended 31 March 2026

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

The balance on the fund stands at £153,196 as at 31 March 2026, a decrease of £16,454 from last year, due to the deficit on the provision of services in the year.

	Total Reserves £
Balance at 1 April 2024	**148,920**
Movement in reserves during 2024/25:	
Surplus or (Deficit) on the Provision of Services	20,730
Other Comprehensive Income and (Expenditure)	0
Increase or (Decrease) in the year	**20,730**
Balance at 31 March 2025	**169,650**
Movement in reserves during 2025/26:	
Surplus or (Deficit) on the Provision of Services	**(16,454)**
Other Comprehensive Income and (Expenditure)	0
Increase or (Decrease) in the year	**(16,454)**
Balance at 31 March 2026	**153,196**

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the Year ended 31 March 2026

2024/25 Net Exp. £		Note	2025/26 Net Expenditure £
153,941	Gross expenditure	3	191,816
(168,457)	Gross income	3	(170,058)
(14,516)	**Cost of Services**		**21,758**
(6,214)	Interest and investment income	7	(5,304)
(6,214)	**Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure**		**(5,304)**
(20,730)	**(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services**		**16,454**
0	**Other Comprehensive (Income) and Expenditure**		**0**
(20,730)	**Total Comprehensive (Income) and Expenditure**		**16,454**

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

Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31 March 2026

31 March 25 £	Revenue Activities	31 March 26 £
(20,730)	(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services	16,454
	Adjustments for non-cash items:	
27,541	Increase/(decrease) in debtors	(4,406)
(6,811)	(Increase)/decrease in creditors	(12,048)
0	**Net cash (inflow)/outflow from activities**	**0**
0	**Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period**	**0**
0	**Cash and cash equivalents and the end of the reporting period**	**0**

Cash Flow Statement – details the changes in cash and cash equivalents of WOSAS.

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2026

31 March 25 £		Note	31 March 26 £
178,959	Net short-term debtors	**8**	174,553
178,959	**Current Assets**		**174,553**
(9,309)	Short-term creditors	**9**	(21,357)
(9,309)	**Current Liabilities**		**(21,357)**
169,650	**Net Assets / (Liabilities)**		**153,196**
169,650	Usable Reserves		153,196
0	Unusable Reserves		0
169,650	**Total Reserves**		**153,196**

Balance Sheet – represents the value of the assets and liabilities of WOSAS as at 31 March 2026. The net assets (assets less liabilities) are matched by the total Usable and Unusable Reserves.

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The unaudited accounts were issued on 30 June 2026 and the audited accounts were authorised for publication on xx September 2026

Robert Emmott BSc (Hons) CPFA
Executive Director of Financial Services
xx September 2026

Notes to the Financial Statements

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

1. Statement of accounting policies

The Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2026 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 2025/26 (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 Service.

The accounting concepts of materiality, accruals, primacy of legislative requirements and going concern 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 Service will not significantly curtail the scale of its operation. Wherever accounting principles and legislative requirements are in conflict, the latter shall apply.

These accounts are prepared on a going concern basis. In accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2025/26, the West of Scotland Archeology Service Joint Committee is required to prepare its Financial Statements on a going concern basis unless informed by the relevant national body of the intention of dissolution without transfer of services or function to another entity. The Annual Accounts are prepared on the assumption that the West of Scotland Archeology Service Joint Committee will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

Based on the Service Agreement, the cost of running the West of Scotland Archeology Service Joint Committee is the main item of expenditure. Salary costs and any administrative expenses incurred by the West of Scotland Archeology Service Joint Committee are funded by the member authorities and fees to other service users. Funding is provided on an annual basis, and £241,405 expenditure budget has been agreed with the member authorities for 2026/27. On this basis the West of Scotland Archeology Service Joint Committee considers the going concern basis to be appropriate for the period at least 12 months from the date of the approval of these financial statements, up until September 2028.

Income

Income includes all sums due in respect of subscriptions from member authorities and other organisations', fees and charges, and interest earned on fund balances for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Income includes all sums owed to the joint committee for the year of account, regardless of when cash payments are received. Specifically:

- Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when the joint committee transfers the significant risks and rewards of ownership to the purchaser, provided it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Joint Committee.
- Revenue from the provision of services is recognised when the joint committee can reliably measure the percentage of completion of the transaction, and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Joint Committee.
- When revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor for the relevant amount will be recorded in the Balance Sheet.
- When it is probable that debts will remain unsettled, an impairment loss is recognised for bad and doubtful debtors within the Cost of Services.

The short-term debtors figure for 2025/26 included debtors impairments of £nil (2024/25 - £500).

Short-term debtors have been recognised in the accounts at the transaction price as it has been determined that they do not contain a significant financing component as defined by IFRS 9 – Financial Instruments.

Supplies of goods and services

Suppliers' invoices received up to 31 March 2026 are included, together with the specific accrual of invoices received after that date for material amounts, provided the goods or services were received in 2025/26.

Short-term creditors have been recognised in the accounts at the transaction price as it has been determined that they do not contain a significant financing component as defined by IFRS 9 – Financial Instruments.

Salaries

Salaries earned to 31 March 2026 are included in the accounts for 2025/26 irrespective of when the actual payments were made.

Material items

When items of income and expenditure are material, their nature and amount is disclosed separately, either on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement or in the notes to the accounts, depending on how significant the items are to the understanding of the service's financial performance.

Events after the balance sheet date

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.

Prior period adjustments, changes in accounting policies and estimates

Prior period adjustments may arise as a result of a change in accounting policy or to correct a material error. Changes in accounting policy are only made when required by proper accounting practice or to provide more reliable or relevant information on the joint committee's financial position. Where a change is made, it is applied retrospectively by adjusting opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period, as if the new policy had always been applied. Changes in accounting estimation techniques are applied in the current and future years and do not give rise to a prior period adjustment.

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 2025/26 Code:

- Amendments to FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard (Amendments to Heritage Assets)
- Amendments to the Classification and Measurement of Financial Instruments (Amendments to IFRS 9 and IFRS 7)
- Annual improvements to IFRS accounting standards – Volume 11
- Contracts Referencing Nature-dependent Electricity (Amendments to IFRS 9 and IFRS 7

The Code requires implementation from 1 April 2026 therefore there is no impact on the 2025/26 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 Service during 2025/26.

2024/25 Net Exp. £		Note	2025/26 Net Exp. £
	Income		
(138,090)	Contributions from participating local authorities	**4**	(138,090)
(30,367)	Fees and charges	**6**	(31,968)
(6,214)	Interest on balances	**7**	(5,304)
(174,671)	**Total income**		**(175,362)**
	Expenditure		
140,772	Employee costs	**5**	167,099
200	Fees and subscriptions		200
3,000	IT maintenance and equipment	**13**	3,160
0	Purchase of services		0
7,390	Rents	**11**	7,390
2,579	Audit fee	**12**	13,967
153,941	**Total expenditure**		**191,816**
(20,730)	(Surplus) or deficit for year		16,454
(148,920)	(Surplus) brought forward		(169,650)
(169,650)	**Accumulated (surplus) or deficit**		**(153,196)**

4. Local authority subscriptions

The majority of income received by WOSAS is derived from contributions received from the local authorities who are members of the Service.

A detailed breakdown of each member's contribution to the Service is shown in the table below:

Annual Subscription 2024/25 £	Local Authority	Annual Subscription 2025/26 £
(22,971)	Argyll and Bute Council	(22,971)
(8,647)	Glasgow City Council	(8,647)
(12,691)	East Ayrshire Council	(12,691)
(7,619)	East Renfrewshire Council	(7,619)
(12,691)	North Ayrshire Council	(12,691)
(12,691)	Renfrewshire Council	(12,691)
(12,691)	South Ayrshire Council	(12,691)
(17,784)	South Lanarkshire Council	(17,784)
(7,619)	West Dunbartonshire Council	(7,619)
(12,691)	West Lothian Council	(12,691)
(9,995)	East Dunbartonshire Council	(9,995)
(138,090)	**Total**	**(138,090)**

Note: - The contribution received from Glasgow City Council is net of an agreed lead authority administrative charge of £5,000.

5. Employee benefits

The staff members of the Service are Glasgow City Council employees, 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 Service'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 employees working on the Service's activities are 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. Fees and Charges

The £31,968 total for fees and charges includes £16,667 for an archeological advice service provided to Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority.

7. Interest

The Interest rate applied is 3.36% (2024/25 3.96%) and is calculated on an annual basis at 31 March using an average of the Base Rate interest over the year, the rate Glasgow City Council have paid to borrow monies throughout the year and the rate Glasgow City Council have received when lending throughout the year.

8. Short-term debtors

The net short-term debtors figure for 2025/26 of £174,553 (2024/25 £178,959) comprises the following:

31 March 2025 £	Short-term debtors	31 March 2026 £
9,374	Balance held by Glasgow City Council on behalf of WOSAS	15,482
	Outstanding payments from: -	
1,761	Pay accrual	2,142
22,971	Argyll & Bute Council	22,971
12,691	East Ayrshire Council	12,691
12,691	North Ayrshire Council	12,691
12,691	South Ayrshire Council	12,691
12,691	Renfrewshire Council	12,691
12,691	West Lothian Council	12,691
19,990	East Dunbartonshire Council	9,995
17,784	South Lanarkshire Council	17,784
7,619	West Dunbartonshire Council	7,619
15,238	East Renfrewshire Council	15,238
16,667	Loch Lomond and the Trossachs	16,667
4,100	Other outstanding payments	3,200
178,959	**Total sundry debtors**	**174,553**

9. Short-term creditors

The short-term creditors figure for 2025/26 of £21,357 (2024/25 £9,309) comprises the following:

31 March 2025 £	Short-term creditors	31 March 2026 £
1,719	Accrued audit fees	13,967
200	Subscription	0
7,390	Rent	7,390
9,309	**Total sundry creditors**	**21,357**

10. Remuneration Report

The prior year accounts have been restated to take account of updates required for the Remuneration disclosure to reflect key management personnel remuneration and the number of employees receiving more than £50,000 remuneration during the year.

WOSAS does not directly employ any members of staff or key management personnel, with all services being provided by staff of the Member Authorities. A remuneration disclosure in respect of elected members and chief officers of the Councils, including those with authority and responsibility for WOSAS, are included in the Annual Accounts of each of the Member Authorities.

The number of other employees receiving more than £50,000 remuneration for the year are also included in similar Glasgow City Council disclosures as follows:

2024-25 Number of Employees	Senior Employee/Full Time Equivalent	2025-26 Number of Employees
0	£50,000 - £54,999	1
1	£55,000 - £59,999	1
1	**Total employees**	**2**

11. Related Parties

Related parties are organisations that the joint committee can control or who can control or influence the joint committee. WOSAS is a joint committee comprised of eleven member authorities, with Glasgow City Council holding the role of lead authority.

Related party transactions during the year and balances at 31 March 2026 are shown in the table below:

2024/25 Net Exp/(Inc) £	*Debtor/(Creditor) at 31 March 2025 £*	**Related Party transactions and balances**	**2025/26 Exp £**	**2025/26 Inc £**	**Debtor/(Creditor) at 31 March 2026 £**
		Related bodies			
(22,971)	22,971	Argyll & Bute Council	0	(22,971)	22,971
1,743	1,984	Glasgow City Council	10,390	(8,647)	8,092
(12,691)	12,691	East Ayrshire Council	0	(12,691)	12,691
(9,995)	19,990	East Dunbartonshire Council	0	(9,995)	9,995
(7,619)	15,238	East Renfrewshire Council	0	(7,619)	15,238
(12,691)	12,691	North Ayrshire Council	0	(12,691)	12,691
(12,691)	12,691	Renfrewshire Council	0	(12,691)	12,691
(12,691)	12,691	South Ayrshire Council	0	(12,691)	12,691
(17,784)	17,784	South Lanarkshire Council	0	(17,784)	17,784
(7,619)	7,619	West Dunbartonshire	0	(7,619)	7,619
(12,691)	12,691	West Lothian Council	0	(12,691)	12,691
(127,700)	**149,041**	**Totals**	**10,390**	**(138,090)**	**145,154**

12. Auditor remuneration

WOSAS incurred fees of £2,690 (2024/25 £2,579), for the statutory inspection of the financial statements by EY, with additional fees due of £11,277 for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 audits. Fees payable in respect of other services provided by the appointed auditor were £nil (2024/25 £nil).

13. IT maintenance and equipment

IT provision is through a service level agreement between the Service and Glasgow City Council valued at £3,000 for 2025/26 (2024/25 £3,000). IT equipment purchases were also incurred at £160 (2024/25 £nil).

14. Events after the balance sheet date

There were no material events between 31 March 2026 and the date of signing that require to be reflected in the Financial Statements.

Annual Governance Statement

1. Scope of responsibility

The West of Scotland Archaeology Service 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 Joint Committee 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 Service's affairs and facilitate the effective exercise of its functions, which includes the management of risk and stewardship of the resources at its disposal.

WOSAS'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 Glasgow City Council's commitment to achieving good governance and demonstrates how it complies with recommended standards.

The Joint Committee relies on Glasgow City 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 Joint Committee failing to achieve its aims and objectives; incurring material errors; losses; fraud or breaches of laws and regulations.

2. The Joint Committee's Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the culture, values, systems, and processes by which the council is directed and controlled. It describes the way the council is accountable to communities. It enables the council to monitor the achievement of its commitments and consider whether these have led to the delivery of appropriate and cost-effective services.

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

- A Minute of Agreement between the member councils of WOSAS
- The Joint Committee of councillors from the member authorities is supported by a Steering Group of officers from the authorities' planning services.
- Clearly defined Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations
- Public performance reporting through the Annual Report
- Regular meetings of the WOSAS Officer Steering Group and the Joint Committee
- 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

3. Review of effectiveness

Glasgow City Council's governance arrangements set out above operated across 2025/26 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 latest Glasgow City Council Annual Governance Statement can be viewed at GCC 2025-26 Pre-Audit Accounts.

The CIPFA Financial Management Code provides guidance for good and sustainable financial management in local authorities. By complying with the principles and standards within the code authorities will be able to demonstrate their financial sustainability. Glasgow City Council management undertook a self-assessment against the Financial Management Code 2025/26, which confirmed overall compliance with the Code's requirements.

4. Update on significant governance issues previously reported

ICT Service and Security

The 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement included the unsatisfactory audit opinion relating to ICT security and service delivered via Glasgow City Council's Managed Service provider. Since then, considerable work has been undertaken to deliver improvements to the council's security environment, including technical, governance, reporting and risk management aspects and whilst a number of higher risk areas are now mostly mitigated, there are other areas where remediation is still ongoing. Therefore the Council Family remained exposed to risk in this area during 2025/26. Through the Road to Multi-Source Strategy (R2MS), management continue to work with the council's Managed Services Provider (MSSP) and individual Managed Service Providers (MSPs) to mitigate the risks in this complex and ever-changing area, as much as possible during 2026/27.

Prior Year Audit Recommendations:

In previous years, WoSAS received several external audit recommendations highlighting the requirement to update the key strategic documents which underpin the governance of the Joint Committee.

Such documents include the Minute of Agreement, Business Plan, Service Level Agreements, and the ICT Service Level Agreement. It was also highlighted that some of the information on the WoSAS website had not been updated in several years.

At 31st March 2026, WoSAS had yet to make significant progress in the implementation of these recommendations. One factor that has impacted progress is the ongoing review of Glasgow City Council's pay and grading system, which is likely to have a significant impact on the overall cost of service delivery by WoSAS. Work is ongoing to ensure that revised strategic documents can be developed as soon as the revised pay scales have been formally implemented by the Council.

5. Significant Governance Issues

Cyber Incident

In June 2025, the council was impacted by a cyber incident. This was an opportunistic attack on a third-party supplier, rather than on the council itself. With access gained through the supplier's network, rather than via any council system or user. The isolation of the affected servers meant that a number of the council's web based services were affected for a period to September 2025. An accredited cyber incident responder was appointed to undertake forensic investigations into the incident and advise on remediation and root cause. And an internal audit review of the lessons learned has been completed and reported to the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 20 May 2026.

The council dealt with the incident in a managed and appropriate manner with lessons identified to be addressed going forward, and a cyber incident response planning exercise was undertaken on 27 May 2026.

6. 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, 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 2025/26 in the council.

8. Certification

It is our opinion that reasonable assurance can be placed upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of governance that operate in the West of Scotland Archaeology Service. We consider the governance and internal control environment operating during 2025/26 to provide reasonable and objective assurance that any significant risks impacting on the West of Scotland Archaeology Service's ability to achieve its objectives will be identified and actions taken to avoid or mitigate the impact.

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

Councillor Richard Bell
Leader of the Administration
xx September 2026

Susanne Millar
Chief Executive
xx September 2026

Independent auditor’s report to the members of West of Scotland Archaeology Service Joint Committee and the Accounts Commission

Reporting on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion on financial statements

We certify that we have audited the financial statements in the annual accounts of the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (the Joint Committee) for the year ended 31 March 2026 under Part VII of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The financial statements comprise the Movement in Reserves Statement, Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, Cash Flow Statement, Balance Sheet and notes to the financial statements, including material accounting policy information. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards, as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2025/26 (the 2025/26 Code).

In our opinion the accompanying financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Joint Committee as at 31 March 2026 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;

- have been properly prepared in accordance with UK adopted international accounting standards, as interpreted and adapted by the 2025/26 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

We conducted our 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. our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor’s responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We were appointed by the Accounts Commission on 18 May 2022. Our period of appointment is five years, covering 2022/23 to 2026/27. We are independent of the Joint Committee in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council’s Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. Non-audit services prohibited by the Ethical Standard were not provided to the Joint Committee. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern basis of accounting

We 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 we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Joint Committee'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.

These conclusions are not intended to, nor do they, provide assurance on the Joint Committee's current or future financial sustainability. However, we report on the Joint Committee's arrangements for financial sustainability in a separate Annual Audit Report available from the Audit Scotland website.

Risks of material misstatement

We report in our Annual Audit Report the most significant assessed risks of material misstatement that we identified and our judgements thereon.

Responsibilities of the Executive Director of Financial Services and the Joint Committee for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities, the Executive Director of Financial Services 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 Financial Services 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 Financial Services is responsible for assessing the Joint Committee'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 there is an intention to discontinue the Joint Committee's operations.

The Joint Committee is responsible for overseeing the financial reporting process.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our 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 our 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 decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

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

- using our understanding of the local government sector to identify that the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014, and the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 are significant in the context of the Joint Committee;

- inquiring of the Executive Director of Financial Services as to other laws or regulations that may be expected to have a fundamental effect on the operations of the Joint Committee;

- inquiring of the Executive Director of Financial Services concerning the Joint Committee's policies and procedures regarding compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework;

- discussions among our audit team on 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 our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the Joint Committee'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 our auditor's report.

Reporting on other requirements

Other information

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

Our responsibility is to read all the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we 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 the Management Commentary and Annual Governance Statement

In our 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 we are required to report by exception

We are required by the Accounts Commission to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or

- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records; or

- We have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

We have nothing to report in respect of these matters.

Conclusions on wider scope responsibilities

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

Use of our 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 108 of the Code of Audit Practice, we do not undertake to have responsibilities to members or officers, in their individual capacities, or to third parties.

Rob Jones, (for and on behalf of Ernst & Young),
Ernst & Young LLP
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Glasgow
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