



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Public Audit Committee

Roy Brannen
Director-General Net Zero
Scottish Government

7 March 2025

Dear Roy

The 2024/24 audit of the Water Industry Commission for Scotland

Thank you for providing evidence to the Public Audit Committee on the above Section 22 report at its [meeting on 19 February 2025](#). The Committee considered the evidence heard at its meeting on 5 March 2025 and agreed to write to you on the following issues arising from the independent reviews published by the Scottish Government on 7 November 2024.

The Scottish Government's review into the [Sponsorship Oversight and Governance of the Water Industry Commission for Scotland](#) (WICS) makes the following point in relation to sponsorship contact and engagement—

“The Ryan Review made a recommendation: “Portfolio Accountable Officers should ensure that there is regular contact between NDPB Boards and both Ministers and SG Officials. This is likely to include attendance at Board meetings for discussion of relevant topics, to ensure a good understanding of strategic priorities and issues”. It also states: “regular attendance may undermine accountabilities so should only be approved where it is justified as an escalation beyond normal governance arrangement”. Since the publication of the s22, SG sponsors have not attended Board meetings. DG NZ as Portfolio Accountable Officer responsible for approving sponsor attendance at Board meetings, should consider whether sponsor attendance is required moving forward during the period where recommendations arising from the s22 and subsequent reviews are being implemented”.

Can the Scottish Government explain why the sponsorship team did not attend WICS Board meetings following the publication of the section 22 report on the 2022/23 audit of the Water Industry Commission for Scotland? Did the Scottish Government not consider that the issues arising from the section 22 report required an “escalation beyond normal governance arrangements”?

Contact: Public Audit Committee, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP.
Email publicaudit.committee@parliament.scot. We welcome calls through Relay UK and in BSL through Contact Scotland BSL.

The Scottish Government's [Independent Review of the Water Industry Commission for Scotland – Review of Governance Arrangements](#) states—

“The requirements of the Framework Document in relation to the appraisal of the performance of the Board, Chair of the Board and Chief Executive were not fully complied with.”.

Can the Scottish Government provide further details on the extent to which the requirements of the Framework Document, in relation to the appraisal of the performance of the Board, Chair of the Board and Chief Executive were not fully complied with.

The Committee requests a response by **2 April 2025**.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Leonard MSP

Convener