Item No. 16

Meeting Date **Wednesday 9th September 2026**

Glasgow City
Integration Joint Board
Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee

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National Reports 2025-26

Purpose of Report:	To provide an overview of national reports issued by the Accounts Commission, Audit Scotland, the Standards Commission and other bodies with potential relevance for Glasgow City Integration Joint Board (GCIJB).

Background/Engagement:	The Accounts Commission, Audit Scotland and other scrutiny bodies and agencies will, from time to time, issue national reports that may be of relevance and interest to the IJB, and in particular the Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

Governance Route:	The matters contained within this paper have been previously considered by the following group(s) as part of their development. HSCP Senior Management Team ☐ Council Corporate Management Team ☐ Health Board Corporate Management Team ☐ Council Committee ☐ Update requested by IJB ☐ Other ☐ Not Applicable ☒

Recommendations:	The IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee is asked to: a) consider and note the national reports issued over the period 2025-26.

Relevance to Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan:
The findings of recent reports by scrutiny bodies are relevant to the delivery of the GCIJB Strategic Plan. The reports highlight ongoing challenges relating to financial sustainability, increasing demand for services, health inequalities, workforce pressures and the pace of service transformation. They also reinforce the importance of prevention, supporting people to live independently within their communities, delivering self-determination and informed choice in care, and demonstrating improved outcomes through robust performance reporting. These issues align closely with the Strategic Plan's vision and partnership priorities and provide an important external benchmark against which the IJB can assess progress and future areas of focus.

Implications for Health and Social Care Partnership:

Reference to National Health & Wellbeing Outcome:	The issues highlighted in recent reports by scrutiny bodies have direct relevance to the delivery of the National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes.
Personnel:	None.
Carers:	None.
Provider Organisations:	None.
Equalities:	None.
Fairer Scotland Compliance:	None.
Financial:	None.
Legal:	None.
Economic Impact:	None.
Sustainability:	None.
Sustainable Procurement and Article 19:	None.
Risk Implications:	Failure to deliver a financially sustainable Strategic Plan while achieving National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes.

Implications for Glasgow City Council:	Inability to meet increasing social care demand within constrained local government finances.

Implications for NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde:	Inability to sustain acute services and improve performance without successful reform and expansion of community-based care.

1. Purpose

1.1. To provide an overview of national reports issued by the Accounts Commission, Audit Scotland, the Standards Commission and other bodies with potential relevance for Glasgow City Integration Joint Board (GCIJB).

1.2. This report provides a summary of reports identified in the period 2025-26. The last year has seen a number of national reports from Audit Scotland, the Accounts Commission, and the Standards Commission and Ethical Standards framework, which have direct relevance to the governance, financial sustainability, performance management and partnership working responsibilities of GCIJB.

2. Audit Scotland - Integration Joint Boards: Finance Bulletin 2024-25 (February 2026)

https://audit.scot/publications/integration-joint-boards-finance-bulletin-202425

2.1 The bulletin provides the most up-to-date national assessment of IJB financial sustainability based on 2024-25 accounts and audit findings across Scotland. Its conclusions are directly applicable to all IJBs, including Glasgow.

2.2 Key Findings

The report found that:

- IJBs are in a "critical financial position" despite a 2.3% real-terms increase in funding
- Demand and cost pressures continue to outstrip additional funding and savings achieved
- Total reserves across Scottish IJBs fell by 12%, with almost half of IJBs no longer holding contingency reserves
- Most IJBs reported operational overspends during 2024-25
- The estimated funding gap for 2025/26 remained substantial at £449 million nationally
- IJBs, councils and NHS boards must make urgent decisions about where services should be redesigned, reduced or discontinued.

2.3 Relevance for Glasgow City IJB

The report aligns closely with many of the issues already being discussed through Glasgow's governance and financial reporting arrangements:

National finding	Potential relevance to Glasgow City IJB
Falling reserves	Scrutiny of reserve levels and sustainability of one-off solutions
Continuing overspends	Need for robust budget management and recovery planning
Large future funding gaps	Medium-term financial strategy and transformation programmes
Requirement for service redesign	Strategic commissioning and service prioritisation decisions
Greater transparency about service impacts	Public engagement and reporting of savings proposals
Reliance on partner contributions	Importance of relationships with GCC and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde

3. Audit Scotland – Community Health and Social Care: Performance 2025 (January 2026)

3.1 Audit Scotland's work during 2025 examined how effectively Integration Authorities are improving outcomes and responding to growing pressures. https://audit.scot/uploads/2026-01/briefing_260108_chsc_performance.pdf

3.2 Key Messages

The audit highlights:
- Lack of comprehensive and consistent performance information nationally
- Difficulties in assessing whether integration is improving outcomes
- Increasing demand across health and social care
- Limited progress in shifting the balance of care from hospitals to community settings
- Insufficient progress in reducing health inequalities

3.3 Relevance for Glasgow City IJB

Particularly significant because:
- Glasgow experiences some of Scotland's highest levels of deprivation and health inequality
- The HSCP must demonstrate measurable improvements despite increasing demand

- There is increasing national scrutiny of the quality of IJB performance data and outcome reporting

4. Audit Scotland – NHS in Scotland: Finance and Performance (December 2025)

4.1 Audit Scotland's annual NHS overview continues to emphasise challenges that directly affect Integration Authorities.
https://audit.scot/uploads/2025-11/nr_251204_NHS_in_Scotland_2025.pdf

4.2 Key Themes

- NHS financial sustainability remains a major concern
- Growing demand is outpacing service capacity
- Reform and productivity improvement are essential
- Greater emphasis is required on prevention and community-based care
- Progress in shifting care from hospital settings remains limited

4.3 Relevance for Glasgow City IJB

The report reinforces national expectations that:
- Community services will play a larger role in managing demand
- Hospital activity cannot continue to absorb increasing pressures
- Integrated models of care must demonstrate measurable benefits

5. Audit Scotland – Delayed Discharges: A Symptom of the Challenges Facing Health and Social Care (January 2026)

5.1 Audit Scotland identified delayed discharge as an indicator of wider system pressures across health and social care.
https://audit.scot/uploads/2026-01/nr_260108_delayed_discharges.pdf

5.2 Key Themes

- Delayed discharge is not solely a hospital issue
- Capacity constraints across community services are a major contributing factor.
- Workforce shortages and increasing complexity of care continue to affect flow through the system
- More integrated planning is required across NHS boards, councils and Integration Authorities.

5.3 Relevance for Glasgow City IJB

This is highly relevant given:
- Glasgow's large acute sector
- Significant demand for care-at-home, intermediate care and care home placements

- Ongoing pressures relating to frailty, mental health and hospital discharge pathways

6. Accounts Commission – Integration Joint Boards Finances Continue to be Precarious (March 2025)
https://audit.scot/publications/integration-joint-boards-finances-continue-to-be-precarious

6.1 Key Findings

- IJB finances across Scotland remain under severe pressure
- Many IJBs are overspending and increasingly reliant on reserves
- Reserves are being depleted and recurring savings are often not being achieved
- Demand for services continues to rise due to population ageing, complexity of need, health inequalities and workforce pressures
- Investment is not shifting sufficiently towards prevention and early intervention

6.2 Relevance for Glasgow City IJB

For Glasgow, the report reinforces:

- The importance of long-term financial sustainability planning
- The need to reduce dependency on non-recurring savings
- Strategic focus on prevention and community-based models of care
- Managing demand associated with deprivation, inequality and complex care needs
- Strengthening performance reporting to demonstrate delivery of outcomes

6.3 Potential Governance Considerations

- Financial Recovery Plans
- Medium-Term Financial Strategy
- Reserves Strategy
- Monitoring of savings delivery and transformation programmes

7. Accounts Commission – Local Government Budgets 2025/26 (May 2025)

7.1 Although directed at Councils, this report carries major implications for IJBs because social work funding and many delegated functions depend on local government finances.
https://audit.scot/uploads/2025-05/briefing_250522_council_budgets.pdf

7.2 Key Findings

- Councils face a collective budget shortfall of approximately £647 million in 2025/26
- Cost pressures from inflation, workforce costs and service demand continue to outstrip funding growth

- Reliance on reserves is not sustainable
- Transformation is occurring but not quickly enough

7.3 Relevance for Glasgow City IJB

The implications include:
- Pressure on Glasgow City Council funding contributions
- Potential impact on social work and community care budgets
- Increased need to demonstrate value for money
- Greater scrutiny of commissioning, redesign and service transformation

8. Standards Commission for Scotland – Annual Report 2024/25 (August 2025)

8.1 While not focused specifically on health and social care, the Standards Commission's work remains important for IJB governance. https://www.standardscommissionscotland.org.uk/uploads/files/1756375123250821SCS_Annual_Report_20242025FINAL.pdf

8.2 Key Themes

- Promotion of high standards in public life
- Ethical leadership
- Conflicts of interest management
- Transparency in decision-making
- Code of Conduct compliance for councillors and public appointees

8.3 Relevance for Glasgow City IJB

Glasgow City's IJB membership includes:
- Elected members
- NHS Board representatives
- Advisers and stakeholder representatives

8.4 The report reinforces the importance of:
- Maintaining declaration of interest arrangements
- Good governance
- Board member training and development
- Strong committee scrutiny and assurance mechanisms

9. Health and Social Care Scotland – IJB Financial Position; Finance Update 2026/27 (July 2026)

9.1 This report sets out the financial position of Integration Joint Boards for 2026/27, highlighting the scale of the financial challenges facing Scotland's health and social care system. It aims to provide a clear understanding of key cost pressures, the actions being taken to manage these, and the impact on services and outcomes.

9.2 Key Findings

- The 2026/27 financial position is unsustainable, with £475 million of financial pressure across Scotland's health and social care system.
- Most Integration Joint Boards (IJBs) have depleted reserves and are increasingly reliant on one-off measures.
- Without additional recurring funding, significant reductions in care at home, care home placements, staffing, and early intervention will occur in-year.
- Reduced social care capacity will increase pressure across the entire system, including unpaid carers, hospitals, councils, NHS partners, and providers.
- Prevention and early intervention are being squeezed, risking greater future demand and costs.
- National expectations and available resources are no longer aligned, leading to ongoing service reductions and increased risk for people, carers, and providers.

9.3 Relevance for Glasgow City IJB

- Significant financial pressure
- Risk to the reserve position
- Direct impact on the ability to provide services
- Wider systemic pressures
- Tension between statutory service provision and the prevention agenda

10. Summary

10.1 The main strategic themes emerging from national scrutiny bodies are:

i. Financial sustainability remains the most significant risk facing IJBs
ii. Greater emphasis is being placed on demonstrating measurable outcomes and performance
iii. National bodies continue to call for a shift towards prevention and community-based care
iv. Health inequalities remain a major concern and progress is insufficient
v. Delayed discharge and system flow issues are symptomatic of wider integration challenges
vi. Governance, transparency and ethical leadership remain key expectations of Boards and Committees

10.2 Overall, these reports create a very consistent national message: IJBs face significant financial sustainability risks, must accelerate service transformation, strengthen performance reporting, and be transparent with stakeholders about difficult decisions affecting future service provision.

11. Recommendations

11.1. The IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

a) Consider and note the national reports issued over the period 2025-26.