

# **Audit Scotland report results in resignation of water regulator boss**

**Auditors have found that the use of public funds by senior officials at the Water Industry Commission for Scotland was unacceptable.**

In light of the report which found expenses of around £80,000 claimed without itemised receipts, the Chief Executive Alan Sutherland has stepped down with immediate effect from his role for which he was paid at least £170,000.

The Commission is the economic regulator of Scottish Water. Its job is to ensure long-term value and excellent levels of service for customers and communities.

But auditors found that, in 2022/23, the Commission needed retrospective approval from The Scottish Government for around £80,000 of spending.

This included:

- £77,350 for the chief operating officer, Michelle Ashford, to attend a training course at Harvard Business School
- £2,600 on £100 Christmas gift vouchers for each member of staff.

Expenses claims exceeding set rates were also found to have been submitted and approved without itemised receipts, including by the Chief Executive, Alan Sutherland. One claim was for a dinner where the cost

per head exceeded £200 per person. This, and other claims, included the purchase of alcohol.

- Stephen Boyle, Auditor General for Scotland, said: “Value for money should always be central to public bodies’ spending decisions.

“But these findings highlight unacceptable behaviour by senior Commission officials in the use of public funds.

“I expect appropriate action to be taken to address the issues reported by the auditor.”

*Auditors have found unacceptable use of public funds by senior officials [@WICScotland](#)*

*They include high expenses claims approved without itemised receipts.*

*And nearly £80k spent on a Harvard training course.*

*Full details: <https://t.co/j150qaKBoKpic.twitter.com/XoDCIRadUq>*

*– Stephen Boyle (@AuditorGenScot) [December 20, 2023](#)*



Alan Sutherland