

## News release on behalf of the Accounts Commission - reporting independently on the performance of local government in Scotland.

**Embargoed until 00:01 hours, 11 January 2024**

### **Dumfries and Galloway Council is well led, and must now deliver on service reform**

Dumfries and Galloway Council has strong leadership and sound financial management. It now needs to deliver its plans to reform local services, keeping residents better informed on performance and progress.

The Accounts Commission says the council has a good financial track record, with clear plans to transform services so it can balance future budgets. But the council cannot underestimate the challenges it will face in delivering those plans.

The Commission urges the council to focus on providing clearer and more easily accessible information to local people about how local services are performing, and its progress on reforms and savings plans. Improving public performance reporting is a statutory requirement. The council has strong engagement with its communities, and a clear vision for the future.

The council also has ambitious plans to tackle climate change, but the Commission says it remains to be seen how achievable these are and whether the council remains committed to them. There is a lack of information in its current council plan about its target of achieving net zero by 2025.

Christine Lester, Member of the Accounts Commission said:

“Dumfries and Galloway Council has made significant progress over recent years, with strong leadership and a clear vision. As the council recognises, balancing future budgets relies on making changes to how it delivers services. Councillors and officers cannot underestimate the challenges to achieve this, and they need to make sure they are reporting clearly to citizens about their progress and performance.

“Councils across Scotland face increasingly constrained budgets and difficult decisions about services will have to be made. It makes it more important for the council to continue the effective way it engages with its communities.”

For further information contact Joanna Mansell Tel: 07970331858 [jmansell@audit-scotland.gov.uk](mailto:jmansell@audit-scotland.gov.uk) or [media@audit-scotland.gov.uk](mailto:media@audit-scotland.gov.uk)

### **Notes to Editors:**

1. This report is the third to reflect [the Accounts Commission's new approach to Best Value](#). It is fully integrated into annual audit work, reported in Annual Audit Reports, and includes detailed work each year on a national theme. For 2022-23 the national theme is strategic leadership.

2. The Controller of Audit will report to the Accounts Commission on each council's performance on their duty of Best Value at least once over the five-year audit appointment. The Commission will then choose how it wishes to respond.
3. The Accounts Commission last reported on Dumfries and Galloway Council in [Best Value in Dumfries and Galloway Council](#) in November 2018.
4. The Accounts Commission has a statutory power to define the performance information that councils must publish for performance comparison and benchmarking purposes. It fulfils this power by issuing a [Statutory Performance Information \(SPI\) Direction](#) to councils.
5. In recent years the Commission has used the power to emphasise what it sees as the prime importance of councils reporting performance to their citizens and communities. The Direction sets out the performance information that the Commission requires councils to publish.
6. The Accounts Commission holds councils and local government bodies in Scotland to account and helps them improve. It operates impartially and independently of councils and of the Scottish Government and meets and reports in public.
7. Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000, under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. It provides services to the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission for Scotland.
8. All reports by the Accounts Commission and Auditor Scotland published since 2000 are available on the [Audit Scotland website](#).