

News release

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"Disappointing" progress at Falkirk

Falkirk Council has been slow in grasping the nettle of tackling major challenges ahead, says the Accounts Commission.

In a report out today the local authority watchdog says it is disappointed at the amount of progress at Falkirk since last August. At that time it voiced significant concerns over the council's approach to making £46 million of savings over three years to protect the delivery and improvement of service priorities. That figure has now grown to £61 million.

The report says while there has been activity at the council there has been limited progress in addressing the underlying need for better coordinated and more radical change.

Falkirk urgently needs to identify and agree its key priorities supported by a more robust approach to financial planning and improvement showing how substantial change can be achieved.

In its findings the Commission said it was encouraged by better working between councillors. Scrutiny had also improved although this could be more open and transparent.

Douglas Sinclair, Accounts Commission chair, said: "All councils need to get to grips with looming budget shortfalls over the next three years but Falkirk has been slow to realise the scale of what is required and make effective plans for it.

"It must now grasp this nettle and meet the challenges it faces through strong leadership both from councillors and its management team".

The Commission has asked for another update on Falkirk Council by the end of next year.

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Notes to editors

1. The Controller of Audit has prepared this report for the Accounts Commission whose August 2015 report is available [here](#).
2. The Accounts Commission is the public spending watchdog for local government. It holds councils and various joint boards and committees in Scotland to account and help them improve. It operates impartially and independently of councils and of the Scottish Government, and meets and reports in public.
3. 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.