

## News release

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### East Ayrshire Council – maintains strong performance, continues to improve but faces financial challenges

**In a report out today, the Accounts Commission highlights that East Ayrshire Council is performing well, services are improving, and there is strong partnership working.**

The report from the local authority spending watchdog, says the council has maintained the strong performance reported in previous audits in 2006 and 2010.

The Commission says the majority of services are improving. These improvements have been achieved against a backdrop of financial, social and economic challenges in East Ayrshire.

The council has strong leadership, together with effective partnership working. Councillors, council staff and partner organisations are committed to working together, as well as working with, and empowering, local communities.

East Ayrshire Council faces a significant budget shortfall over the next five years, with an estimated budget gap of £55 million. Managing the change needed to bridge this gap will be a major challenge for the council.

The council is also acting to address challenges in some service areas, such as employment and planning, but has more work to do. Working with the business community to support and develop a more sustainable local economy will be critical in providing more local jobs and opportunities.

Ronnie Hinds, deputy chair of the Accounts Commission, said: 'The Commission is impressed by the continued improvements made to services across East Ayrshire, and the commitment of the council, partner organisations and residents.'

'Faced with a substantial budget gap over the next five years, challenging levels of deprivation and changes in the make-up of its population, the council must now focus on realising significant transformation in the delivery of services. With an already strong record of partnership working and improvement, East Ayrshire Council is well-placed to tackle the necessary changes.'

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#### Notes to editors

1. The Controller of Audit has prepared this report for the Accounts Commission. It is the eighth of the new Best Value Assurance Reports (BVAR), which aim to offer a rounded and comprehensive analysis of a council's performance. The new reports cover how effectively councils are managing changes in services, involving the public in decisions, ensuring they have appropriate skills and capacity to deliver their priorities and providing good information so the public can gauge improvement.

2. Until now, some councils may not have had a Best Value audit for a decade or more, whilst others have had several. In future, all 32 councils will have a BVAR at least once every five years and all will continue to be the subject of an annual audit of their accounts, and a published audit report.

3. Previous reports on East Ayrshire Council are available for [2006](#) and [2010](#).

4. 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 helps them to improve. It operates impartially and independently of councils and of the Scottish Government, and meets and reports in public

Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000, under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act, 2000. It provides audit services only to the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission for Scotland.