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## News release

**Embargoed until 00:01 hours, Thursday 6 November, 2014**

### Community planning urgently needs to improve in Orkney

**Orkney Community Planning Partnership (CPP) lacks effective leadership - all partners need urgently to agree priorities and align resources to deliver them.**

A report published today for the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland says there are good examples of island bodies working well together but the CPP is not exploiting these to deliver better outcomes for the people of Orkney.

The Commission said it was extremely disappointed at poor progress made by the CPP.

The CPP steering group had identified three priorities but still not agreed how and when to take them forward. It was not using Orkney's scale and agility to best effect. An overly complex structure made it difficult for partners to contribute effectively and only just over half of last year's targets were met.

The CPP had a strong track record in involving the voluntary sector and its Empowering Communities initiative to support the outer isles may provide a model for wider improvements.

Douglas Sinclair, chair of the Accounts Commission, said: "Community planning is not delivering what it should for the people of Orkney. The Partnership is aware of some of the areas in which it needs to improve, but has been slow to implement necessary changes and improvements."

"There is substantial potential for it to build on vibrant community engagement and the strength of the voluntary sector to deliver better services. But this needs effective leadership from the top to make it happen."

In its findings, the Commission said: "We note with serious concern that tensions between Orkney Islands Council and NHS Orkney have held back progress in community planning. It is imperative that those two bodies address and resolve issues between them.

"But we emphasise that all partners need to fulfil their responsibilities to work together to fulfil the CPP's objectives. It is the responsibility of each partner, and of the CPP, to fulfil its obligations and to ensure improved outcomes for the people of Orkney."

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#### Notes to editors

1. Community Planning Partnerships were established more than a decade ago to bring together councils, health boards and other agencies to agree and implement plans for tackling key problems in their areas.

2. This report has been prepared by the Controller of Audit (for the Accounts Commission) and the Auditor General. It is the last of five CPP reports this year, following those on Glasgow, Falkirk, Moray and West Lothian. An overview report is due to be published later this month.

3. 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.

4. 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.