

EMBARGOED News release

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Improvements made, but serious challenges ahead for Clackmannanshire Council

In the past 12 months Clackmannanshire Council has significantly improved how it works, but its finances remain an issue of serious concern says the Accounts Commission.

The Commission, Scotland's local authority watchdog, has praised the work the council has done so far, and recognises the increased pace of change during the past year. This follows serious concerns raised by the Commission about the council's financial position in a 2018 review.

In a follow-up report published today, the Accounts Commission says that over the last 12 months the council has demonstrated a determination to change, including making savings, appointing a new management team and improving how councillors and officers work together. Clackmannanshire Council is also building effective working relationships with local councils and others as it seeks to establish sustainable and efficient services for the future.

But the Commission remains seriously concerned about the council's financial position. With a cumulative budget gap of over £23 million in the next three years, maintaining the pace of change, transforming services and making long-term savings are critical.

Stephen Moore, member of the Accounts Commission, says: "Whilst the council has had the determination to take on board many of the recommendations in our 2018 report, there is an urgent need for the council to implement change to tackle their financial position. Without transforming services, the council's finances are not sustainable in the longer term. The scale of the challenge ahead remains significant.

"Our auditors will continue to have a close interest in progress made. "

For further information contact Joanna Mansell: 0131 625 1652 jmansell@audit-scotland.gov.uk or media@audit-scotland.gov.uk

Notes to editors

1. This report follows the Best Value Assurance Report on Clackmannanshire Council published in January 2018.
2. Best Value Assurance reports, prepared for the Accounts Commission, aim to offer a rounded and comprehensive analysis of a council's performance. These reports cover how effectively councils are managing changes in services; involving the public in decisions; ensuring enough skills and time to deliver clear priorities; and providing clear information so the public can gauge improvement.
4. Audit Scotland has prepared this report for the Accounts Commission for Scotland. All Audit Scotland reports published since 2000 are available at www.audit-scotland.gov.uk

- 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
- 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.