

News release

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Midlothian has to make progress on big challenges

Midlothian Council needs to deal with a significant budget shortfall as it faces further pressures as the fastest-growing local authority in Scotland.

In a report out today, the Accounts Commission says the council urgently needs a medium-term financial strategy to address a £14.5 million budget shortfall by 2022/23 and ensure it can plan funding for services in the future. At the same time, Midlothian is also experiencing a projected 13 per cent rise in its population by 2026, the fastest rise in the country.

The local government spending watchdog says that in recent years the council has used its funding reserves rather than make difficult decisions on how services are provided. All councillors now need to show better leadership in pushing forward necessary changes.

The council has delivered high profile projects in schools, housing and transport and it works well with partners and local communities. The Commission says this will help it when addressing its challenges.

Accounts Commission member Tim McKay said: "Midlothian needs to address the significant challenges it faces - the cumulative funding gap and the additional pressures from a fast-expanding population.

"The council has a good record of working with its partners and local communities. This will help in supporting a medium-term strategy and transformation programme to get its finances and services in good shape for the future."

For further information contact Chris Holme: 0131 625 1653 cholme@audit-scotland.gov.uk or media@audit-scotland.gov.uk

Notes to editors

1. Previous Best Value reports are available on Midlothian Council from [2012](#) and [2008](#).
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.
3. 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.

