

News release

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A decade of improvement at Dundee City Council, but progress needs to quicken to tackle deep social issues

Over the last ten years Dundee City Council has improved many services for residents and played a major part in the ambitious programme of projects that have transformed much of the city centre.

In a report published today the Commission says the council is well led, with a clear vision for the future, alongside a good understanding of the problems affecting many residents.

However, the Accounts Commission says the council must now work with partners to move even faster to address complex and deep-rooted problems such as poverty, inequality and the highest level of drug-related deaths for a city in Scotland.

The council now needs to work with its partners to increase the pace of service improvement. It also needs to continue to reshape its services and, in particular, narrow the educational attainment gap for vulnerable or disadvantaged children.

The financial sustainability of the Integration Joint Board, the body responsible for delivering health and social care services in Dundee, is a significant risk. The impact of Covid-19 will add to the challenges to come and it is critical that the council works with partners to address this, so it can continue to provide vital services to residents.

Tim McKay, Interim Deputy Chair of the Accounts Commission, said, "Dundee is a well led council and whilst there has been much improvement to the city and services, those in disadvantaged areas have not all benefited from that transformation. The significant investment to transform parts of the city, most notably the waterfront, sits in marked contrast to the endemic poverty, inequality and drug-related deaths.

"Many services have improved, but the council and its partners must now act faster to address these long-standing issues. As the council continues to transform the city it is critical that the social value to all Dundee residents of this investment can be demonstrated. Without this, those who are already disadvantaged will not see the benefits of the investment in and regeneration of their city."

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Notes to editors

1. Audit Scotland has prepared this report for the Accounts Commission. 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.

2. The work for this audit was done prior to the onset of the current Covid-19 emergency. The Commission recognises the significant pressures under which local government finds itself in this current situation. Equally the Commission is of the firm view that the principles of sound financial management, good governance, public accountability and transparency remain vital.

3. Best Value Assurance reports, prepared for the Accounts Commission, 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.