

News release on behalf of the Accounts Commission

Embargoed until 00:01 hours, 5 July 2022

Impressive improvements at Angus Council

Angus Council serves its communities well, has made impressive improvements to services in recent years and benefits from effective leadership and a clear vision. There is strong partnership working and collaboration to help deliver services that benefit local people.

The Accounts Commission, the independent body that holds local councils to account, says the council has made significant changes since previous critical reports by the Commission in 2010 and 2016. The council's performance has improved or been maintained across three of the four key priority areas, including:

- Working with partners to reduce the proportion of households experiencing fuel poverty
- increasing the proportion of waste that is recycled - Angus is the top-ranked council in Scotland for this
- local people being more satisfied with services than the Scottish average.

Councillors show strong leadership, working well with each other, and in partnership with council staff, as they make challenging decisions. Like other local authorities across Scotland, the council faces increasing demand for services at a time of reducing income. The council has already made significant savings, but will need to work with communities to make difficult decisions for the future.

The council should now:

- focus on critical areas where improvement is needed, including housing and improving the local economy.
- do more to respond to a significant increase in demand for health and social care services, together with its NHS partners
- fully implement, across all services, its approach to managing and monitoring performance.

Tim McKay, Interim Deputy Chair of the Accounts Commission said: "It's clear that Angus Council serves its communities well. The pace of improvement over the last six years has been impressive.

The council is delivering on many of its stated ambitions and priorities, benefitting and enhancing the lives of local people. Now the council must drive forward change to services, to ensure that they are financially sustainable. This change must be determined by working with residents and be informed by robust information about how the council is performing."

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Notes to Editor:

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 holds councils and other local government bodies in Scotland to account and helps them improve by reporting to the public on their performance. We operate impartially and independently of councils and of the Scottish Government
- 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 during 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.