

## News release on behalf of the Accounts Commission

Embargoed until 00:01 hours, 24 October 2024

### The City of Edinburgh Council must listen and act on community views

It is crucial that the City of Edinburgh Council continues to engage with and then act on the views of its residents and communities as it considers options to make the significant savings needed.

The council isn't alone in Scottish local government in having to make substantial savings. But the scale of savings needed - over £100 million by 2029 - means senior officers and councillors must work together to find sustainable ways to deliver differently, improve performance and ultimately reduce costs.

The council has ambitious plans to borrow money to improve housing and school buildings. But this will need to be managed carefully to ensure that plans are affordable and don't have a detrimental impact on services.

Progress has been made since the Commission last reported, and many services are performing well. But now the council must address declining performance in areas including housing, waste and some aspects of street cleaning.

The Accounts Commission recognises the council's ambitious plans to end poverty and become a net zero city by 2030. Given current progress, however, there remains a significant amount of work to achieve these targets, not least in establishing cost implications.

#### Jo Armstrong, Chair of the Accounts Commission said:

"We cannot underestimate the scale of financial challenge. The council has successfully achieved savings over recent years. But given increasing demand and financial pressures, the council must accelerate its transformation and change programme. Listening to and acting on the views of staff and local communities will be vital.

"The council has real opportunities, including the potential to raise more income. It shouldn't use the potential of future income, however, to delay making difficult decisions now as challenges will only intensify."

For further information contact Joanna Mansell Tel: 07970331858  
[jmansell@audit-scotland.gov.uk](mailto:jmansell@audit-scotland.gov.uk) or [media@audit-scotland.gov.uk](mailto:media@audit-scotland.gov.uk)

#### Notes to Editor:

1. This report reflects the Accounts Commission's new approach to Best Value. It is fully integrated into annual audit work, reported in Annual Audit Reports, and includes detailed work each year

on a national theme. For 2023-24 national theme is workforce innovation.

2. The Controller of Audit will report to the Accounts Commission on each council's performance on their duty of Best Value at least once over the five-year audit appointment. The Commission will then choose how it wishes to respond.
3. The Accounts Commission [last reported on the City of Edinburgh Council in 2020](#).
4. The Accounts Commission holds councils and local government bodies in Scotland to account and helps them improve. It operates impartially and independently of councils and of the Scottish Government, and meets and reports in public.
5. 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.
6. All reports by the Accounts Commission and Auditor Scotland published since 2000 are available on the [Audit Scotland website](#).