
News release on behalf of the Accounts Commission

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Argyll & Bute Council must build on culture of innovation to deliver savings

Argyll and Bute Council has a real opportunity to harness a long-standing culture of innovation as it looks to close a funding gap of nearly £29 million, rethink how services are delivered and ensure it has a stable workforce.

In a new report, the Accounts Commission recognises the council has delivered significant, recurring savings, at a time when all councils are facing pressures from rising demand and increasing costs. Now the council needs to take a more strategic approach to transformation and redesigning services, to help make the savings needed.

As the council puts in place plans to both improve and change how services are delivered, it must listen to and act on the views of local communities. Many services are improving, including culture and leisure services, but some are getting worse, including those for children and adult health and social work.

The council is heavily reliant on temporary and agency staff, making up around sixteen per cent of its total workforce. The majority leave before the end of their contracts. This is expensive and presents risks to the quality of services. The council is taking proactive steps to tackle recruitment and retention, including through more apprenticeships, career development and sponsoring students.

Andrew Burns, Deputy Chair of the Accounts Commission said:

“Argyll and Bute Council has tackled the challenges it faces with innovation and collaboration, including embracing new technology to deliver services. In many ways this is a council that’s ahead of the game in its use of digital technology to deliver services to its rural and island communities.

“The council has plans to improve services and deliver a workforce that meets future demands. This approach should be shared with other councils. But it now needs to rapidly build on this culture of improvement to drive forward deeper transformation and service re-design. This will be a key part of the council’s focus to deliver savings and sustainable services for the future.”

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Notes to Editor:

1. The Accounts Commission [last reported on Argyll and Bute Council in 2020](#).

2. All reports by the Accounts Commission and Auditor General published since 2000 are available at www.audit.scot

- 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.

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