
News release on behalf of the Accounts Commission

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Exits of senior officers at Glasgow City Council fell short of standards expected

The processes, decisions and actions that enabled five senior Glasgow City Council officers to take significant early retirement and redundancy payouts fell short of the behaviour and standards expected of public servants.

Between 2021 and 2024, five senior officers left the council, including the former Chief Executive. The restructuring proposals appear to have been approved by some individuals who directly benefited. Given the seniority of the officers leaving, restructuring proposals should have been considered by the relevant council committee for councillors to scrutinise.

The absence of independent scrutiny from councillors, formal documentation, including details of how decisions were made and evidence of value for money, is deeply concerning.

The action taken by the new Chief Executive has been welcomed by the Accounts Commission. After councillors became aware of the departures, an internal investigation was actioned, leading to the commissioning of an independent review. The council accepted and implemented its recommendations.

Andrew Burns, Deputy Chair of the Accounts Commission said:

‘The actions taken by a group of senior staff at Glasgow City Council fell short of the values and principles every public sector worker and councillor are expected to follow. There was a failure to address and document how potential conflicts of interest were considered. And a failure to demonstrate how the guiding principles of working in the public sector- in particular selflessness, integrity and objectivity - had been applied.

‘It is alarming to see reports which need to consider the lawfulness of actions within councils, and such circumstances do little to reassure taxpayers about how public money is being used. All councils need to undertake restructuring, particularly with financial pressures, growing demand and an ageing workforce. Given the issues highlighted in this report, the Accounts Commission will write to all council chief executives and leaders to highlight the importance of good governance, value for money and transparency in decision making.’

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Notes to Editor:

1. [The Key Principles of Public Life in Scotland](#) are: selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability & stewardship; openness; honesty; leadership; duty and respect.

2. [The 2023/24 annual audit report](#) is available on the Audit Scotland website.

3. 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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