ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

News release on behalf of the Accounts Commission

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Glasgow City Council at a critical point

Glasgow City Council is at a critical point as it tries to tackle financial pressures, rising homelessness, growing demand for services, persistent high poverty levels and unresolved equal pay claims.

Each of these challenges are significant. But the council must deal with them concurrently while delivering services for local people. The council also faces a budget gap of at least £110 million between 2026/27 and 2027/28. Greater transparency and clarity about the scale of the financial challenges facing the council is needed to inform the choices available to councillors, and the impacts on communities and services.

Now the Accounts Commission says the council must ensure it has the capacity and skills to address these challenges, whilst managing complex, high-risk programmes, including implementing a new finance system. Delivering the new pay and grading structure by April 2027 is critical; achieving this must be a collective responsibility for officers, councillors and trade union representatives.

The council needs to show sustained leadership from councillors and officers, together with local and national partners, as they tackle all these challenges, including homelessness. Glasgow's spending on homelessness rose from £38 million last year to an expected £56 million in 2026/27.

Andrew Burns, Deputy Chair of the Accounts Commission said:

'There is no doubt about the scale and complexity of the challenges that Glasgow City Council faces, particularly equal pay and homelessness. The council is at a challenging point; decisions made over the coming months will have a significant bearing on financial sustainability and on the services that communities receive in future.

'We need to see leadership, responsibility and robust oversight by councillors. The council must also prioritise its medium-term financial planning, setting out the choices the council needs to make to live within its means. There must be clear plans to redesign services, the resources needed, costs and savings and the impact on communities and budgets. These are vital to ensure the council and its services are sustainable for the future.'

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Notes to Editor:

1. The 2024/25 Annual Audit Report for Glasgow City Council is available on our website.

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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