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## Press release

### Commission welcomes progress made by Glasgow City Council

The Accounts Commission says it is pleased to acknowledge the continuing good progress and improvements made by Glasgow City Council and is encouraged by the impact this is having on the city's people.

In December 2005 the Commission made its first assessment of the council's performance towards providing Best Value for local people. The Commission said then that it was encouraged by the rate of improvement Glasgow City had made over recent years. It said the council needed to stay focussed on improvement as it faced significant and complex social and economic challenges.

Reflecting on the latest progress report published today, the Commission says the council has continued to make good progress. The Commission says it is also encouraged by the fact that the improvements have led to better outcomes for the people of Glasgow, particularly in the areas of education and unemployment.

However the Commission notes that some significant issues still need to be addressed, such as the council's management and development of its employees. Statutory performance indicators and inspection reports show a mixed picture of the performance of services, and the Commission urges the council to address these issues.

Chairman of the Accounts Commission, John Baillie, said: "Glasgow City Council has continued to make good progress and to address the improvements that were needed. We are particularly pleased that this work has led to better outcomes for the people of Glasgow. The council is now well placed to build on its current performance and we look forward to the council maintaining its momentum and continuing to improve.

"As the Commission noted in its first report on this council, Glasgow City faces significant and complex social and economic challenges. It also needs to address the mixed picture of the performance of its services and address significant issues over the management and development of its own workforce."

The council's performance will continue to be monitored through routine audits.

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#### Notes to Editors:

1. The Accounts Commission for Scotland was set up in 1975. The Commission checks whether local authorities, fire and police boards spend public money properly and effectively.
2. Best Value is the duty placed on local authorities to demonstrate their on-going commitment to providing better services to local people.
3. The Audit of Best Value is undertaken by Audit Scotland on behalf of the Accounts Commission. It responds to the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, which gave councils a new power to promote or improve the well-being of their area and the people living within it and responsibilities including:
  - making arrangements which secure Best Value, defined as 'continuous improvement in the performance of the authority's functions, having regard to efficiency, effectiveness, economy and equal opportunities.
  - discharging their duties in a way which contributes to sustainable development
  - maintaining a community planning process
  - making arrangements for reporting to the public on their performance
  - meeting new rules relating to trading.
4. Key Features of the audit are:

- The focus is on each council's performance over time rather than comparisons between councils. It takes account of differences in local priorities, constraints and opportunities.
- All 32 councils in Scotland are audited.
- Each audit results in a report to the Accounts Commission.
- A report is published after each individual audit.
- In most cases Key Findings from the Commission are published at the same time as the Report. However, the Commission also has the power to: Ask the Controller of Audit to carry out further investigations before reporting its findings; hold a hearing with council before reporting its findings; publish findings which include recommendations to the council and/or Scottish Ministers.
- The council's external auditor monitors progress and reports through an annual review. If the council has made insufficient progress, the Commission is alerted and it may ask for further action to be taken.