

## News release

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### Council must be more ambitious on tackling financial challenges

**Angus Council needs to up the pace of change if it is to meet its £26.5million savings target, an Accounts Commission report says today.**

The local government spending watchdog found that the council has made progress since 2010, setting out a clear vision, modernising its business processes and improving the leadership provided by senior managers.

But the council is facing significant financial pressures and needs to find savings of £26.5million over the next three years. Today's report says that the council's ability to make these savings largely depends on the success of its change programme, Transforming Angus.

While Transforming Angus has helped to improve the organisational culture within the council and has contributed to reducing the cost of delivering some services, there are risks that it may not succeed in delivering savings within the required timescales. The council needs to be more ambitious and increase the pace and depth of change.

In its report, the Commission also welcomed an improvement in the relationships between elected members and officers at the council, but raised concern that cross-party relations have become increasingly fragile. While improvements have been made in arrangements for elected members to scrutinise decision-making, these should be more open and transparent.

Douglas Sinclair, chair of the Accounts Commission, said: "Angus Council is heading in the right direction as an organisation but it is only now implementing initiatives which many other councils have already done.

"If the council is going to confront increasingly tough financial challenges, it needs to get more ambitious and speed up the pace of change."

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#### Notes to editors

1. Transforming Angus is a change programme introduced by Angus Council in 2013. It involved changes to the council's management structure, and then focused on a series of projects aimed at modernising the delivery of services and helping to reduce costs.
2. The Controller of Audit has prepared this report for the Accounts Commission for Scotland.

- 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.
3. The Accounts Commission's previous Best Value audit of Angus Council, published in 2010, is available [here](#).