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## News release

**EMBARGOED until 00:01 hours, Tuesday 22 October 2019**

### Scottish Borders Council can do more to be fit for the future

**Scottish Borders Council has made steady progress as it continues to transform the way it delivers services. Working with other organisations will be key to the council achieving its ambitions for further changes.**

A report by the Accounts Commission, Scotland's local authority watchdog, says the council must have clear plans to enable it to deliver its ambitious programme of transformation. The programme, called Fit for 2024, aims to improve how the council is run and save £30 million within the next five years.

The Commission says it is important for the council to be clear about the senior level staff it needs and have the right mix of skills in its workforce to deliver services differently. It is also crucial that that all council staff contribute to the transformation plans.

Although education, economic development and some social care services continue to improve, many services are performing below the national average. The council must do more to understand where and how these services need to improve.

Graham Sharp, Chair of the Accounts Commission, said: "The continued progress Scottish Borders Council has made to transform services is encouraging. Now it must focus on several critical areas including tackling underperforming services, ensuring councillors have the right training to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities and getting to grips with both staff and community engagement."

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#### Notes to editors

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1. Audit Scotland has prepared this report for the Accounts Commission. All Audit Scotland reports published since 2000 are available at [www.audit-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk)
  - 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.
2. Best Value Assurance reports, prepared for the Accounts Commission, offer a rounded and comprehensive analysis of a council's performance. These reports cover how effectively councils are managing changes in services; involving the public in decisions; ensuring enough skills and time to deliver clear priorities; and providing clear information so the public can gauge improvement.