

News release

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Argyll and Bute makes progress but more to do

Argyll and Bute Council has made solid improvement but needs to build on this for the future, says the Accounts Commission.

A report published today by the local government watchdog welcomes progress since 2013 in the council's decision making, scrutiny, governance, and improving relationships both between political groups, and members and officers.

In its findings the Commission says the council needs to be more transparent and open and improve how it involves communities to build trust and confidence of service users and the public.

Like all councils, Argyll and Bute has to make substantial savings over the next few years and so far has mainly looked at cutting services rather than doing things differently. The Commission says this approach is not sustainable and needs to be more clearly linked to the council's priorities and based on rigorous appraisal of options for redesigning services.

The report also highlights long-standing personal and political differences between a small number of councillors, senior officers and the Argyll and Bute constituency MSP. The Commission's firm view is that the interests of the public are best served by a shared commitment by all parties to maintaining constructive relationships and high standards of conduct.

Accounts Commission chair Douglas Sinclair said "Argyll and Bute has made good progress but has more to do in key areas such as being more open and transparent, how it engages with the public, and developing a longer term financial strategy.

"There are now good foundations on which it can build."

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Notes to editors

1. The Controller of Audit has prepared this report for the Accounts Commission. His two previous reports on Argyll and Bute Council from October 2013 and July 2014 are available [here](#).
2. All Audit Scotland reports published since 2000 are available at 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.