

News release

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Inverclyde on track but has to maintain progress

Inverclyde Council has made significant improvements and needs to continue to build on those strengths for the future, says the Accounts Commission.

A report published today, the first of a new type of audit, charts progress since 2005 when the Commission found serious failings by the council in meeting its legal duty to demonstrate Best Value and continuous improvement.

Inverclyde Council has changed significantly, developing a positive culture of improvement which has resulted in better service performance. Key elements to its success include a clear vision and, effective collaborative leadership.

The report highlights a range of improvement activity and good joint working with partners. However, more clarity is needed on how this makes a difference to outcomes.

Financial management is effective. Like other councils it faces a significant savings gap in the medium term. Various proposals have already been worked up for councillors to yield savings of around £20 million. Newly-elected councillors will need to make decisions on these to ensure financial stability.

Inverclyde has been innovative in finding different ways of delivering services and involving local communities in reaching decisions.

In its findings, the Commission said it was pleased for the residents and communities of Inverclyde with the pace, depth and continuity of improvement. Inverclyde still faces substantial challenges. The council and its partners need to focus on improving outcomes and to set clear milestones for achieving them.

Ronnie Hinds, acting chair of the Accounts Commission, said: "Inverclyde has made real improvements and is doing well in many areas. However, the council still faces big challenges and needs to maintain this positive momentum.

"These new reports will give local people a detailed and rounded insight into how their council is performing. We hope this provides each council with an important foundation to help shape and improve services for the future."

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Notes to editors

1. The Controller of Audit has prepared this report for the Accounts Commission. It is the first of the new Best Value Assurance Reports (BVAR) designed to offer a comprehensive and detailed analysis of performance. All 32 councils will have a BVAR report at least every five years and all will still continue to be the subject of an annual audit report and accounts.

2. Until now, some councils may not have had a Best Value audit for a decade or more, whilst others had several. Inverclyde's 2005 Best Value audit and two progress reports in 2005 and 2007 can be viewed [here](#).

3. BVAR reports will be published on another five councils over the next year: Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, West Lothian, Orkney and Clackmannanshire. The new reports will 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 good information so the public can gauge improvement.

- 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.