

## News release

**Embargoed until 00:01 hours, Thursday 31 August 2017**

### Renfrewshire makes solid progress

**Renfrewshire Council continues to improve and is making encouraging progress in the performance of its services, says the Accounts Commission.**

A report published today, the second of a new type of audit, charts progress since 2006 when the Commission found the council had strong and effective leadership but needed to improve service performance. Improvements have been made since then in the way Renfrewshire plans, manages and carries out its business.

The council works well with its partners and has successfully brought in innovative ways of providing services at a local level. Continuing to build on engagement with local communities will be an essential part of progress in this area.

The report highlights stark inequalities within Renfrewshire - life expectancy for men in Ferguslie is 14 years behind those in Bishopton and there are similar disparities in child welfare and educational achievement. However, the council has a clear and ambitious vision to revitalise the area's economy and address poverty and inequality.

The report notes that changes have recently been made to strengthen previously weak scrutiny arrangements. The Commission urges councillors to make these arrangements work, ensure more constructive political arrangements and make better use of training and development opportunities.

In its findings, the Commission said effective financial management and planning gave Renfrewshire the capacity to deal with funding challenges. This needs to be supported by a workforce strategy. It also urges the council to look at ways of ensuring more transparency and clarity of responsibilities in its relationship with Renfrewshire Leisure which provides a range of services previously run directly by the council.

Christine May, acting deputy chair of the Accounts Commission said: "Renfrewshire has a sound foundation on which to build.

"Like other councils in Scotland, it has a new minority administration. The challenge for all councillors is to find ways they can work well together and improve the lives of the people of Renfrewshire."

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#### Notes to editors

1. The Controller of Audit has prepared this report for the Accounts Commission. It is the second of the new Best Value Assurance Reports (BVAR) which aim to offer a rounded and comprehensive analysis of a council's performance.
2. Until now, some councils may not have had a Best Value audit for a decade or more, whilst others have had several. 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.

3. BVAR reports will be published on another four councils over the next year: East Renfrewshire, West Lothian, Orkney and Clackmannanshire. The new 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 good information so the public can gauge improvement.
4. The previous 2006 report on Renfrewshire Council is available [here](#).
- 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.