

Accounts Commission

Audit of Best Value: Progress Report – Argyll and Bute Council

Commission findings

The Commission accepts this report by the Controller of Audit on progress made by Argyll and Bute Council since our 2013 and 2014 reports on Best Value in the Council.

The Commission acknowledges and welcomes the progress by the Council since 2013 in relation to improved governance, decision making and scrutiny arrangements and the improving relationships between political groups and between members and officers.

Members and senior officers need to consolidate this progress by continuing to improve the Council's openness, transparency and how it involves its communities in decision-making and scrutiny, in order to build the trust and confidence of service users and the public. More can be done to ensure a more effective contribution from area committees.

The council's current approach to the scale of the financial challenge it faces is not sustainable. This approach urgently needs to be more clearly linked to the Council's priorities and based on rigorous appraisal of options for service redesign.

The Commission notes with disquiet the dysfunctional relationships which persist between a number of individuals. The Commission is firmly of the view 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.

We will maintain our interest in the progress made by the Council. The Controller of Audit will continue to monitor progress through the annual audit process.