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PRESS RELEASE

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Best Value Progress Report

In response to the Audit Scotland progress report on Best Value published today, Shetland Islands Council have commented that they are pleased that significant progress has been made on the key priority areas agreed from the initial Best Value audit. The Council is fully committed to continuous improvement across all aspects of its business, through the development and deepening of the significant changes already initiated in organising the Councils business.

Chief Executive Morgan Goodlad stated, "We are pleased that the Accounts Commission acknowledges our progress; particularly in the agreed key areas of financial strategy, performance management and budgetary control. We are not surprised that we are now being urged to do more, faster, that is the nature of continuous improvement."

He went on to say "We are always going to have to work hard to address some of the particular challenges that Shetland faces. However the progress made, especially in service and financial management, has put us firmly on the right track to make sure the Council can deal with these effectively".

Convener Sandy Cluness added, "meeting the needs of the Shetland community now, and in the future, remains the priority of the Council. We keep those needs at the front of our minds when making choices and changes about how the Council operates. Shetland has some unique issues and opportunities, and it can take time to make sure everyone is part of making decisions about doing things differently. We are determined to find the right solutions for Shetland, and will continue to put services to the people of Shetland first.

He continued; "The overall feedback we have had on the improvement work we have done with our partners, the community, auditors and others is we have made very positive changes. We will continue to work hard to build on these solid foundations."

Shetland Island Council will consider the progress report in detail over the next few weeks and reflect on how its Corporate Improvement Plan should be updated in light of its content.

There will then be a formal debate on any modifications and other response during its March meeting cycle.

Ends.....

Notes; for further information on the Shetland Islands Councils corporate improvement agenda or background information contact John Smith, Head of Organisational Development on 01595 744513, e-mail jrsmith@shetland.gov.uk.