

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK (LGBF) 2016/17: ASC MEMBERS' COMMENTS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Audit and Scrutiny Committee agreed at the meeting on 19 June 2018 to forward comments with regard to the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) 2016/17 report.
- 1.2 This paper presents the comments received from members.
- 1.3 Some comments are observations but where possible appropriate responses are provided.
- 1.4 It is recommended that the Audit and Scrutiny Committee (ASC) –
- Endorses the report.
 - Agrees that information contained in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework is used as a tool to inform the Committee's scrutiny process on their selected topics.
 - Note that the Performance and Improvement Team in IHR will be involved in scoping future scrutiny work.
 - Note that the LGBF 2016/17 report is published on the Council Website and forms part of our statutory Public Performance Reporting duty.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK (LGBF) 2016/17: ASC MEMBERS' COMMENTS

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This paper presents the comments received from members following the presentation of the LGBF 2016/17 report for Argyll and Bute at the Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 19 June 2018. The report includes 'Telling Our Story' and 'Looking Forward' commentary from Heads of Service.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Audit and Scrutiny Committee (ASC):

- 3.1 Endorses the report.
- 3.2 Agrees that information contained in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework is used as a tool to inform the Committee's scrutiny process on their selected topics.
- 3.3 Note that the Performance and Improvement Team in IHR will be involved in scoping future scrutiny work.
- 3.4 Note that the LGBF 2016/17 report is published on the Council Website and forms part of our statutory Public Performance Reporting duty.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 All Scottish Councils participate in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) which is managed and produced by the Improvement Service (IS). The purpose of the LGBF is to improve performance through Benchmarking and sharing good practice between councils.
- 4.2 The Framework consists of 94 indicators that are collected through various means during the year. For example directly to the IS, CIPFA, the Scottish Government or the Scottish Household Survey (SHS). Many of the indicators have data from 2010/11.
- 4.3 In the past the LGBF has been criticised for using measures that many councils felt were not relevant, or that sample sizes, such as the SHS, were too small

and did not provide the detailed qualitative feedback from service users. Work is ongoing to improve and strengthen the measures to support a more strategic use of the LGBF and be more outcome focused.

- 4.4 The LGBF is a key element of our Performance and Improvement Framework (PIF). The PIF enables the Council to deliver its statutory duty to 'make arrangements to secure Best Value (continuous improvement in the performance of functions)' as required by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. The use of the LGBF is also a key element in the current round of Best Value³ audits.
- 4.5 Some of the indicators in the LGBF are used strategically in our Service Plans and Scorecards while others are used operationally for Benchmarking.
- 4.6 The LGBF uses a rank structure to illustrate performance, from 1st to 32nd with the Scotland average also shown. The rank structure should be used in context of the actual performance. For example our performance may have improved but our rank position has worsen – this is because other Councils have also improved.

With this in mind, rather than simply analyse the data Heads of Service added commentary that helps us 'Tell Our Story'. This also helps put into perspective some of the challenges and achievements that have occurred. The 'Looking Forward' section contains additional commentary by Heads of Service and explains any improvements that have been identified in the process.

- 4.7 Following the presentation of the LGBF 2016/17 at the Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 19 June 2018 members were asked to review the report and feedback comments. The following comments, observations and questions have been received. Where appropriate answers are provided below.
- 4.8 General Comments
 - The Telling our Story and Looking Forward narratives are generally useful in scene setting and identifying forward initiatives. This is particularly so with the Education and Children and Families sections.
 - Members should bear in mind that the introduction of the Looking Forward section means that for each indicator two differing time periods are being revised - one looking back and one looking forward. This makes the scrutiny function more nuanced albeit more comprehensive.
 - There are weaknesses with the Adult Care and Roads indicators due to the lack of substantive comment in the Looking Forward section.
 - Looking Forward commentary by Live Argyll reflects its recent start up. While the core message is about the setting up of the Trust, specific proposals for improvement are referred to in the latter indicators.
 - ENV 4a and 4b The Looking Forward narrative is limited to continuation of the

roads status and options report. This does not sound particularly ambitious or radical given the significance of the roads infrastructure to the Council's corporate plan and in the Single Investment Plan. There is reference to £3.5m investment in 16-17. For greater clarity on the developing picture it would be helpful if the total expenditure (actual and budgeted) on roads be provided for the years 16/17-18/19.

4.9.1 Specific Questions / Answers

4.9.1 CHN 18: Quality Ratings for Children's Provision

Q: How is this data collected to help improve the Looking Forward Commentary?

A: The Care Inspectorate carries out announced and unannounced inspections for every service they inspect. For example records and files are examined and they talk to service users and providers. They take account of self-assessment forms that are completed, any recommendations or requirements that have previously been made and any complaints received. Grade are awarded for certain Quality Themes which indicate how good the service provision is. This information is provided to the Improvement Service for the purposes of the LGBF report.

4.9.2 CHN 20a: School Exclusion Rates – per 1,000 pupils

Q: What are the base number of pupils?

A: The total school roll for the 2016/17 academic year was 10,316

Q: What is the Looking Forward idea?

A: To continue working towards further reducing the school exclusion rates. There has been a consistent improvement for the last 4 years.

4.9.3 CHN 21: Participation Rates for 16-19 year olds

Q: What impact if any did inclusion of the young people in the dance school make on the percentage score?

A: It increased the unconfirmed score by 0.9%

Q: What are the numbers of young people involved?

A: 151 young people were unconfirmed, of these 33 were enrolled in the dance school and should therefore have been included in the participation figure. This would raise the participation percentage to 93.9%

4.9.4 CHN 22: The percentage of child protection re-registrations within 18 months

Q: How many children are involved?

A: In the period 1/8/16 to 31/7/17; there were 73 children registered. Four of these children had 2 registrations each (8) within 18 months.

4.9.5 CHN 23: Percentage of looked after children with more than 1 placement in the last year (Aug-July).

Q: How many children are involved?

A: Scottish Government methodology looked at those children who were still LAAC as at 31/7/2017. Therefore 45 of the 175 (25.71%) had 2 or more placements during the previous 12 months.

4.9.6 Corp 6b: Sickness Absence Days per Employee (non-teacher)

Q: Can more detail be provided on the proposed emphasis on the well-being programme?

A: The HR and OD team have been reviewing the council responses to the Health and Wellbeing Survey conducted in partnership with the NHS at the start of the year and are now in the process of putting together a draft wellbeing agenda. This will include where appropriate, findings and good practice around wellbeing from other key national reports and initiatives (Thriving at work etc.). The proposals will be presented to the HR Board in the autumn.

4.9.7 SW1,2 and 3

Q: Why is there no Looking Forward commentary?

A: Despite several requests commentary from the H&SCP was not provided.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 At the June ASC meeting, members were invited to make detailed comment on the benchmarking information that was presented. The comments and queries submitted have been presented in this report. The committee will use the PGBF data to inform their scrutiny work once their topics are selected.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1	Policy	None
6.2	Financial	None
6.3	Legal	The LGBF forms part of our statutory Public Performance Reporting duty
6.4	HR	None
6.5	Equalities	None
6.6	Risk	Engaging with the LGBF is an area of interest for the upcoming BV3 audit.
6.7	Customer Service	None

Douglas Hendry, Executive Director - Customer Services

4 September 2018

For further information contact: Jane Fowler, Head of Improvement and HR

