
ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

**POLICY AND RESOURCES
COMMITTEE**

CUSTOMER SUPPORT SERVICES

15 AUGUST 2019

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK 2017/18 – ANALYSIS
AND COMMENTARY**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This paper presents the final Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) 2017/18 data for Argyll and Bute which includes our 'Telling Our Story' and 'Looking Forward – Expected Impact on Indicator' commentary from Heads of Service.

1.2 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee (PRC):

- Considers the contents of the report for scrutiny activity and performance reporting purposes.
- Notes that the completed LGBF 2017/18 is published on our website as part of the Council's statutory Public Performance Reporting duty.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK (LGBF) 2017/18

ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This paper presents an overview of the relevant Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) indicators 2017/18 and the Council's performance. LGBF is used as the main tool for comparing Council performance and has been developed by COSLA and the Improvement Service.
- 2.2 The paper presents the 11 Policy and Resources performance indicators from the final LGBF 2017/18 data for Argyll and Bute. The analysis includes 'Telling Our Story' and 'Looking Forward – Expected Impact on Indicator' commentary from Heads of Service. The completed LGBF 2017/18 is published on our website as part of the Council's statutory Public Performance Reporting duty.
- 2.3 The report highlights our performance as well as setting out the wider context within which we are delivering our services.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee (PRC):

- 3.1 Considers the contents of the report for scrutiny activity and performance reporting purposes.
- 3.2 Notes that the completed LGBF 2017/18 is published on our website as part of the Council's 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 81 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 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.
- 4.4 Some of the indicators in the LGBF are used strategically in our Service Plans and Scorecards while others are used operationally for Benchmarking. Some services also use other sources of benchmarking information where this is more relevant to their service.
- 4.5 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 may have fallen – this is because other Councils have also improved.
- 4.6 With this in mind, rather than simply analyse the data, Heads of Service have 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 – Expected Impact on Indicator' section contains additional commentary by Heads of Service and explains any improvements that have been identified in the process.
- 4.7 Our performance should also be viewed in the context of the challenges we face. These challenges mainly come in the form of geography, demography and finance.
- 4.8 The financial climate we operate within is challenging. Over the past 5 years Argyll and Bute Council has had the third largest cut to its core funding of all of Scotland's councils since 2013/14. This is despite having the highest number of inhabited islands (23) and the second largest mainland area and facing challenges of depopulation, rurality and deprivation.
- 4.9 Over the past nine years we have met the challenge of delivering £50 million in savings.
- 4.10 The direct impact of these savings has meant that we have had to prioritise our services against our strategic objectives whilst ensuring that we meet our statutory requirements. As a result we have taken prudent decisions to reflect as far as possible the needs of our communities, aware that these decisions may adversely impact on the performance of some of the indicators within the LGBF report.
- 4.11 The final data is normally received at the end of March / early April each year. Since then the data has been analysed and is now presented in a more user

friendly way. It should be noted that the base year differs for some indicators.

- 4.12 This report presents the 11 performance indicators that relate to Policy and Resources Committee areas of interest.
- 4.12 This report is a large piece of work with the objective of improved performance engagement and scrutiny by Officers, Elected Members and the Public. Consideration for future presentation options will be taken forward during the course of 2019/20, i.e. whether to continue with the presented format or use Pyramid to illustrate our performance.
- 4.13 Many of the Improvements mentioned in Looking Forward are captured in the current Service Plans, either as success measures or improvements. Other Improvements that are noted in Looking Forward will be identified and built in Pyramid.
- 4.14 The Improvement Service are holding a series of Learning and benchmarking events throughout the year. The purpose of these is to work with councils to further improve the appropriateness of the indicators. We are fortunate that Executive Director Pippa Milne is a member of the Board of the LGBF and this will support our engagement going forward.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The PRC considers the contents of the report for scrutiny activity and performance reporting purposes.
- 5.2 Notes that analysis and commentary on the full suite of LGBF indicators which was reviewed by the Audit and Scrutiny committee at their June meeting can be accessed via the following link:
<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=595&MId=8311&Ver=4>

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1	Policy	None
6.2	Financial	None
6.3	Legal	Publication forms part of our statutory Public Performance Reporting duty
6.4	HR	None
6.5	Fairer Scotland Duty	No impact assessment required for this report, although the report notes that there are geographic and demographic issues that impact on LGBF performance indicators.
6.5.1	Equalities – protected characteristics	N/A
6.5.2	Socio-economic Duty	N/A
6.5.3	Islands	N/A
6.6	Risk	Engaging with the LGBF is an area of interest for the upcoming BV3 audit.
6.7	Customer Service	None

Pippa Milne, Executive Director
22 July 2019

For further information contact: Jane Fowler, Head of Customer Support Services

Appendices

Appendix 1 – LGBF 2017-18 Policy and Resources PIs