
ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

CUSTOMER SUPPORT SERVICES

14 SEPTEMBER 2021

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK 2019/20 – ANALYSIS
AND COMMENTARY**

1.1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.2. This paper presents the final Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) 2019/20 data for Argyll and Bute which includes our 'How We Performed' and 'Expected Future Performance and Impact Of Policy Decisions' commentary from Heads of Service.

1.3. It is recommended that the Audit and Scrutiny Committee:

1.3.1. Considers the contents of the report for scrutiny activity and performance reporting purposes.

1.3.2. Notes that the completed LGBF 2019/20 is published on our website as part of the Council's statutory Public Performance Reporting duty.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK (LGBF) 2019/20

ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This paper presents a selection of indicators from the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) 2019/20 and the Council's performance.

2.2 The indicators for analysis have been identified by the Strategic Management Team (SMT) for analysis. The analysis includes 'How We Performed' and 'Expected Future Performance and Impact Of Policy Decisions' commentary from Heads of Service. The completed LGBF 2019/20 is published on our website as part of the Council's statutory Public Performance Reporting duty.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Audit and Scrutiny Committee:

3.1 Considers the contents of the report for scrutiny activity and performance reporting purposes;

3.2 Notes that the completed LGBF 2019/20 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 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.

4.3 The Framework consists of 97 indicators which this year includes 7 new indicators to cover Financial Sustainability (5) and Climate Change (2). The data is 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.

4.4 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. In the past the LGBF has been criticised for using measures that many councils felt were not relevant, or the SHS size was too small a sample. We actively engage with the IS and other Scottish Councils to improve and strengthen the measures to support a more strategic use of the LGBF and for the framework to be more outcome focused.

- 4.5** Geography and demography impact on indicators in a variety of ways. For some we recognise we cannot change the performance and will always be for example, high in cost, which in turn impacts on the performance of particular LGBF indicators, such as the cost of primary and secondary school pupils.

However, the indicators that we can influence through improvements and those that matter to our communities have been identified for detailed analysis and are directly mapped to our Corporate Outcomes.

- 4.6** To help put performance into context and support improvement the LGBF groups Councils with similar characteristics into two sets of Family Groups

The characteristics for Family Groups are the type of population that they serve (e.g. relative deprivation and affluence) and the type of area in they cover (e.g. urban, semi-rural, rural).

The two sets of Family groups are centred around:

- People's Services: Children; Social Work and Housing.
- Corporate Services: Environment; Culture & Leisure, Economic Development; Corporate and Property.

Our membership of these two sets of family groups are different.

Within People's Services we are part of a family group with: Angus; East Lothian; Highland; Midlothian; Moray; Scottish Borders; Shetland.

Within Corporate Services we are part of a family group with: Aberdeenshire; Dumfries and Galloway; Eilean Siar; Highland; Orkney Islands; Scottish Borders; Stirling.

- 4.7** In March 2021 the SMT identified 58 indicators for analysis. Analysis was performed on 52 indicators as data was not available for 6 of the identified indicators. Where possible these have been linked by subject matter. Analysis has been performed on our Family Group of councils and are presented in Appendix 1 by Corporate Outcome in the following order:

- People Live Active, Healthier And Independent Lives
- People Will Live In Safer And Stronger Communities
- Children And Young People Have The Best Possible Start
- Education, Skills And Training Maximise Opportunities For All
- Our Economy Is Diverse And Thriving
- We Have An Infrastructure That Supports Sustainable Growth
- Getting It Right

This mapping is part of our performance improvement activity, which seeks to better align the measures that we report on for scrutiny purposes to our Corporate Outcomes. The full list of LGBF 2019/20 indicators with the 58 identified for analysis is presented in Appendix 2. It should be noted that the order of presentation is that of the LGBF and not by Corporate Outcome.

4.8 Some of the LGBF indicators are used strategically in our Service Plans and Scorecards while others are used operationally for Benchmarking.

The following LGBF indicators are used within our Service Plans and therefore directly mapped to our Corporate Outcomes.

- CHN 21: Participation Rate for 16-19-year olds
- CORP 8: Percentage of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days
- CORP ASSET 1: Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use
- ENV 7b: % of adults satisfied with street cleaning services
- CORP 7: Percentage of income due from Council Tax received by the end of the year

However, we do not just use the LGBF to monitor and present our performance or aid our improvement journey. It is important to note that other indicators which are similar to those in the LGBF are used and mapped to our Corporate Outcomes, for example:

- RIS113_02: The percentage of roads in need of maintenance as defined by the annual survey. (This captures and presents the overall condition of all our road network).
- RIS114_02: The number of tonnes of waste sent to landfill. (This captures all landfill waste, not just domestic)
- EDU106_01: Increase positive destinations for our looked after children in Argyll and Bute. (We work to ensure that our looked after young people have the best transitions possible to equip them for post school life).

4.9 The LGBF uses a rank structure to illustrate performance, from 1st to 32nd with the Scotland average also shown. The rank structure should only be used in context of the actual performance. For example, our performance may have improved but our rank position has worsened, this can occur if other Councils have also improved. The rank structure is not made public by the Improvement Service, therefore this approach has been maintained for the purposes of this report.

4.10 To illustrate our performance for all of the LGBF indicators analysis by quartile has been performed on 83 indicators that there is data for. This is excluding the 5 Housing and 9 indicators with no data. This is presented as follows:

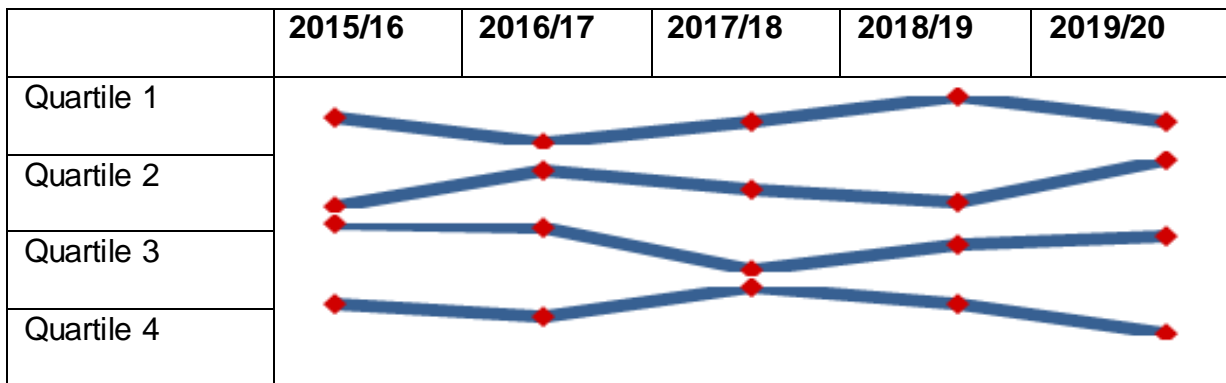
Table 1. Presents analysis of 83 indicators by quartile and as a percentage.

	83 Indicators
Quartile 1 (Best)	17%
Quartile 2	31%
Quartile 3	25%
Quartile 4	27%

Table 2. Presents our performance over the past 5 years of the LGBF analysis by quartile as a percentage has been performed. It should be noted that the LGBF dataset has grown over the years and for the 2019/20 dataset 9 indicators have no data. Although a direct year-on-year comparison cannot be made it provides an indication of our performance.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Quartile 1	18%	13%	17%	22%	17%
Quartile 2	17%	28%	22%	18%	31%
Quartile 3	29%	28%	18%	24%	25%
Quartile 4	36%	32%	42%	36%	27%

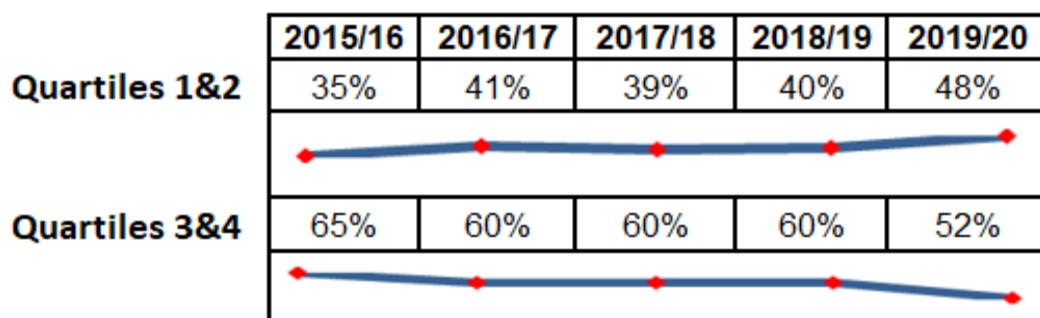
Table 3. Presents our past 5 years of LGBF performance by quartile as above as a simple trend line.



4.11 To further help present a simple overview of our performance over the past years' Quartiles have been combined to present the trend in our performance by the Top 50% of performance and the Bottom 50% of performance.

As can be seen in Table 4 the percentage of all indicators within the top two quartiles over the past 5 years has improved, while the percentage of all indicators within the bottom two quartiles has decreased.

Table 4. Illustrates overall trend in performance for Quartiles 1&2 combined and Quartiles 3&4 combined over the past 5 years.



4.12 HROD have analysed the data, this is presented in the 'How We Performed' section. Rather than simply analyse the data Heads of Service have added narrative that helps us understand future performance. This is presented in the 'Expected Future Performance and Impact Of Policy Decisions'. The Head of Service narrative can put into perspective some of the challenges and achievements that have occurred, align policy decisions to performance and any expected impact on delivery which helps address the findings from Audit Scotland in our recent Best Value 3 audit.

4.13 Points for noting that relate to the complete LGBF 2019/20 report are:

- The Mid-Year Population Estimates (MYE) used for this LGBF 2019/20 report are 2019. For 2019 MYE for Argyll and Bute was 85,870
- Detailed analysis was performed on the reduced suite of indicators from our Family Group and Scotland rather than all Scottish Councils.
- We are not reporting the indicator Rankings. This is in line with the Improvement Service practice whereby they do not publish the Ranking data.
- Of the 97 indicators in total in the LGBF, 5 refer to Housing which we do not submit data for; due to Covid current data is not available for 9 of the indicators. Where these are for indicators identified for analysis this is noted individually.
- Of the indicators identified for detailed analysis five are survey satisfaction measures. This Data comes from the Scottish Household Survey. The surveys cover a mixture of periods varying from a 3 year period to annual however, for most indicators the period is 2017-20. The data is a rolling 3-year average with a 5.5% confidence tolerance.

The sample and response sizes are both very small, these should be borne in mind when reviewing the satisfaction results.

To complement these findings a local survey is planned for 2021/22. The findings will be presented once available.

4.14 The LGBF is also a key element in our Performance Excellence Project (PEP). Following the outcome of our 2019 BV3 audit the PEP has been exploring ways to improve our performance management, reporting and scrutiny.

The PEP has a desired outcome of improved performance engagement and scrutiny by Officers, Elected Members and the Public. There has been engagement with elected members, Strategic Management Team, Heads of Service and Managers. The process has been facilitated by an external expert and has taken a root and branch review of our approach.

Recommendations based on this engagement will be brought to the Policy and Resource Committee on 30th September 2021. Consideration for future presentation options based on the decisions taken in September will be taken forward during the course of 2021/22 for implementation for 22/23.

A regular update on all Performance Improvement Framework (PIF) activity which includes the PEP, is included in the Council 6-Month Performance Report at the December 2021 Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

4.15 The LGBF is a large piece of work with a desired outcome of improved performance engagement and scrutiny by Officers, Elected Members and the Public.

4.16 The IS hold 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. As a result of Covid these are now being held online which gives us the opportunity to attend more than has been possible in the past. We are fortunate that the Chief Executive Pippa Milne is a member of the Board of the LGBF, which supports our engagement going forward.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The Audit and Scrutiny Committee considers the contents of the report for scrutiny activity and performance reporting purposes.

5.2 Notes that the completed LGBF 2019/20 is published on our website as part of the Council's statutory Public Performance Reporting duty.

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 Equalities None

6.6 Risk Engaging with the LGBF is a key element in our Performance Excellence Project which aims to improve our performance management, reporting and scrutiny.

6.7 Customer Service None

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – LGBF 2019/20 by Corporate Outcome

Appendix 2 – LGBF 2019/20 – All Indicators