Argyll & Bute COUNCIL

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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Glossary of terms used in the Performance and Improvement Framework and wider performance and improvement activities

ABOIP	Argyll and Bute Outcomes Improvement Plan. It is a joint statement from the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership and sets out the partnership's vision for achieving long term outcomes for communities in Argyll and Bute. It is supported by locality plans and delivery plans
Benchmarking	Benchmarking refers to the comparison of a business's processes and performance with those of other organisations in order to see how well it is doing in relation to others. In turn, benchmarking may be a learning tool, and can be used to identify areas for business improvement. Typical things to benchmark are quality, time and cost. Benchmarking may be used to compare organisations that have similar characteristics (e.g. other rural authorities) or with 'best in class' organisations. 'Longitudinal benchmarking' may refer to the comparison of a single organisation's performance over time.

Best Value	The duty of Best Value, which was set out in the Local Government in Scotland Act (2003), requires that Public Services make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance whilst maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost. In making these arrangements and securing that balance, Public Services must have regard to economy, efficiency, the equal opportunities requirements, and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. (https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-public-finance-manual/best-value/best-value/)
Consultation	Consultation is the dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views, with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action (Consultation Institute).
Continuous Improvement	Continuous improvement is the improvement of products, services or processes through incremental and breakthrough improvements. Improvement should not be seen as a series of one-off activities that are completed and then forgotten; instead, improvement should be seen as being an ongoing process.
Corporate Plan	The Corporate Plan sets out the council's strategic priorities and how these relate to the council's corporate outcomes and vision as well as to the vision and outcomes we share with our community planning partners.
Engagement	Engagement involves an on-going mutually beneficial two-way partnership between the council and stakeholders. Decision-making may be shared between the parties. Engagement differs from consultation because the relationship between the parties is ongoing.
External evaluations	Some parts of the council are subject to external evaluations and inspections. These may lead to the identification of areas for improvement.
Inspections	Some parts of the council are subject to external evaluations and inspections. These may lead to the identification of areas for improvement.

Internal self-assessment	As part of the PIF's monitoring and review activities, the council expects engagement in self-assessment. This can be as part or whole of a team function, or a thematic area of service delivery that crosses a number of teams. We need to reflect honestly on our activities and functions to help identify areas for improvement.
Local Government Benchmarking Framework	The Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) brings together a range of information about the performance of Scottish councils. The LGBF has published benchmarking data for a range of indicators annually since 2010-11. The LGBF indicators cover seven service areas that, together, account for over 60% of local government spending. These service areas are: children, corporate, adult social care, culture and leisure, environmental, housing and economic development. LGBF data is published by the Improvement Service <insert link>
Local Government in Scotland Act (2003)	The Local Government in Scotland Act (2003) placed a statutory duty of Best Value upon local authorities in the discharge of their functions. The Act also required local authorities to engage in, and demonstrate, continuous improvement.
Performance and Improvement Framework	The Performance and Improvement Framework sets out how the council approaches its performance and improvement functions to ensure that it meets its obligations to deliver Best Value to the people of Argyll and Bute.
Performance management	Performance management involves the assessment of an employee, process, equipment or other factor to gauge progress towards predetermined goals. On the basis of the observed performance, actions should be taken to make improvements as required.
Performance Management system	The council reports and monitors performance through a set of dashboards using Power BI.
Performance measures	Performance measures are quantifiable indicators that are used to assess how well the organisation is achieving its intended objectives or outcomes. The review of performance measures is an integral part of performance management, and enables managers to assess in an objective manner how their business is operating and whether improvement is required. To achieve this, measures should be SMART: Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound. Measures should be associated with targets and, where possible, benchmarks.

PIF	See Performance and Improvement Framework
Public Performance Reporting (PPR)	All performance that is reported to the public. Some performance reporting is carried out as a statutory activity. Most reporting is desirable. PPR is required as part of Best Value and can reduce numbers of Freedom of Information Requests.
PPR	See Public Performance Reporting.
Scrutiny	Scrutiny requires assessing evidence (e.g. relating to performance indicators, benchmarking data and financial processes) to enable the examination of policies and procedures, and the formation of recommendations for improvement.
Self-assessment	A lot of improvement activity starts with some form of self-assessment. The key point of self-assessment is that it is something we do ourselves, about ourselves. Self-assessment can range from simple and informal activities (e.g. SWOT) through to more complicated, formal exercises (e.g. PSIF). All self-assessment activities have in common the need for open and honest reflection. Some services or teams may be required to do self-assessment within their professional work area using a specific tool provided for this. Alternatively, the Council has created a template and guidance for self-assessment.