

PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW SCRUTINY FORUM

Minutes of meeting held via Confero and in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 16 August 2022

Chair:

Councillor Joe Fagan

Councillors Present:

Councillor Gerry Convery (Depute), Councillor Andrea Cowan (*substitute for Councillor Maureen Chalmers*), Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Katy Loudon, Councillor Davie McLachlan, Councillor Kirsten Robb

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor John Anderson, Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Councillor Richard Lockhart, Councillor John Ross

Attending:

Chief Executive's Service

C Sneddon, Chief Executive

Community and Enterprise Resources

T Finn, Planning and Building Standards Manager (Headquarters); C Park, Head of Roads, Transportation and Fleet Services

Education Resources

D Dickson, Education Operations Manager

Finance and Corporate Resources

P Manning, Executive Director; S Somerville, Administration Manager; T Little, Head of Communications and Strategy; K McLeod, Administration Assistant; S McLeod, Administration Officer; N Reid, Improvement and Community Planning Manager; M Gordon, Administration Assistant

Health and Social Care/Social Work Resources

I Beattie, Head of Health and Social Care (Hamilton and Clydesdale)

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2 Council Plan Connect 2017 to 2022 - Quarter 4 Progress Report 2021/2022

A report dated 1 August 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the progress of 'Connect', the Council Plan 2017 to 2022, at the Quarter 4 Stage of 2021/2022.

'Connect' detailed the Council's vision, values, ambitions and objectives to be delivered in the 5 year period of the Plan. Progress made on key objectives was summarised in the report. Of the 108 measures nominated for reporting against the Plan:-

- ◆ 16 projects had been completed
- ◆ 73 had met their timescale or target as per expectations
- ◆ 11 had minor slippage against timescale or minor shortfall against target
- ◆ 2 had major slippage against timescale or major shortfall against target
- ◆ 6 were contextual or would be reported on at a later stage

A summary of the key achievements against each of the 4 'Connect' priorities was contained in the report and the 'Connect' Performance Report for Quarter 4, 2021/2022, covering the period to the end of March 2022, was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

To aid scrutiny, a further analysis had been introduced, with any measures that had changed status between Quarters 2 and 4 being highlighted and an explanation provided for the change of status. Of the 108 measures, 27 had changed status between Quarters 2 and 4 with 9 measures showing a decline in performance, mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and 18 measures showing an improvement in performance. A list of those measures was attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

The Forum decided:

- (1) that the 'Connect' Quarter 4 Progress Report 2021/2022, summarised in the report and attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the summary of the Council's key achievements against each of the 4 'Connect' priorities, for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, be noted; and
- (3) that the additional scrutiny of changes in measure status between Quarter 2 and Quarter 4, summarised in the report and attached as Appendix 2 to the report, be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 17 August 2021 (Paragraph 4)]

Councillor McLachlan joined the meeting after this item of business

3 Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2020/2021 Results and Action Plan

A report dated 27 June 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the Scottish Local Government Benchmarking (LGBF) results for 2020/2021.

The LGBF compared spend/cost, performance and customer satisfaction results over several years and between similar councils. It comprised a number of performance indicators across a range of services.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council had been forced to suspend or reduce a number of services in order to comply with government advice. In addition, the Council had been required to redirect resources to deliver vital new services to support individuals, communities and businesses and there had been an inevitable impact on performance in some areas.

Information on the Council's LGBF data and results for 2020/2021, together with comparative data for 2019/2020 and 2018/2019, was provided in Appendix 1 to the report. This information also showed whether the Council's performance in 2020/2021 had improved, remained the same or declined compared to the previous year and how the Council's performance compared with the Scottish average.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic had affected data collection for some indicators, notably in education, details of which were provided in the report.

Although the LGBF results were available for all councils in Scotland and could be used to construct league tables, the Local Government Improvement Service (LGIS) cautioned against this approach and emphasised that the purpose of the data was to open discussion about performance and improvement in the context of specific services whilst taking account of geography, demographics and local council priorities. It was, therefore, important to pay attention to the narrative against each indicator when forming a judgement on what the performance meant in a South Lanarkshire context.

At a local level, each council was required to publish its results at the same time as the publication of the national results by the LGIS. The LGIS would continue to:-

- ◆ review and develop indicators
- ◆ hold benchmarking events where local authorities could share good practice

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

On a point raised regarding whether visits to leisure facilities referred only to physical visits or included virtual visits, officers undertook to provide the information requested to the members.

The Forum decided:

- (1) that the importance of viewing LGBF measures in the local context, as detailed in the report, be noted;
- (2) that the results, narrative, actions and family group analysis identified following scrutiny of the results for 2020/2021 be noted;
- (3) that it be noted that the Council's LGBF results and explanatory narrative for 2020/2021 had been published on the Council's website, to coincide with the publication of the national results by the Local Government Improvement Service; and
- (4) that the developments and events being undertaken by the Local Government Improvement Service/LGBF Board be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 18 May 2021 (Paragraph 3)]

4 Local Government Benchmarking Framework Update

A report dated 21 July 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted providing an update on engagement with the Local Government Improvement Service (LGIS) regarding the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) and its future use.

Following the update provided to this Forum at its meeting held on 26 October 2021, in December 2021, the LGIS provided a bespoke analysis of LGBF indicators for the Council, structured around the emerging key themes contained in the new Council Plan for 2022 to 2027.

The aim of the analysis had been to look at the LGBF indicators more thematically and strategically. Resources had been asked to review the LGIS analysis in tandem with work on the new Council Plan for 2022 to 2027 and consider which LGBF indicators added value and would be the best candidates for inclusion in a subset of indicators for future reporting. The resultant draft suite of indicators, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, identified 33 of the 95 LGBF indicators for inclusion within the reporting arrangements for the Council Plan.

Discussions with the LGIS had also highlighted the importance of how and when progress against the indicators was reported and identified barriers to using the LGBF for effective scrutiny, enquiry and learning which were detailed in the report.

This suggested that a best practice approach placed an emphasis on considering LGBF indicators in a more integrated and thematic way alongside other performance reporting. This would enable the LGBF to be seen in an appropriate context alongside or in the course of strategic decision-making and scrutiny. Consequently, the draft strategic suite of LGBF indicators, included at Appendix 1 to the report, would form part of the reporting arrangements for the new Council Plan for 2022 to 2027 and would appear alongside other measures relevant to the achievement of the 6 outcomes contained in the Plan.

To complement the reporting of this draft strategic suite of LGBF indicators, additional work would be undertaken to map the LGBF indicators across the Council's reporting arrangements to identify where LGBF might be included within other reporting streams where there would be more context and other indicators. The aim of this exercise would be to find a "home" for the LGBF indicators in the Council's routine reporting so that they could be reported in the most suitable context and alongside other appropriate information and narrative content.

As part of this exercise, the Public Performance Reports (PPRs) on the Council's website would be reviewed to identify where LGBF indicators could usefully be included. The PPRs were updated annually and were provided as part of the Council's commitment to balanced and accessible performance reporting as required by Best Value legislation. This would enhance the visibility and relevance of the LGBF in the Council's public performance reporting.

The conclusion of this work with the LGIS would ensure that the Council's LGBF indicators were embedded across its reporting arrangements, with a strategic focus on those indicators which were most relevant to the Council's priorities, strengthening opportunities to scrutinise the LGBF and enhance its role in the Council's public performance reporting.

Further work would be undertaken with the LGIS and a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Forum after the conclusion of this work to:-

- ◆ refine and finalise the draft strategic suite of indicators for use in conjunction with the reporting of the new Council Plan for 2022 to 2027
- ◆ investigate routes by which LGBF indicators could be embedded into routine reporting by mapping indicators to potential reporting routes

The Forum decided:

- (1) that the engagement with the LGIS on the use of the LGBF be noted;
- (2) that the draft suite of indicators aligned with Council Plan outcomes, as detailed in the report and attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be noted;
- (3) that it be noted that further work would be undertaken to map LGBF indicators to reporting routes which placed them in an appropriate setting and scrutiny context; and
- (4) that it be noted that a report on the conclusion of this work with the LGIS would be submitted to a future meeting of the Forum.

[Reference: Minutes of 26 October 2021 (Paragraph 3)]

5 Annual Performance Spotlights 2021/2022

A report dated 12 July 2022 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the Annual Performance Spotlights for 2021/2022.

At its meeting on 4 September 2018, the Forum had considered a report which set out plans to review the Annual Performance Report (APR) element of the Council's public performance reporting (PPR) approach. Consequently, a new approach had been developed which replaced the APR document with Annual Performance Spotlights (APS). The APS provided "bite sized" web content performance information for each objective contained in 'Connect', the Council Plan, together with the theme Delivering the Plan and Achieving Best Value. Each APS consisted of:-

- ◆ a case study
- ◆ a selection of infographics
- ◆ links to other related material

The infographics contained in the 2021/2022 APS were attached as Appendix 1 to the report. In response to points raised by the Accounts Commission in the Council's Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) 2019, the 2021/2022 APS had been improved by:-

- ◆ including, for each infographic, trend information with a clear indication as to whether performance had improved and if the target had been met
- ◆ providing a link, directly below the infographic on the website, to supporting data, further reports or more detailed information

A suite of public performance reports, focusing on key areas of Council business, would continue to be prepared to complement the APS. The format of the APS would be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure the documents kept pace with public expectations, Audit Scotland's requirements in respect of public performance reporting, continuous improvement and Best Value, the Accounts Commission's Direction 2021 and the Council Plan for 2022 to 2027. The APS for 2021/2022 would become live on the Council's website in September 2022, significantly in advance of the statutory deadline of 31 March 2023.

The Forum decided: that the report and the content of the Annual Performance Spotlights 2021/2022 be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 17 August 2021 (Paragraph 3)]

6 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.