



Council Offices, Almada Street
Hamilton, ML3 0AA

Monday, 20 May 2024

Dear Councillor

Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum

The Members listed below are requested to attend a meeting of the above Forum to be held as follows:-

Date: Tuesday, 28 May 2024

Time: 14:00

Venue: Hybrid - Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton, ML3 0AA

The business to be considered at the meeting is listed overleaf.

Yours sincerely

Paul Manning
Chief Executive

Members

Joe Fagan (Chair), Gerry Convery (Depute Chair), John Anderson, Maureen Chalmers, Maureen Devlin, Richard Lockhart, Katy Loudon, Davie McLachlan, Kirsten Robb, John Ross

Substitutes

Andrea Cowan, Gladys Ferguson-Miller, Martin Hose, Eileen Logan, Margaret B Walker

BUSINESS

1 Declaration of Interests

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

3 - 6

Minutes of the meeting of the Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum held on 19 March 2024 submitted for approval as a correct record. (Copy attached)

Item(s) for Consideration

3 Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Overview Report 2022/2023 7 - 12

Report dated 2 May 2024 by the Chief Executive. (Copy attached)

4 Accounts Commission - New Approach to the Audit of Best Value – Falkirk and Moray Councils 13 - 18

Report dated 2 May 2024 by the Chief Executive. (Copy attached)

5 Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Dashboard Development 19 - 24

Report dated 2 May 2024 by the Chief Executive. (Copy attached)

Urgent Business

6 Urgent Business

Any other items of business which the Chair decides are urgent.

For further information, please contact:-

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Clerk Name: | Stuart McLeod |
| Clerk Telephone: | 07385 370 117 |
| Clerk Email: | stuart.mcleod@southlanarkshire.gov.uk |

PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW SCRUTINY FORUM

2

Minutes of meeting held via Confero and in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 19 March 2024

Chair:

Councillor Joe Fagan

Councillors Present:

Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Councillor Gerry Convery (Depute), Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Richard Lockhart, Councillor Katy Loudon, Councillor Kirsten Robb, Councillor John Ross, Councillor Margaret Walker (*substitute for Councillor Davie McLachlan*)

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor John Anderson, Councillor Davie McLachlan

Attending:

Chief Executive's Service

P Manning, Chief Executive; T Little, Head of Communications and Strategy; L Marshall, Finance Adviser; N Reid, Improvement and Community Planning Manager

Community and Enterprise Resources

A Brown, Head of Enterprise and Sustainable Development; K Carr, Head of Facilities, Waste and Grounds; C Park, Head of Roads, Transportation and Fleet Services

Education Resources

D Dickson, Education Operations Manager

Finance and Corporate Resources

J Taylor, Executive Director; M Gordon, Administration Assistant; S McLeod, Administration Officer

Housing and Technical Resources

L Hayes, Performance and Support Adviser

Social Work Resources

M McConnachie, Adult and Older People Service Manager

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum held on 5 December 2023 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Forum decided: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

3 Scottish Household Survey Key Findings

A report dated 29 February 2024 by the Chief Executive was submitted providing a summary of the key findings from the Scottish Household Survey which had been published in December 2023.

The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) was an annual survey of the general population in Scotland which had been carried out since 1999 and aimed to collect reliable and up-to-date information on a range of topics, through a random sample of people in private residencies.

The report provided a summary of the key findings that were particularly relevant to local government in relation to:-

- ◆ housing
- ◆ neighbourhoods and communities
- ◆ finance
- ◆ physical activity and sport
- ◆ climate change
- ◆ internet access
- ◆ volunteering
- ◆ culture and heritage
- ◆ childcare
- ◆ trust in institutions

Approximately 450 households were sampled within South Lanarkshire and a summary of the data from the responses provided was also included in the report.

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

The Forum decided: that the report be noted.

4 Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2022/2023 Results and Action Plan

A report dated 29 February 2024 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the Scottish Local Government Benchmarking (LGBF) results for 2022/2023.

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.

South Lanarkshire Council's performance was summarised in table 1 of the report and further information on the Council's LGBF data and results for 2022/2023, together with comparative data for 2021/2022 and 2020/2021, was provided in Appendix 1 to the report. This information also showed whether the Council's performance in 2022/2023 had improved, remained the same or declined compared to the previous year and how the Council's performance compared with the Scottish average.

Family group analysis for indicators where the Council had lower performance than the Scottish average, based on the 2022/2023 results, was provided in Appendix 2 to 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 hold benchmarking events where local authorities could share good practice.

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 2022/2023 be noted; and

- (3) that it be noted that the Council's LGBF results and explanatory narrative for 2022/2023 would be published on the Council's website, to coincide with the publication of the national results by the Local Government Improvement Service.

[Reference: Minutes of 21 March 2023 (Paragraph 3)]

5 Best Value in Scotland

A report dated 29 February 2024 by the Chief Executive was submitted providing a summary of Audit Scotland's Best Value in Scotland report, published in September 2023, which had reflected on 20 years of auditing Best Value and the next steps for Best Value reporting in Scotland.

The Best Value in Scotland report provided details of how the Best Value audit approach had evolved and assessed its impact in driving improved performance, better governance, better use of public money and use of resources since its introduction in 2003.

The report to the Forum summarised the key messages and areas for further work, identified by the Accounts Commission, which included the following themes:-

- ◆ strategic direction in relation to:-
 - ◆ leadership
 - ◆ governance and accountability
- ◆ use of resources in relation to:-
 - ◆ performance management
 - ◆ financial management and planning
 - ◆ workforce
 - ◆ asset management
 - ◆ information
- ◆ partnership working in relation to:-
 - ◆ Community Planning and wider partnership working
 - ◆ communities
- ◆ continuous improvement in relation to transformation and reform

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

The Forum decided: that the report be noted.

6 Accounts Commission – New Approach to the Audit of Best Value – Initial Reports

A report dated 29 February 2024 by the Chief Executive was submitted on the Controller of Audit (COA) reports that had been published by the Accounts Commission under its new approach to auditing Best Value.

In terms of the new approach, auditors were required to report progress against previous Best Value audit reports and Accounts Commission findings. The Controller of Audit was required to report on all councils across the audit appointment round, covering the period October 2023 to August 2027.

The new approach consisted of brief COA reports which were accompanied by, and reflected on, published annual audit reports. The COA reports, which would be considered by the Accounts Commission in public and reported publicly, were intended to offer a Best Value focused reflection on each council's annual audit report.

In line with previous practice of reporting Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) findings to the Forum to highlight good practice and place South Lanarkshire Council's activities in context, the findings from the following COA reports were summarised in the Forum report:-

- ◆ South Ayrshire Council (published 2 November 2023)
- ◆ Dundee City Council (published 30 November 2023)
- ◆ Dumfries and Galloway Council (published 11 January 2024)
- ◆ Orkney Islands Council (published 30 January 2024)

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

The Forum decided: that the report be noted.

7 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

Report

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| Report to: | Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum |
| Date of Meeting: | 28 May 2024 |
| Report by: | Chief Executive |

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|----------|---|
| Subject: | Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Overview Report 2022/2023 |
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide a summary of the key messages from the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) overview report published by the Improvement Service in March 2024

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Forum is asked to approve the note the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the contents of the report be noted.

3. Background

3.1. The Local Government Improvement Service publishes an LGBF overview report each year, reflecting on the results and identifying key themes and messages presented by the data.

3.2. The 2022-23 overview was published in March 2024 and is the twelfth report in the series, drawing upon more than a decade of LGBF data.

3.3. This report summarises the key messages within the LGBF overview report.

4. The 2022/2023 Overview Report – Structure and Focus

4.1. In recent years (since the 2021/2022 report) the Local Government Improvement Service (LGIS) has reduced the size of the report and moved towards a more analytical and thematic treatment of the results. This has been achieved by shifting the publication of results onto an online platform, leaving the overview to focus on a more discursive approach.

4.2. The report is structured around the following themes:

- ◆ financial and workforce pressures
- ◆ poverty, financial hardship and cost of living crisis
- ◆ health and social care pressures
- ◆ education for children and young people
- ◆ performance of local government services

4.3. The overview report complements the publication of the LGBF dataset on the online dashboard. The dashboard provides the complete LGBF dataset comprising more than ten years' worth of data across more than 100 indicators. The dashboard also provides access to a wide range of financial data which is collected alongside the LGBF and profiles spending patterns across councils over time.

5. Key Messages

- 5.1. The 2022/2023 report introduces data from a period when communities and council services were managing unprecedented financial challenges in the shape of soaring inflationary pressures and the cost-of-living crisis. This was against a backdrop of deepening fiscal, demand and workforce pressures, including those resulting from the ongoing effects of the Covid pandemic.
- 5.2. During this time, funding levels for councils have not kept pace with increased demand, growing need and rising cost pressures. While total revenue funding for councils increased in real terms by 0.7% in 2022/2023, Audit Scotland report that the proportion of funding which is ringfenced in some way has grown from 23.7% to 25.7%, resulting in a 1.9% real-terms reduction in revenue funding available to councils in 2022/2023 to pursue local priorities.
- 5.3. The financial gap between councils' income and expenditure has increased by over a third in 2022/2023. To bridge this gap, councils have increased their reliance on savings, Council Tax increases, and have doubled their relative use of reserves.
- 5.4. In light of the sustained fiscal pressures and the requirement to make substantial savings, councils are facing increasingly difficult decisions in relation to their spending priorities. Expenditure within social care, education, and support for care experienced children continues to be sustained and enhanced, increasing since 2010/11 by 29%, 21% and 17% respectively.
- 5.5. Services which have seen cuts over the same period include:
- ◆ 20% reduction in culture and leisure spending
 - ◆ 27% reduction in planning spending
 - ◆ 24% reduction in corporate support service spending
 - ◆ 9% reduction in roads spending
 - ◆ 26% reduction in trading standards and environmental health spending
 - ◆ 35% reduction in street cleaning
- 5.6. In terms of overall Council service performance, the long-term picture remains positive, with 66% of performance indicators within the LGBF showing improvement since the base year. In recent years, however, year on year trends show a slowing in this improvement, and an increase in the number of performance indicators which are now declining. If the current trend continues, the improvements and progress that has been achieved thus far, could potentially be lost and Council service performance may start to decline over the longer-term.

- 5.7. While the overall picture points to a slow-down in performance improvement, there are a number of long-term improvement trends which have been sustained and strengthened in policy critical areas. These include:
- ◆ attainment both at senior phase and at primary level
 - ◆ positive destinations and participation in education, training or employment for 16–19-year-olds
 - ◆ school exclusion rates
 - ◆ placement stability for care experienced children
 - ◆ payment of the living wage
 - ◆ roll out of superfast broadband
 - ◆ housing energy efficiency
 - ◆ road network condition
 - ◆ the gender pay gap
 - ◆ Council Tax collection
 - ◆ corporate asset condition
- 5.8. While the recent downward trend in performance improvement is true for all councils, there is variation in the depth, severity and focus of impacts. This shows that although pressures are system wide, local areas are experiencing their impacts differently. Responses by councils have exemplified the importance of 'local' with local solutions and responses to local needs and issues, varying both between and within authorities.
- 5.9. Factors which play into the variability observed in the data include:-
- ◆ local priorities and strategic direction
 - ◆ local capacity in terms of infrastructure, workforce, digital maturity, and partnership context
 - ◆ local pattern of demand and need, including the demographic and socioeconomic profile of local communities
 - ◆ local geography, including the level of remoteness and population density
 - ◆ local responses to innovation; redesign; and transformation
 - ◆ local economy
- 5.10. Social care is the area where councils and their partners face significantly growing demands in part due to supporting the complex needs of people with disabilities and an ageing population. The long-term trends show how councils and their partners have worked together to expand provision and have succeeded in shifting the balance of care towards greater home-based support. However, LGBF data in 2022/2023 provides clear evidence of current system pressures, with significant capacity issues contributing to the delivery of fewer hours of care at home (-2.5% in 2022/2023), fewer people receiving personal care at home (-0.4% in 2022/2023) and increasing delayed discharges (up 23% in 2022/2023).
- 5.11. The ongoing cost-of-living crisis is adding pressures on families that will exacerbate the profound and ongoing impact the Covid pandemic has had on children in Scotland. Some key outcomes are showing strong improvement in 2022/2023 compared with pre-pandemic levels, including attainment for primary and senior phase pupils, and positive destinations. Other areas however, such as pupil attendance and the development of pre-school children, remain lower than pre-Covid levels.

- 5.12. Councils are facing multi-faceted workforce capacity pressures, including challenges of recruitment, retention, staff absence, and an ageing workforce. The scale of the problem is growing and spans a wide range of skills, professions and occupations. Council staff absence levels rose by 10% in 2022/2023 to reach the highest level ever reported (13.2 days for all staff, excluding teachers, and 6.8 days for teachers). Staff shortages are being felt to varying degrees across all Council services, largely driven by competition from other sectors, pay related issues, and shortages of workers with the appropriate skills (locally and nationally).
- 5.13. Data in this year's LGBF reveals the ongoing consequences of the cost-of-living crisis on the levels of financial hardship facing communities. The scale of this is evidenced in the growth in demand for Scottish Welfare Fund Grants (up 49% since 2019/20), Discretionary Housing Payments (up 23% since 2019/20), and increasing levels of rent arrears (up 2.3 percentage points since 2019/20).
- 5.14. Tackling poverty continues to be a core focus for local government and has been agreed as one of the three shared priorities within the Verity House Agreement. Councils have moved quickly to provide support to communities, deploying a range of measures aligned to local need, including bolstering existing provisions, sustaining or supplementing Covid funds, making best use of Council facilities, extending grants to voluntary organisations, debt recovery, and housing support. The deepening fiscal, workforce and demand pressures facing councils, however, pose real risks to the future sustainability of vital services which are essential in preventing and mitigating the effects of poverty.

6. Next steps and recommendations

- 6.1. The full data set for the LGBF is available through the LGIS [explore the data](#) tool. To complement the national dashboard, a South Lanarkshire LGBF dashboard has been developed which focuses on strategic indicators aligned to the Council Plan.

7. Employee Implications

- 7.1. There are no direct employee implications.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. There are no direct financial implications.

9. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 9.1. There are no direct climate change, sustainability and natural environment implications arising from this report.

10. Other Implications

- 10.1. Considering the detail of the report and identifying actions as appropriate contribute towards effective risk management.

11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 11.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

- 11.2. Consultation was not required to inform the contents of this report.

Paul Manning
Chief Executive

2 May 2024

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

- We will work to recover, progress and improve

Previous References

- None

List of Background Papers

- National Benchmarking Overview Report 2022/2023

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Tom Little, Head of Communications and Strategy

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E-mail: Tom.Little@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Report

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| Report to: | Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum |
| Date of Meeting: | 28 May 2024 |
| Report by: | Chief Executive |

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|----------|---|
| Subject: | Accounts Commission - New Approach to the Audit of Best Value – Falkirk and Moray Councils |
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise the Forum of key messages and recommendations from recent reports published under the Accounts Commission's new approach to auditing Best Value

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Forum is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the key messages and recommendations within the report be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. Towards the end of 2023, the Accounts Commission introduced a new approach to the Audit of Best Value to replace the Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) regime which had run from 2018 to 2023.
- 3.2. The approach consists of brief Controller of Audit (COA) reports accompanied by and reflecting on published annual audit reports. These COA reports are considered by the Commission in public and reported publicly.
- 3.3. The COA reports are intended to offer a BV-focused reflection on the Council's annual audit report. In line with the previous practice of bringing BVAR findings to the Forum to highlight good practice and place our own activities in context, the findings from the recent COA reports are summarised below.

4. Falkirk Council (Published 2 May 2024)

- 4.1. Falkirk received a broadly positive report, with recognition being given to the council's approach to transformational change and the collaborative leadership provided by officers and members. Strategic planning and public performance reporting also show elements of good practice, though further work in both areas is required.
- ◆ We are particularly pleased to see substantial improvements since our Best Value Assurance Report in 2022, but note that there is still work to do. Our findings are designed to both recognise these successes and provide encouragement and impetus where further improvement is required.

- ◆ In common with other councils across Scotland, Falkirk faces significant financial challenges. The council has a record of delivering savings, including through its Council of the Future programme, but has previously relied on non-recurring savings. Its financial strategy sets out a significant budget gap, which requires substantial savings to be made in the financial year just started, 2024/25, and the two following years. The council must focus on delivering recurring savings this year to avoid exacerbating the challenge in future years.
- ◆ While Falkirk has a track record in producing sufficient one-off savings, this is not necessarily an indicator of it being able to keep doing so without putting services at risk. This is why the transformational change programme is increasingly important. We welcome the strengthening of the Council of the Future Board. The Board will play a critical role in ensuring the delivery of the council's transformation programme and the associated savings.
- ◆ Linked to this, we are assured that the collaborative leadership of the council, by both officers and elected members, has improved in recent years. Continuing this consensual approach will be crucial in making and communicating the difficult decisions which lie ahead for the council and to ensure the council continues to meet the needs of its communities.
- ◆ It is also crucial that the council has effective community engagement arrangements in place. We note that consultation does take place, but we are concerned by the delays in production of the council's community engagement strategy. We encourage the council to accelerate this as much as possible, which can only assist in the difficult decisions to come. In doing so, we encourage the council to ensure its consultation and engagement activity is meaningful and that participants feel they are involved and listened to.
- ◆ The council's overall approach to strategic planning, with clear priorities and linked commitments, is welcome. While we were disappointed not to see evidence of formal, published, service plans, we understand this work is nearing completion.
- ◆ Despite being in its infancy, we are particularly pleased to see the council's approach to performance reporting, utilising both data from the Local Government Benchmarking Framework and its own indicators, and welcome the council's compliance with our Statutory Performance Information Direction. It is now critical that the council builds on this very promising start and further develops its approach to using performance information to drive improvements and address areas of underperformance.
- ◆ As is clear from the Controller of Audit's report and the Annual Audit Report, the council is grappling with difficult challenges, which will only continue in the years to come. This makes continuing to build on the improvements it has made even more important, if it is going to continue to improve outcomes for its citizens.

4.2. The Commission puts forward the following action points for Falkirk Council:

- ◆ Members and officers should work collaboratively to ensure the delivery of the priorities for the people of Falkirk.
- ◆ The council should review the revised arrangements to assess their effectiveness and make any necessary amendments to further enhance performance reporting and scrutiny; it should implement corporate self-evaluation.
- ◆ The council needs to identify further savings and take difficult decisions to ensure it can bridge its projected budget gap.
- ◆ The council should finalise and implement its community engagement strategy and ensure meaningful, quality consultation with stakeholders to involve them in the council's decision-making; it should ensure that budget consultations are robust and provide useful information to inform budget decisions.

- ◆ The council should continue its work to drive up the quality and coverage of Equality and Poverty Impact Assessments and make them accessible to the public. It should clearly demonstrate how the assessments are conducted and how the results shape its strategic decisions.

5. Moray Council (Published 28 March 2024)

5.1. Moray received criticism across a number of fronts, including the slow pace of improvements; the use of reserves to deal with its significant forecasted budget gap; lack of integration between capital and revenue plans; failure to meet performance reporting duties; and lack of effective cross-party working.

- ◆ We note that the council has received six Best Value reports since 2006. These reports have consistently highlighted that while the council has made improvements, the pace of progress has not been fast enough.
- ◆ Despite this extended series of reports, the council still needs to accelerate the pace of change to deliver the significant progress needed to demonstrate Best Value for its citizens. Our specific findings that follow are therefore focused on supporting the council to make the necessary improvements.
- ◆ The Commission is extremely concerned by the council's reliance on unidentified savings to deal with its significant forecasted budget gap, and agrees with the Controller that the continued use of useable reserves is not sustainable.
- ◆ To bridge its budget gap and ensure its financial sustainability, the council must accelerate the pace and ambition of its transformation plans, and most importantly it must show clear, sustained evidence of this transformation. We therefore expect the council's Improvement Modernisation Programme to set out clear deliverables, deadlines and lines of accountability. In doing so the council must ensure strong financial management and put in place arrangements to ensure the accuracy of its forecasting and its in-year budget monitoring.
- ◆ The council has an ambitious capital plan, much of which is planned to be financed through loans. We are surprised that capital and revenue plans are not more clearly integrated, especially given the revenue implications of the high level of borrowing planned, and this should be done as a matter of urgency. The council should also demonstrate how it intends to prioritise its capital investment in line with the council plan.
- ◆ At the time of considering the Controller's report in March 2024, the council still had not published its annual performance report for 2022/23, and is therefore not meeting its statutory requirement to publish this information in a timely manner. While the council has an effective approach to reporting service performance, it must make improvements in the timeliness of overall performance reporting and urgently finalise its approach to self-evaluation. We expect the council to set out a timeline to deliver these improvements. This will enable the council to promptly address areas of poor performance relative to other councils.
- ◆ We acknowledge long-standing issues with recruiting senior staff, particularly in finance as well as in the leadership of its transformation programme. As a result of these issues, the Commission has real concerns about the capacity of the council to make the step change that is needed to deliver its transformation plans at the scale and pace required whilst also maintaining and improving everyday service delivery. The council therefore needs to demonstrate how it will close this capacity gap.

- ◆ Linked to this, the council has long-standing issues related to a lack of effective cross-party working, highlighted in previous Best Value reports, and this continues to be a strong concern expressed in the Annual Audit Report (particularly regarding the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee) and the Controller's report. We are therefore pleased to see that the council has sought external support and strongly encourage the continued use of this support, particularly in light of the forthcoming retirement of the Chief Executive. Further, we are pleased to note that the council's recent Budget for 2024/25 was agreed on a cross-party basis, and hope that these encouraging signs continue.
- ◆ The way in which public audit operates means that, inevitably, there can be time lags between audit work being completed and reports coming to the Commission. In Moray's case, it appears to the Commission that, since the Annual Audit Report was completed, some positive steps have been taken, though these steps have not yet been subject to audit. We note that the council intends to bring its improvement actions together in a Best Value action plan, by April 2024. It will be important for this plan to consider the issues highlighted in this and previous reports to demonstrate sustained pace and momentum.
- ◆ The actions identified from the audit will be followed up in future annual audit reports to the council, and the Commission asks the Controller of Audit to monitor the council's progress and report back to the Commission with any concerns if she deems it necessary.
- ◆ We also look forward to our forthcoming meeting with the council, which we undertake following all reports on Best Value, where we will be looking to discuss all of the Commission's findings, in particular around effective political leadership and the council's Best Value action plan.

5.2. The Commission puts forward the following action points for Moray:

- ◆ The council should ensure that members work effectively together to act on key decisions in an effective and efficient manner.
- ◆ The council should ensure all Audit and Scrutiny Committee members are clear on their remit.
- ◆ The council should undertake further consultation and engagement to ensure local communities are more involved in participatory budgeting.
- ◆ The council needs to finalise the performance and delivery framework for its new Corporate Plan. It should implement annual self-evaluation to identify strengths as well as areas for improvement.
- ◆ The council needs to report performance in a more timely manner.
- ◆ The council needs to increase its pace of transformation and identify savings to ensure its financial sustainability.
- ◆ The council should keep the affordability of its capital plan and related revenue implications under review.
- ◆ The council should continue to monitor any slippage of the capital plan.
- ◆ The council should review its forecasting process to ensure the most accurate projections.

6. Next steps and recommendations

- 6.1. Officers of the Council will continue to review the Controller of Audit reports as they are published to learn any lessons for the Council. Reports on any significant findings and key messages will be brought to the Forum for information.

7. Employee Implications

7.1. There are no direct employee implications.

8. Financial Implications

8.1. There are no direct financial implications.

9. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

9.1. There are no implications for climate change, sustainability or the environment in terms of the information contained in this report.

10. Other Implications

10.1. Considering the detail of the report and identifying actions as appropriate contribute towards effective risk management.

11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

11.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

11.2. There is no requirement for consultation on the content of the report.

Paul Manning
Chief Executive

2 May 2024

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

- Ambitious, self-aware and improving

Previous References

- None

List of Background Papers

- None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Tom Little, Head of Communications and Strategy

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E-mail: Tom.Little@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Report

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|------------------|--|
| Report to: | Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum |
| Date of Meeting: | 28 May 2024 |
| Report by: | Chief Executive |

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|----------|---|
| Subject: | Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Dashboard Development |
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide the Forum with an overview of a custom Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) dashboard, developed in partnership with the Local Government Improvement Service (IS)

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Forum is asked to note the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the development of the South Lanarkshire Council Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) dashboard be noted.

3. Background

3.1. In the course of 2021, the Council raised a number of concerns about the LGBF with the IS and the LGBF Board.

3.2. Following this dialogue, the Council agreed to work with the IS to review how it uses the LGBF and in particular to develop an approach to LGBF reporting which will better reflect the Council's priorities and support scrutiny of progress in priority areas. Update reports on this work were brought to the Forum on 26 October 2021 and 16 August 2022.

3.3. A final report to the Forum on 21 March 2023 presented the outcome of the review of LGBF reporting, setting out enhanced reporting arrangements to better reflect the council's priorities and strengthen scrutiny of council performance through the Benchmarking Framework.

3.4. This report provides an overview of recent follow-up work to enhance our LGBF reporting further through the development of a custom LGBF dashboard for South Lanarkshire Council (SLC).

4. Using Dashboards to Explore LGBF

4.1. In 2024, the IS launched an online dashboard as the main portal to access LGBF data and analysis. The dashboard is part of the commitment by SOLACE and COSLA to develop better measurement and comparable data as a catalyst for improving services, targeting resources to areas of greatest impact, and enhancing public accountability.

- 4.2. As part of this, the IS offered to work with interested councils to explore how dashboard technology could be used at a local level to improve engagement with and use of the LGBF.
- 4.3. Building on the review of LGBF reporting undertaken in 2021-23, South Lanarkshire took the opportunity to work with the IS to develop a South Lanarkshire version of the LGBF dashboard.
- 4.4. Key features of the South Lanarkshire Council dashboard:
- ◆ based on the 36 “priority indicators” aligned to the council plan outcomes (see appendix 1 for the matrix of indicators aligned to the council plan)
 - ◆ focuses on SLC vs Scotland vs family group average performance
 - ◆ allows drill-down to examine family group members and their performance
 - ◆ provides at-a-glance time-trend information for each indicator
 - ◆ presents the LGBF data for SLC along with local commentary (as presented to the Forum in February)
- 4.5. Appendix 2 provides screenshots of the dashboard for information, showing the home page, indicator detail page and data definition pages.

5. Next Steps and Recommendations

- 5.1. Forum is asked to note the engagement with the LGIS on the LGBF dashboard and the development of the SLC dashboard as a further step in the Council’s review of how it uses the Framework.
- 5.2. The dashboard will be made available via a link on the Council website following this meeting of the Forum. The dashboard can be accessed via any device which supports internet browsing, including tablets and smartphones.

6. Employee Implications

- 6.1. There are no direct employee implications.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. There are no direct financial implications.

8. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 8.1. There are no direct climate change, sustainability and natural environment implications arising from this report.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1. Considering the detail of the report and identifying actions as appropriate contribute towards effective risk management.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 10.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

Paul Manning
Chief Executive

2 May 2024

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

- Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent
- Ambitious, self-aware and improving

Previous References

- LGBF Update – 26 October 2021
- LGBF Update – 16 August 2022
- LGBF Update – 21 March 2023

List of Background Papers

- None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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Appendix 1 – LGBF suite aligned to Connect Outcomes

| Communities and Environment Caring, connected, sustainable communities | Education and Learning Inspiring learners, transforming learning, strengthening partnerships | Health and Wellbeing People live the healthiest lives possible | Children and Young People Our children and young people thrive. | Housing and Land Good quality, suitable and sustainable places to live | Our Economy Thriving business, fair jobs and vibrant town centres | Delivering the Plan and achieving Best Value |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|---|
| Refuse collection (recycled waste) ENV6 | LAC Pupil Attendance Rates (CHN19b) | Delayed Discharges (SW8) | Child Poverty Rates (CHN24) | Rent Arrears (HSN1b) | Superfast broadband (ECON8) | % of income due from Council Tax received (CORP7) |
| Street Cleansing Score (ENV3c) | Literacy Attainment Gap (CHN14a) | Hospital readmissions (SW6) | Developmental Milestones (CHN17) | Voids (HSN2) | Town centre vacancy rates (ECON9) | Uncommitted Gen. Fund (FinSus2) |
| Libraries Satisfaction (C&L5a) new | Numeracy Attainment Gap (CHN14b) | Home Care Costs (SW1) | LAC Placement Stability (CHN23) | Repair time (HSN4b) | Unemployment (ECON1) | Actual outturn as a % of budgeted expenditure (FINSUS5) |
| Leisure Satisfaction (C&L5d) | % Pupils Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5 (SIMD) (CHN4) | Residential Care Costs (SW5) | Balance of Care CHN9 | Energy Efficiency (HSN5a) | % earning less than the real Living Wage (ECON7) | |
| Museums and galleries Satisfaction (C&L5c) new | % School Leavers entering Positive Destinations (CHN11) | | LAC Costs Community (CHN8b) | | Roads Condition (all 4 measures ENV4b, ENV4c, ENV4d & ENV4e) | |
| Carbon Emissions (CLIM2) | | | LAC Costs Residential (CHN8a) | | | |

Home page

Local Government Benchmarking Framework - Home Page

Council Outcomes

- Communities and Environment
- Education and Learning
- Health and Wellbeing
- Children and Young People
- Housing and Land
- Our Economy

What is the LGBF

South Lanarkshire Council uses benchmarking information to help understand performance with a view to making improvements. We have identified a 'strategic' subset of indicators, aligned to the six Council Outcomes listed in the [Council Plan 2022-27](#).

This dashboard reports on these indicators and gives insight into the Council's performance for the year and over time as well as comparison with the [family group](#) of eight 'similar' councils and the Scottish average.

The full suite of LGBF indicators continues to be reported annually in the [Public Performance Reports](#) on the council's website.

In addition, you can compare all LGBF results with other councils' using the Local Government Improvement Service Dashboard [explore the data](#) tool.

This dashboard was built in partnership with

Outcome page with multiple indicators

Local Government Benchmarking Framework

Council Outcomes

- Communities and Environment
- Education and Learning
- Health and Wellbeing
- Children and Young People
- Housing and Land
- Our Economy

Trend over Time

● South Lanarkshire ● Family Group (Average) ● Scotland

C&L05a - Proportion of adults satisfied with libraries

C&L05c - Proportion of adults satisfied with museums and galleries

C&L05d - Proportion of adults satisfied with leisure facilities

CLIM02 - CO2 emissions area wide: emissions within scope of LA per capita

Indicator detail page showing family group members and narrative

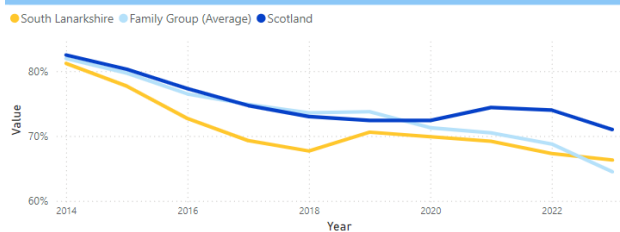
Local Government Benchmarking Framework



C&L05a - Proportion of adults satisfied with libraries



Trend over Time



Narrative

SLC has dropped 1% on our 21/22 satisfaction rates and 4.7% below the Scottish average, however when taken in the context of the 'family grouping' SLC sits 1.8% above the average for library services. It should also be noted that the household survey does not necessarily mean those completing the survey have used our services. SLLC conducted a Customer Satisfaction Survey in 22/23 to assess actual service delivery, nearly 3,000 customers responded (12% of members across services), with very positive feedback saying - service delivery 95%, staff performance 97% and value for money 95%.

Family Group Comparison

