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East Dunbartonshire Council

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COUNCIL THURSDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2023

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LEAD OFFICER: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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SUBJECT TITLE: SCOTTISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT
BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK – 2021/22
DATA ANALYSIS

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this Report is to provide Council with an update on the Scottish Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) publication covering the 2021/22 financial year and providing data analysis covering all indicators included in the dataset.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council:

- 2.1** considers performance in relation to the LGBF indicators highlighted in **Appendix 1**;
- 2.2** highlights any areas of particular focus for further dedicated benchmarking work;
and
- 2.3** instructs further updates on LGBF to Council following the initial publication of the 2022/23 Dataset in Q4 of 2023/24.

ANN DAVIE
DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

3.0 BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1** The Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) provides evidence of trends in how councils allocate resources, the performance of key council services and levels of public satisfaction with the major services provided and commissioned by councils. The data supports evidence-based comparisons between similar councils providing an essential tool for policy makers and the public over time.
- 3.2** The key criterion applied to the suite of indicators is that any one of the indicators must be able to be collected on a comparable basis by all 32 councils. The indicator set is not static but intended to evolve alongside the needs of local authorities and regular revisions are made to the indicator set.
- 3.3** The data comprises of a range of cost, satisfaction and performance indicators. The principal source of finance data continues to be the Local Financial Returns (LFR,) which all councils submit to the Scottish Government. For satisfaction measures, the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) is the primary source used.
- 3.4** The 2021/22 initial benchmarking Figures were initially published on 17th March 2023 on the Improvement Service website accompanied by a national overview report outlining the trends over time at a national level. This initial report did not include the data for all indicators. This report is available on the Improvement Service website and was distributed on the date of initial publication.
- 3.5** Immediately following the initial publication, a Technical Note (Issue 043-23) was issued to Elected Members, providing an overview of the publication, an overview of trends at a national level and an initial local analysis of the comparable indicators which were available at the time.
- 3.6** Following the initial publication there were a number of updates to the dataset to include Looked after Children and School Leaver destination data, which was unavailable at the time of initial publication. Updates to financial data at a national level following the validation of local financial returns were also made. The last update to the benchmarking data was in July 2023, however, there are currently still 14 indicators that have yet to be updated for 2021/22 in the areas of Climate Change, Customer Satisfaction and Children living in Poverty.

4.0 THE NATIONAL OVERVIEW

- 4.1** The Improvement Service National Overview report initially introduced data from the 2021/22 Framework, a period when communities and council services were still managing the significant ongoing impact of Covid, while new challenges were emerging in the shape of soaring inflationary pressures and a 'cost of living crisis'.
- 4.2** The report recognised the extraordinary effort and achievements delivered across local government during this exceptional period. Councils have adapted quickly to meet new demands, maintain essential services and implement new ways of working, and have strengthened partnerships with communities as well as the third and private sectors, helping to protect those who are vulnerable, and maintaining community wellbeing.
- 4.3** The report further identified the key emerging themes across all local authorities as the current challenging financial outlook, evidence of workforce pressures such as a

significant rise in absence, recruitment challenges and staff retention following on from the pandemic. Pressures on health and social care services in the wake of the pandemic, a negative impact on Covid recovery on children and ongoing challenges presented by the cost of living crisis.

5.0 EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE DATA ANALYSIS

- 5.1** As with all local authorities the last few years have been challenging for East Dunbartonshire with budgets having been reduced year on year. Despite this, however, for the Council the majority of all the current indicators in the suite have demonstrated improvement since their baseline year and from the 2020/21 financial year. A detailed analysis setting out performance of all indicators in the dataset has been included as **Appendix 1**.
- 5.2** While indicators demonstrated a decline in performance in 2020/21, in 2021/22 the overall trend has gone back to one of improvement, reflecting recovery from the pandemic. The Council's overall performance against comparable indicators from the previous year's publication has improved, with 64% of indicators showing improved or sustained performance from the previously reported year and only 37% showing a decline in performance.
- 5.3** In rank position, the Council has maintained or improved in rank position in just over 52% of indicators from the previous comparable period and declined in rank in 48%, demonstrating an overall slight improvement in rank placing from the previous year's data.
- 5.4** The Council's rank performance upon initial publication when compared across Scottish councils now reports 33 (31%) of our indicators in the top quartile, which is comparable to 2020/21 publication figures. The number of bottom quartile indicators has dropped to 16 representing only 15% of the available dataset. A narrative providing the context/ improvement narrative for all bottom quartile indicators has been provided in Appendix 1.
- 5.5** The Council reports 58% of all indicators in the top two quartiles of Scottish local authorities, this represents a 2% improvement from the baseline year though beneath this lies variations between service areas.
- 5.6** The Council's performance against assigned family groupings remains strong with 57% of all indicators performing higher than the family group average.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

The implications for the Council are as undernoted.

- 6.1** Frontline Service to Customers – Improved service delivery through continued effective scrutiny and management of performance
- 6.2** Workforce (including any significant resource implications) – Impact on future Business Improvement Planning
- 6.3** Legal Implications – N/A

6.4 Financial Implications – N/A

6.5 Procurement – N/A

6.6 ICT – N/A

6.7 Corporate Assets – N/A

6.8 Equalities Implications – N/A

6.9 Corporate Parenting – N/A

6.10 Other – N/A

7.0 MANAGEMENT OF RISK

The risks and control measures relating to this Report are as follows:-

7.1 Ensuring effective Scrutiny of service performance and driving improvement in service delivery

7.2 Ensuring the Council is continuing to meet its statutory obligations in regards to performance reporting and Best Value

8.0 IMPACT

The effective management and scrutiny of service performance should drive improvements across all service areas, helping to achieve LOIP outcomes.

8.1 ECONOMIC GROWTH & RECOVERY – Cross Cutting

8.2 EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS - Cross Cutting

8.3 CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE - Cross Cutting

8.4 SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES - Cross Cutting

8.5 ADULT HEALTH & WELLBEING - Cross Cutting

8.6 OLDER ADULTS, VULNERABLE PEOPLE & CARERS - Cross Cutting

8.7 CLIMATE CHANGE - Cross Cutting

8.8 STATUTORY DUTY - This report forms part of the Council's statutory duty of performance reporting and Best Value as set out in the Local Government acts 1992 and 2003

9.0 POLICY CHECKLIST

9.1 This Report has been assessed against the Policy Development Checklist and has been classified as being an operational report and not a new policy or change to an existing policy document.

10.0 APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix 1: East Dunbartonshire 2021/22 LGBF Data Analysis Report