

ANGUS COUNCIL

SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 13 JUNE 2024

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK (LGBF) NATIONAL BENCHMARKING
OVERVIEW REPORT 2022-23

REPORT BY IAN LORIMER, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

1. ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report presents to the Scrutiny and Audit Committee the key messages outlined in the Improvement Service's Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) '[National Benchmarking Overview Report 2022-23](#)', and provides a strategic overview of Angus Council's performance against the various indicators as published on the [Local Government Benchmarking Framework Dashboard](#).

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

- 2.1 This report provides insight into local and national performance from a comparator perspective which can inform the Council's approach to quality improvement, performance management and achieving the outcomes laid out in the Council Plan.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny and Audit Committee: -
- (i) Note the key messages outlined in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) '[National Benchmarking Overview Report 2022-23](#)'; and
 - (ii) Scrutinise the strategic overview of Angus Council's position against the various indicators as published on the [Local Government Benchmarking Framework Dashboard](#).

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The annual LGBF Overview Report provides the Council with an opportunity to reflect on its performance on a range of performance indicators that are monitored and agreed nationally, presenting performance trend and variations relating to a wide range of services delivered by the 32 local authorities across Scotland.
- 4.2 The information in the online dashboard provides a vast array of information and detail. This is available to services and utilised as a source of information, along with other sources of data that services rely on to monitor their performance. Collectively, that forms part of our Performance Led (PLED) Programme approach which includes self-evaluation and identification of performance variation leading to improvement action.
- 4.3 Some of the LGBF indicators also link to our Council Plan priorities. These have Council specific targets and are reported as part of our annual Council Plan Performance Report. These indicators will therefore tend to have greater relevance for Angus and LGBF performance data could be in line with our own targets even when they appear comparatively poor.
- 4.4 Members of the Scrutiny & Audit Committee were provided with a demonstration of the Improvement Service's LGBF Dashboard as part of the self-assessment workshop on 28 March and are encouraged to access the information to support their scrutiny of Council performance. However, while this can be helpful, caution is often required when interpreting data in isolation as this may only reflect one dimension of a broader context. Additional elected member briefings can be provided on request for those who would find this helpful.

5. CURRENT POSITION

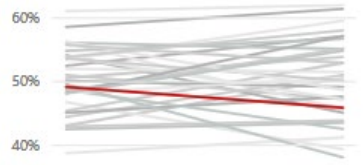
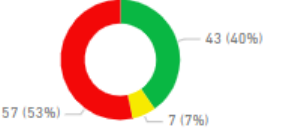
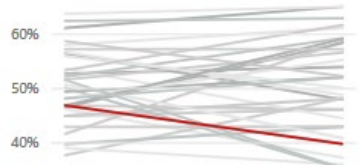
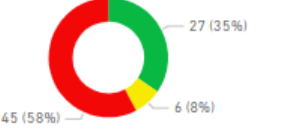
- 5.1 The LGBF '[National Benchmarking Overview Report 2022-23](#)' was published by the Improvement Service in March 2024. The report is jointly issued annually by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE).
- 5.2 Data gathered from local authorities is published on the [Local Government Benchmarking Framework Dashboard](#). The data can be accessed and interrogated easily on the public website and helps local authorities to make comparisons of their performance against the national picture and both between and within local authorities' over time, since the base year of collection which was in 2010-11.
- 5.3 This report highlights some of the factors that may have contributed to the decline and improvement of services over years, acknowledging that not everything remains static over time, including pandemic recovery, cost of living increases, changes in demography and the financial challenges which have emerged since the base year. The figures reported should be interpreted with the view that they are 'can-openers' for further investigation rather than as a statement of definitive council performance. Comparing performance across local authorities and within a local authority over time requires interpretation and meaningful analysis, considering the external factors on performance at any given point in time.
- 5.4 The overview report for the period of 2022/23 also includes a number of key messages. These provide a backdrop to the report set in a national context, describing the environment that local authorities across Scotland are currently operating in. A summary of the key messages from the report are set out below:
- (i) the report highlights the substantial financial challenges faced by communities and council services amidst soaring inflationary pressures and a cost-of-living crisis. These challenges were exacerbated by deepening fiscal, demand, and workforce pressures, including recovery from the Covid pandemic.
 - (ii) During this time, funding levels for councils have failed to keep up with the increased demand, growing need, and rising cost pressures. These financial constraints coincided with a requirement to deliver on new policy commitments, resulting in a real-terms reduction of 1.9% in revenue funding available to councils for local priorities (despite a nominal increase of 0.7% in total revenue funding).
 - (iii) The report highlights that the financial gap between councils' income and expenditure widened by over a third in 2022/23. To bridge this gap, councils have relied on savings, and doubled their relative use of reserves. In response to sustained fiscal pressures, councils faced difficult decisions regarding spending priorities.
 - (iv) While social care, education, and support for care-experienced children saw increased funding, non-statutory services experienced substantial reductions. These reductions included a 20% decrease in culture and leisure spending, a 27% decrease in planning spending, a 24% decrease in corporate support service spending, a 9% decrease in roads spending, a 26% decrease in trading standards and environmental health spending, and a 35% decrease in street cleaning since 2010/11.
 - (v) However, in terms of overall council service performance across Scotland, 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.
 - (vi) In 2022/23, for the first time, it appears that **Scotland has reached a tipping point**. The rate of decline has overtaken the rate of improvement (45% and 43% respectively). It is apparent that given the deepening fiscal, workforce and demand pressures facing the sector, councils are having to make increasingly difficult decisions about the shape



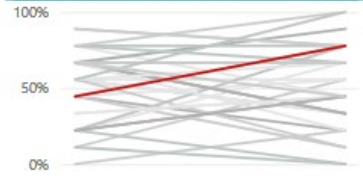
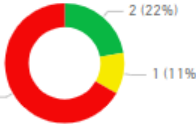

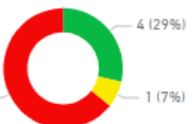
and level of service delivery, and these are beginning to have a clear impact on service performance.

- (vii) While performance decline affected all councils, the depth and focus of impacts varied locally, highlighting the importance of tailoring services to local needs and issues. The report also highlights that communities are experiencing increasing poverty and financial hardship, at a time when councils have reducing capacity to support them. These include multi-faceted workforce capacity pressures, including challenges of recruitment, retention, staff absence, and an ageing workforce.
- (viii) Social care is the area specifically cited in the report, 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. A sustained commitment to the 'whole system' of population health is therefore required, including investment in the vital preventative and early intervention services councils provide.
- (ix) The report also references the need to progress the ambitions of the joint Scottish Government and local government Verity House Agreement. A solution is urgently required to the long-term issues of sustainable funding for councils and greater local financial flexibility in order to protect essential front-line services for our communities.

6. ANGUS COUNCIL PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

6.1 The following table provides an overview of Angus Council's performance in 2022-23 outlining the overall changes from the base year (2010-11). It also compares performance in 2022-23 to the previous year (2021-22) for all the indicators that are included in the [LGBF Dashboard](#).

Change from Base Year (proportion of indicators in top 2 quartiles)	Change in 2022-23 since Previous Year (2021-22)	Commentary
<p>Overall</p> 	<p>Overall</p> 	<p>This provides an overview across all the indicators.</p> <p>The overall % of indicators in the top 2 quartiles have decreased slightly from 49% (2010-11) to 46% in the most recent year.</p> <p>The change in the most recent year highlights 57 (53%) indicators declining; 7 (7%) staying the same; and 43 (40%) increasing.</p> <p>This highlights that the trend in Angus is on a declining trajectory overall.</p>
<p>Performance Indicators</p> 	<p>Performance Indicators</p> 	<p>This provides an overview across all 78 indicators that relate to a measure of qualitative performance.</p> <p>The overall % of indicators in the top 2 quartiles have decreased from 47% (2010-11) to 40% in the most recent year.</p> <p>The change in the most recent year highlights 45 (58%) indicators declining; 6 (8%) staying the same; and 27 (35%) increasing.</p> <p>This highlights that performance against the indicators in Angus is declining overall.</p>

Change from Base Year (proportion of indicators in top 2 quartiles)	Change in 2022-23 since Previous Year (2021-22)	Commentary
<p>Cost Indicators</p> 	<p>Cost Indicators</p> 	<p>This provides an overview across all 20 indicators that relate to a measure of unit cost.</p> <p>The overall % of indicators in the top 2 quartiles have decreased from 60% (2010-11) to 55% in the most recent year.</p> <p>The change in the most recent year highlights 14 (70%) indicators increasing and 6 (30%) declining.</p> <p>This highlights that in Angus since the base year several unit costs have declined compared to others, albeit in the most recent year there is an improving picture potentially reflecting an increase in cost efficiency overall.</p>
<p>Satisfaction Indicators</p> 	<p>Satisfaction Indicators</p> 	<p>This provides an overview across all 9 indicators that relate to a measure of customer satisfaction.</p> <p>The overall % of indicators in the top 2 quartiles have increased significantly from 44% (2010-11) to 78% in the most recent year.</p> <p>The change in the most recent year highlights 2 indicators increasing; 6 decreasing and 1 stayed the same (percentages not reported due to low numbers of indicators).</p> <p>This highlights that customer satisfaction in Angus has increased significantly since 2010-11, however in the latest year there is evidence of a decline.</p>
<p>Financial Sustainability</p> 	<p>Financial Sustainability</p> 	<p>This provides an overview across all 14 indicators that relate to a measure of financial sustainability.</p> <p>The overall % of indicators in the top 2 quartiles have increased from 20% (2010-11) to 40% in the most recent year.</p> <p>The change in the most recent year highlights 4 indicators increasing; 9 decreasing and 1 stayed the same (percentages not reported due to low numbers of indicators).</p> <p>This highlights that financial sustainability in Angus has increased since 2010-11 (albeit starting from a low position), however in the latest year there is evidence of decline.</p> <p>It should be noted however that LGBF financial sustainability indicators relate to technical accountancy areas and do not relate specifically to the council's overall budget and funding arrangements from Scottish Government and other funding sources. The Corporate Risk Register is currently scored at 25 (highest risk score available) relating to financial sustainability</p>

Change from Base Year (proportion of indicators in top 2 quartiles)	Change in 2022-23 since Previous Year (2021-22)	Commentary
		and reflecting an ever-increasing risk over a number of years. This exemplifies the cautionary approach that is required to the 'face value' interpretation of LGBF data.

6.2 Angus's position against these 5 council-wide indicators demonstrates similar trends to those across Scotland. The overall % of indicators in the top 2 quartiles have reduced slightly from 49% (2010-11) to 46% in the most recent year. Overall performance has reduced in the past year where 57 (53%) of indicators have deteriorated; 43 (40%) have increased and 7 (7%) have remained the same.

6.3 Further analysis of the eight service groupings used by LGBF is included in Appendix 1. The eight service groupings are as follows:

- Childrens Services
- Adult Social Work Services
- Corporate Services
- Culture and Leisure Services
- Economic Development
- Environmental Services
- Housing Services
- Tackling Climate Change

6.4 A high level analysis of the overall performance trends since the base year (2010-11) has identified the following:

- Environmental Services and Culture and Leisure Services demonstrated an **increase** in their overall % of indicators sitting in the top 2 quartiles between the base year (2010 -11) and 2022-23.
- With regards to Tackling Climate Change, the % of indicators sitting in the top 2 quartiles between base year (2010-11) and 2022-23 **remains static**.
- 5 out of the 8 service groupings have shown a **decrease** in their overall % of indicators sitting in the top 2 quartiles between the base year (2010-11) and 2022-23. These service groupings include: Childrens Services, Adult Social Work Services, Corporate Services, Economic Development and Housing Services.

6.5 A high-level analysis of the overall performance trends between 2021-22 and 2022-23 has identified the following:

- Environmental Services and Culture and Leisure Services have increased in more indicators than they have deteriorated over the past year.
- Corporate Services and Economic Development have equivalent numbers of indicators increasing and deteriorating over the past year.
- The remaining 4 out of the 8 service groupings have deteriorated in more indicators than they have increased over the past year. These include Childrens Services, Adult Social Work Services, Housing Services and Tackling Climate Change.

6.6 As part of our Performance Led (PLED) programme approach, the data-led evidence highlighted in the service groupings will be examined further to consider where improvement action is possible.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 The following risks from the Corporate Risk Register are relevant to this report:

- Performance Management

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this report is providing reflective information.

11. CONSULTATION

11.1 The Chief Executive and all Council Directors, along with the Chief Officer of Angus Health & Social Care Partnership and the interim Chief Executives of Angus Alive have been consulted in the preparation of this report and its Appendix.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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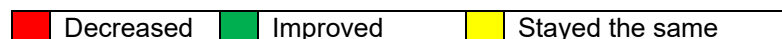
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List of Appendices:


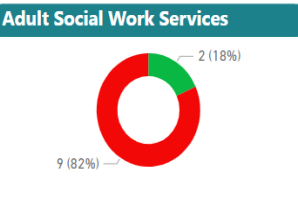
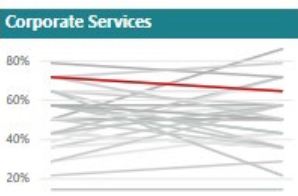
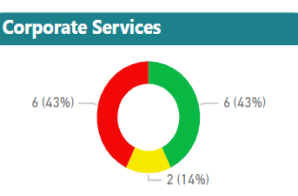
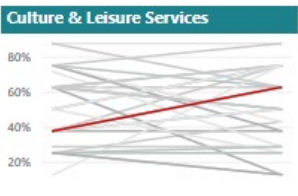
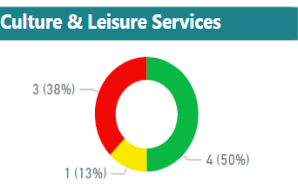
Appendix 1 – Service Grouping: Performance Trend Analysis

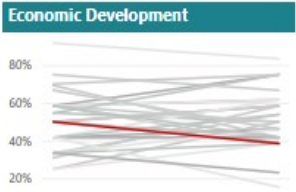
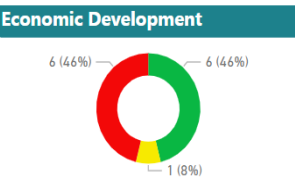
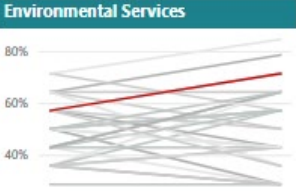
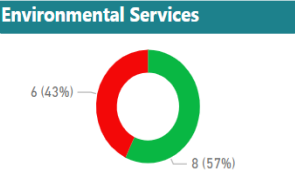
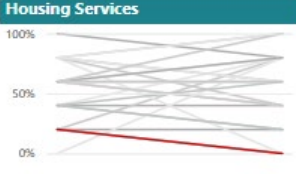
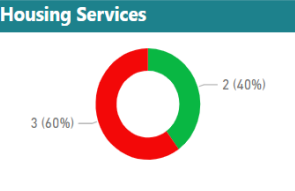
APPENDIX 1 – SERVICE GROUPING: PERFORMANCE TREND ANALYSIS – ANGUS COUNCIL

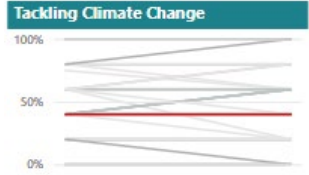
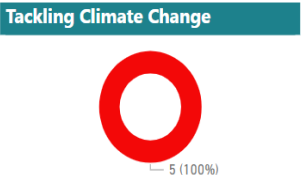
Key to Angus's performance in each service area Change since 2010-11



Change from Base Year (Proportion of indicators in top 2 quartiles)	Change in 2022-23 since Previous Year (2021-22)	Commentary
<p>Children's Services</p>	<p>Children's Services</p>	<p>This provides an overview across all 32 indicators that relate to Children's Services. It is noted that a number of indicators in this service area have not yet been updated to reflect 2022/23 data.</p> <p>The overall % of indicators in the top 2 quartiles have decreased from 44% (2010-11) to 38% in the most recent year.</p> <p>The change in the most recent year highlights 13 (41%) indicators increased; 16 (50%) decreased; and 3 (9%) stayed the same.</p> <p>Angus Council's key measures of performance for Education Services align with the nationally-set "Core Measures" identified in the Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress. Some of the Core Measures are not reflected within the LGBF. Further commentary on attainment can be found in the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate's Interim Performance Update. An update on Attendance data will be reported to Family, Education and Justice Committee in September 2024.</p>

Change from Base Year (Proportion of indicators in top 2 quartiles)	Change in 2022-23 since Previous Year (2021-22)	Commentary
<p>Adult Social Work Services</p> 	<p>Adult Social Work Services</p> 	<p>This provides an overview across all 11 indicators that relate to Adult Social Work Services.</p> <p>The overall % of indicators in the top 2 quartiles have decreased significantly from 64% (2010-11) to 36% in the most recent year.</p> <p>The change in the most recent year highlights 2 indicators increased and 9 decreased (percentages not commented on due to low numbers of indicators).</p>
<p>Corporate Services</p> 	<p>Corporate Services</p> 	<p>This provides an overview across all 14 indicators that relate to a Corporate Services.</p> <p>The overall % of indicators in the top 2 quartiles have decreased from 71% (2010-11) to 64% in the most recent year.</p> <p>The change in the most recent year highlights 6 indicators increased and 6 decreased and 2 have remained the same (percentages not commented on due to low numbers of indicators).</p>
<p>Culture & Leisure Services</p> 	<p>Culture & Leisure Services</p> 	<p>This provides an overview across all 8 indicators that relate to a Culture and Leisure Services.</p> <p>The overall % of indicators in the top 2 quartiles have increased significantly from 38% (2010-11) to 63% in the most recent year.</p> <p>The change in the most recent year highlights 4 indicators increased, 3 decreased and one stayed the same (percentages not commented on due to low numbers of indicators).</p>

Change from Base Year (Proportion of indicators in top 2 quartiles)	Change in 2022-23 since Previous Year (2021-22)	Commentary
<p>Economic Development</p> 	<p>Economic Development</p> 	<p>This provides an overview across all 13 indicators that relate to Economic Development.</p> <p>The overall % of indicators in the top 2 quartiles have decreased from 50% (2010-11) to 38% in the most recent year.</p> <p>The change in the most recent year highlights 6 indicators increased and 6 decreased and one remained the same (percentages not commented on due to low numbers of indicators).</p>
<p>Environmental Services</p> 	<p>Environmental Services</p> 	<p>This provides an overview across all 14 indicators relating to Environmental Services.</p> <p>The overall % of indicators in the top 2 quartiles have increased significantly from 50% (2010-11) to 71% in the most recent year.</p> <p>The change in the most recent year highlights 8 indicators increased and 6 decreased (Percentages not commented on due to low numbers of indicators).</p>
<p>Housing Services</p> 	<p>Housing Services</p> 	<p>This provides an overview across all 5 indicators that relate to Housing Services.</p> <p>The overall % of indicators in the top 2 quartiles have decreased significantly from 20% (2010-11) to 0% in the most recent year.</p> <p>The change in the most recent year highlights 2 indicators increased and 3 decreased (percentages not commented on due to low numbers of indicators).</p> <p>It is highlighted that housing services data relates to 26 councils and not all 32, as some councils deliver these services through a 3rd party organisation.</p>

Change from Base Year (Proportion of indicators in top 2 quartiles)	Change in 2022-23 since Previous Year (2021-22)	Commentary
		<p><u>Please note for this service area the most up to date data available from the LGBF Dashboard is up to 2021-22.</u></p> <p>This provides an overview across all 5 indicators that relate to Tackling Climate Change.</p> <p>The CO2 emissions area wide per capita, Angus ranks 27 out of 32 in 2021-22. This is a slight decrease from 26 in 2020-21.</p> <p>For all the Tackling Climate Change indicators, Angus sits around mid-range within its local authority family grouping.</p>