| ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL | AUDIT COMMITTEE |
| CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UNIT | 13 DECEMBER 2013 |

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK

1   Introduction

The Local Government Benchmarking Framework has replaced the Statutory Performance Indicators as a means of improving Scotland's performance through comparison and learning across Scottish councils. Argyll and Bute Council is participating in the developing framework.

2   Recommendation

It is recommended that the Audit Committee notes the progress made with implementing the new Local Government Benchmarking Framework.

3   Detail

3.1   The National Benchmarking Project, sponsored by SOLACE and delivered through the Improvement Service, is an improved method of comparing like-for-like performance across Scotland's councils. For more than a decade, all Scotland's councils have been required to gather, audit and report performance information across a range of services. These Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) have informed the focus of external auditors and inspectors as well as providing the Press and public with league tables of top-performing and poorly-performing councils. Many of the SPIs are flawed or do not accurately reflect local service provision. This was acknowledged by the Accounts Commission during 2009 when they issued a new Direction, reducing the number of defined indicators from around 70 to just 25.

3.2   The Improvement Service has been working with councils to develop a new approach which has now been approved by the Accounts Commission to replace the defined indicators (SPIs). The suite of benchmarking data was presented to CoSLA in March 2013, relating to performance in 2011-12. The defined indicators (SPIs) will be replaced by the benchmarking data for 2013-14 and beyond. Thereafter, all councils will be required to publish the benchmarking data instead of the defined indicators. An extract of the Commission's 2012 Direction is attached (published in 2012, relating to the financial year 2013-14).

3.3   Representatives of Argyll and Bute Council (finance and performance) have been involved in the working groups to ensure a clear and shared understanding of the benefits and risks associated with the project.

3.4   To facilitate detailed work, all councils have been divided into Family Groups of eight similar councils. As the characteristics used for membership of these groups are diverse, two sets of benchmarking indicator have been created – People Services and Other Services. This provides for similarities in terms of e.g. geography, deprivation, relative size of budget to be taken into account.

3.5 Argyll and Bute Council is in the People Services Family Group with Angus, East Lothian, Highland, Moray, Scottish Borders and Stirling Councils. Our Other Services Family Group is with Aberdeenshire, Dumfries & Galloway, Western Isles, Highland, Orkney, Scottish Borders and Shetland Councils.

3.6 Work is progressing with our Family Groups and with the Improvement Service to develop the process of analysis that will allow councils to learn from each other. This is essentially based on detailed work around each of the 52 indicators, although we will not participate in the five housing indicators as we do not provide a housing service. The list of indicators is appended to this paper.

3.7 The results of the benchmarking process will be twofold. Firstly, the data are published centrally by the Improvement Service, allowing everyone access to these comparative indicators of local service delivery. Secondly, Family Groups of councils will analyse and compare the underlying processes for each indicator, allowing us to learn and improve together.

3.8 The data for 2010-11 and 2011-12 are available now through the Improvement service website http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/ and in a Pyramid scorecard. Detailed comparison by council and by Family Group provides a starting point for all councils to plan and implement improvements.

4   Conclusion
Argyll and Bute Council is participating in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework to improve services and to comply with Accounts Commission direction.

5   Implications

Policy	none
Financial	none
Personnel	none
Legal	participation in the LGBF is required by the Accounts Commission for Scotland
Equal Opportunities	none

Jane Fowler
Head of Improvement & HR

For further information:
David Clements
I&OD Programme Manager

EXTRACT from the Accounts Commission for Scotland Direction 2012

SCHEDULE
Corporate management
SPI 1: Each council will report a range of information, sufficient to demonstrate that it is securing Best Value in relation to:

- responsiveness to its communities
- revenues and service costs
- employees
- assets
- procurement
- sustainable development
- equalities and diversity.

Service performance
SPI 2: Each council will report a range of information sufficient to demonstrate that it is securing Best Value in providing the following services (in partnership with others where appropriate):

- benefits administration
- community care
- criminal justice social work
- cultural & community services covering at least sport & leisure, museums, the arts and libraries
- planning (both environmental and development management)
- the education of children
- child protection and children's social work
- housing & homelessness
- protective services including environmental health, and trading standards
- roads and lighting
- waste management services

SOLACE benchmark framework
SPI 3: Each council will report its performance in accordance with the requirements of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executive (SOLACE) benchmark framework – now referred to as the *Local Government Benchmarking Framework*.

LGBF Indicators - DRAFT PROPOSED CHANGES FOR 13/14

	Data	Indicator Description
Children's Services	CHN1	Cost per Primary school Pupil
	CHN2	Cost per Secondary School Pupil
	CHN3	Cost per Pre-School Education Registration
	CHN 4	% of Pupils Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5
	CHN5	% of Pupils Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 6
	CHN6	% of Pupils from Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5 (SIMD)
	CHN7	% Pupils from Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 6 (SIMD)
	CHN8a	The Gross Cost of "Children Looked After" in Residential Based Services per Child per Week
	CHN8b	The Gross Cost of "Children Looked After" in a Community Setting per Child per Week
	CHN9	Balance of Care for looked after children: % of children being looked after in the Community
	CHN10	% of Adults Satisfied with Local Schools
	CHN11	Proportion of Pupils Entering Positive Destinations
	NEW	Outcomes for primary aged children & pre-school children
Corporate Services	CORP 1	Support services as a % of Total Gross expenditure
	CORP 2	Cost of Democratic Core per 1,000 population
	CORP3a	The percentage of the highest paid 2% employees who are women
	CORP4	The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax
	CORP5b 2	(Domestic Noise) Average time (hours) between time of complaint and attendance on site, for those requiring attendance on site
	CORP6	Sickness Absence Days per Employee
	CORP7	Percentage of income due from Council Tax received by the end of the year
	CORP8	Percentage of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days

Social Work Services	SW1	Older Persons (Over65) Home Care Costs per Hour
	ADD	Adult Home Care Costs per Hour (18-64)
	SW2	SDS spend on adults 18+ as a % of total social work spend on adults 18+
	SW3	% of people 65+ with intensive needs receiving care at home
	SW4	% of Adults satisfied with social care or social work services
Culture & Leisure Services	C&L1	Cost per attendance at Sports facilities
	C&L2	Cost Per Library Visit
	C&L3	Cost of Museums per Visit
	C&L4	Cost of Parks& Open Spaces per 1,000 Population
	C&L5a	% of adults satisfied with libraries
	C&L5b	% of adults satisfied with parks and open spaces
	C&L5c	% of adults satisfied with museums and galleries
	C&L5d	% of adults satisfied with leisure facilities
Environmental Services	ENV1	Gross cost of Waste collection per premises
	ENV2	Gross cost per Waste disposal per premises
	ENV3a	Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population
	ENV3b	Street Cleanliness Index
	ENV4a	Cost of maintenance per kilometre of roads
	ENV4b	Percentage of A class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment
	ENV4c	Percentage of B class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment
	ENV4d	Percentage of C class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment
	ENV5	Cost of trading standards and environmental health per 1,000 population
	ENV6	The % of total waste arising that is recycled
	ENV7a	% of adults satisfied with refuse collection
	ENV7b	% of adults satisfied with street cleaning

Housing Services	HSN1	Current tenants' arrears as a percentage of net rent due
	HSN2	Percentage of rent due in the year that was lost due to voids
	HSN3	Percentage of dwellings meeting SHQS
	HSN4	Percentage of repairs completed within target times
	HSN5	Percentage of council dwellings that are energy efficient
	NEW	Homelessness indicator
Corporate Services: Asset Management and Property	CORP ASSET 1	Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use
	CORP ASSET 2	Proportion of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition

POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL INDICATORS		
PROCUREMENT	**NEW**	Social/Economic impacts of procurement activity
PLANNING	**NEW**	Value added through planning process
PEOPLE	**NEW**	HR Costs/L&D Costs/Employee satisfaction