Assessment Report

Customer Service Excellence

Argyll and Bute Council Corporate Template

Complete

18 September 2024

Assessment Summary

Overview

Overall Self-assessment	Strong
Overall outcome	

1: Customer Insight

Criterion 1 self-assessment	Strong
Criterion 1 outcome	

2: The Culture of the Organisation

Criterion 2 self-assessment	Strong
Criterion 2 outcome	

3: Information and Access

Criterion 3 self-assessment	Strong
Criterion 3 outcome	

4: Delivery

Criterion 4 self-assessment	Strong
Criterion 4 outcome	

5: Timeliness and Quality of Service

Criterion 5 self-assessment	Strong
Criterion 5 outcome	

Overall Summary:

Strongly Compliant Criteria =	51
Compliant Criteria =	6
Partially Compliant Criteria =	0
Non-Compliant Criteria =	0

1: Customer Insight

1.1 : Customer Identification

1.1.1 : We have an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of our current and potential customer groups based on recent and reliable information.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C201: CRM Citizen and Business Database Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council's Oracle CRM hold comprehensive information on many characteristics of households, businesses and visitors to Argyll and Bute that is easily reportable and constantly updated and used to increase our understanding of their needs and activities.

C202: ABC Data Reporting Landscape Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council recently reviewed its numerous data reports sent to Scotgov and many of these show characteristics of current and potential customer gps, from those with a Private Water Supply to Looked After Children. See red highlights.

C203: Full Council Workforce Report Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Council employees are 24% of A&B employees and internal customers, so it is vital to know their key characteristics. This is a Workforce Report that shows this at Corporate and team Level and lets internal teams tailor their services to them.

1.1.1.1 : We have an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of our current

1.1.1.2 : and potential customer groups

1.1.1.3 : based on recent and reliable information.

1.1.2 : We have developed customer insight about our customer groups to better understand their needs and preferences.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C204: Post Pandemic Customer Contact Survey and Action Plan Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In 2021 we held a survey of customers (making special efforts to include Hard to Reach Groups) to inform our Post Pandemic Customer Engagement Delivery Plan based on their needs and preferences. This is a copy of the Report and Action Plan.

C205: Customer Input to Budget Making Decisions Assessor Acceptance: Yes

ABC has a long history of seeking customer insight to influence budget decisions and in 2023 we are using a sophisticated Budget Simulator with Demographic Info to allow citizen participation and so better understand needs and preferences.

C206: Scottish Approach to Service Design and Consultation of Groups Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council has embraced the Scottish Approach to Service Design (Design with and not for) and now widely consults Customer Groups re needs and preferences - see list of consults from past 12 months and SATSD rollout.

1.1.2.1 : We have developed customer insight about our customer groups

1.1.2.2 : to better understand their needs and preferences.

1.1.3 : We make particular efforts to identify hard to reach and disadvantaged groups and individuals and have developed our services in response to their specific needs.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C204: Post Pandemic Customer Contact Survey and Action Plan Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We paid for 500 postal surveys with reply paid envelopes to be sent to hard to reach customers as part of our post pandemic Customer Contact review and 200 replied. The Action Plan on this document strongly reflects their input.

C207: Keep in the Loop Notification Service Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This service is a powerful, pro-active means to engage with Hard to reach (geographically and other attributes) groups to both seek their input to service design and to alert them to issues so they can help us manage specific needs. (Demo on day)

C208: Community Planning Partnership Outcome Improvement Plan Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The CPP Outcome Improvement Plan is the result of extensive consultation (detailed here) that deliberately reaches out to marginalised groups and includes their insights into future services, such as the Gaelic Language Actions Plan.

1.1.3.1 : We make particular efforts to identify hard to reach

1.1.3.2 : and disadvantaged groups and individuals

1.1.3.3 : and have developed our services in response to their specific needs.

1.2 : Engagement and Consultation

1.2.1 : We have a strategy for engaging and involving customers using a range of methods appropriate to the needs of identified customer groups.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C209: ICT Digital Strategy 2021-24 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

As much engagement is by Digital means the Councils recent ICT Strategy has a section dedicated to Customers (see Pages 4-6) including accessibility, services and even CSE!

C210: ABOIP Engagement Strategy - Presentation Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This presentation shows the Strategy Adopted by the Community Planning Partnership to maxise engagement with community groups using a wide range of approaches and alternative mediums tailored to them.

C211: Dog Fouling Campaign Strategy Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This is an example of a campaign strategy on a dedicated topic close to many citizen's hearts - Dog Fouling. Note the Community Group based approach and bespoke products approved for the Campaign.

1.2.1.1 : We have a strategy for engaging and involving customers

1.2.1.2 : using a range of methods

1.2.1.3 : appropriate to the needs of identified customer groups.

1.2.2 : We have made the consultation of customers integral to continually improving our service and we advise customers of the results and action taken.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C206: Scottish Approach to Service Design and Consultation of Groups Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council has embraced the Scottish Approach to Service Design (Design with and not for) and now widely consults Customer Groups re needs and preferences and publishes outcomes to members and customers.

C212: Dedicated Online Consultation Hub Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council has a dedicated consultation web resource here for all live consultations and we alert subscribers to them via Keep in the Loop (C207)and also updates on survey outcomes..

C213: Employee Learning and |Development Resources for Consult Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Effective Consultation is such a high priority we have created this dedicated learning resource and toolkit on it; stressing importance of cascading outcomes.

1.2.2.1 : We have made the consultation of customers integral to continually improving our service

1.2.2.2 : and we advise customers of the results and action taken.

1.2.3 : We regularly review our strategies and opportunities for consulting and engaging with customers to ensure that the methods used are effective and provide reliable and representative results.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C213: Employee Learning and |Development Resources for Consult$_A$a$_s$ti$_s$o$_e$n$_s$s$_s$or Acceptance: Yes

Effective Consultation is such a high priority we have created this dedicated learning resource and toolkit on it; Steps 2 and 3 are about reaching the right people and using the right method to get effective results.

C214: New Customer Service Strategy Product Description Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council's Customer Service Strategy is to be reviewed in 2023 and this product description will be approved by stakeholders to ensure it encompasses their requirements. Note emphasis on Customer Engagement

C220: Member Zone Sounding Board Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In 2022 we completely reviewed the way we engage operationally with elected members (as customers of Services) and introduced a new collaborative approach including a Sounding Board and Online Feedback. These are giving great outcomes.

1.2.3.1 : We regularly review our strategies and opportunities for consulting

1.2.3.2 : and engaging with customers to ensure that the methods used are effective and provide reliable and representative results.

1.3 : Customer Satisfaction

1.3.1 : We use reliable and accurate methods to measure customer satisfaction on a regular basis.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C215: Customer Engagement Team Satisfaction Monitoring Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Customer Engagement Team is the corporate first point of contact across many channels and satisfaction is continually monitored across these and across a range of metrics including fairness.

C216: Tiered Corporate Approach to Customer Satisfaction Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council has a tiered approach to monitoring customer and employee satisfaction with some top level metrics reported to Committees and then Service and Team level reporting for performance and improvement.

C217: Corporate Web Report 2022-23 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The website has a million uses a year so satisfaction monitoring is vital. This is the annual report with key five measures of satisfaction. Will show quarterly at meeting as this breaks down by Service.

1.3.1.1 : We use reliable and accurate methods to measure customer satisfaction on a regular basis.

1.3.2 : We analyse and publicise satisfaction levels for the full range of customers for all main areas of our service and we have improved services as a result.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C204: Post Pandemic Customer Contact Survey and Action Plan Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In 2021 our post pandemic Customer Engagement survey used satisfaction measurement (sections 3 and 4) to drive out improvements included in the Delivery Plan Appendix. This resulted in a £49k investment in the new website etc.

C216: Tiered Corporate Approach to Customer Satisfaction Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council has a tiered approach to monitoring customer and employee satisfaction with top level metrics reported to Committees and then Service and Team level reporting for performance and improvements identified and published.

C218: LGBF and Customer Satisfaction Benchmarking Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council provides data for and closely analyses the outcomes of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework – and in particular the satisfaction related measures in it. Audit and Scrutiny Committee receives a report on this and areas for improvement.

1.3.2.1 : We analyse and publicise satisfaction levels for the full range of customers

1.3.2.2 : for all main areas of our service

1.3.2.3 : and we have improved services as a result.

1.3.3 : We include in our measurement of satisfaction specific questions relating to key areas including those on delivery, timeliness, information, access, and the quality of customer service, as well as specific questions which are informed by customer insight.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

New Evidence

C215: Customer Engagement Team Satisfaction Monitoring Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Customer Engagement Team monitors all aspects of satisfaction, but particularly, information, professionalism and access.

C218: LGBF and Customer Satisfaction Benchmarking Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council provides data for and closely analyses the outcomes of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework – and in particular the satisfaction related measures in it. The metrics vary between Services but meet Scotgov needs.

C219: Member Zone Performance Management Briefing Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This evidence shows a Performance Briefing on the elected member request system called Member Zone. It shows high levels of Member Satisfaction for Timeliness and Quality of responses.

1.3.3.1 : We include in our measurement of satisfaction specific questions relating to key areas including those on delivery, timeliness, information, access, and the quality of customer service,

1.3.3.2 : as well as specific questions which are informed by customer insight.

1.3.4 : We set challenging and stretching targets for customer satisfaction and our levels are improving.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C215: Customer Engagement Team Satisfaction Monitoring Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Customer Engagement Team has had a 95% satisfaction target for mediated channels based on best in class and consistently exceeds this. In fact Registration achieved 100% in the last report. Best ever.

C218: LGBF and Customer Satisfaction Benchmarking Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Local Government Benchmarking Framework does not have targets per se, but the de facto target is to be at least as good as the Scottish Average and to be improving. This evidence shows that to be the case for ABC.

C236: ICT Customer Satisfaction Targets and Improvements Assessor Acceptance: Yes

ICT uses Socitm's Satisfaction survey to monitor satisfaction levels and has a target to reduce the weighted gap in performance and increase satisfaction levels. The last survey had highest ever performance and they responded to all feedback, making many service improvements e.g. a new Hub Site

1.3.4.1 : We set challenging and stretching targets for customer satisfaction

1.3.4.2 : and our levels are improving.

1.3.5 : We have made positive changes to services as a result of analysing customer experience, including improved customer journeys.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C220: Member Zone Sounding Board Assessor Acceptance: Yes

See items 4 and 5 on this evidence showing the numerous improvements being made to member Zone and relayed to Members via Briefings and Sounding Board.

C221: Customer Led Website Redesign Assessor Acceptance: Yes

See items 4 and 5 on this evidence showing the numerous improvements being made to member Zone and relayed to Members via Briefings and Sounding Board.

C222: New Employee Onboarding Development Assessor Acceptance: Yes

A new Corporate Employee Onboarding Process was develped by HR after analysisng the dysfunctional current journey with stakeholders. This evidence shows the revised 6 stage process.

1.3.5.1 : We have made positive changes to services as a result of analysing customer experience,

1.3.5.2 : including improved customer journeys.

2: The Culture of the Organisation

2.1 : Leadership, Policy and Culture

2.1.1 : There is corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery and leaders in our organisation actively support this and advocate for customers.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C206: Scottish Approach to Service Design and Consultation of Groups Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council has embraced the Scottish Approach to Service Design (Design with and not for) and has invested in training for all managers and key change staff on it. All significant customer affecting changes now require consultation.

C209: ICT Digital Strategy 2021-24 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

As much engagement is by Digital means the Councils recent ICT Strategy has a section dedicated to Customers (see Pages 4-6) including accessibility, services and even CSE!

C223: SSSC Policy and Commitment 2023 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Social Care has clients who are in particular need of focus and advocacy. The council has a new policy on the application of the Scottish Social Care Council standards and mandatory code of conduct for all Social Workers.

2.1.1.1 : There is corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery

2.1.1.2 : and leaders in our organisation actively support this and advocate for customers.

2.1.2 : We use customer insight to inform policy and strategy and to prioritise service improvement activity.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C205: Customer Input to Budget Making Decisions Assessor Acceptance: Yes

ABC has a long history of seeking customer insight to influence budget decisions and in 2023 we are using a Budget Simulator with Demographic Info to understand needs and influence spending priorities.

C224: Customer Engagement Team EqSEIA Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Every significant strategy, policy or operational change requires an EqSEIA and stakeholder consultation is an intrinsic part of every one of these. See https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/my-council/plans-and-policy/equality-and-socio-economic-impact-assessments

C225: Short Term Lets Policy and Operation Assessor Acceptance: Yes

There was an extensive landlord consultation to inform both the policy and operation of the Scotgov Short Term Lets licensing scheme which resulted in 'localised' improvements being added.

2.1.2.1 : We use customer insight to inform policy and strategy

2.1.2.2 : and to prioritise service improvement activity.

2.1.3 : We have policies and procedures which support the right of all customers to expect excellent levels of service.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C226: Customer Engagement Team Performance Monitoring Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Customer Engagement Team' embedded procedures for standards monitoring support the Council's Customer Service Charter and is used in conjunction with C215 Satisfaction Monitoring .

C227: Internal Audit Customer Service Centre Audit Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Corporate Internal Audit Team have an annual audit programme that targets Audits of Service Delivery across the council to provide public assurance of standards. This is a recent example for Contact Centre.

C228: Member Zone Performance Management Regime Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Members as customers expect high levels of speed and quality of response to enquiries and this is safeguarded by a dedicated MZ Performance Management Regime. See also C219

2.1.3.1 : We have policies and procedures which support the right of all customers to expect excellent levels of service.

2.1.4 : We ensure that all customers and customer groups are treated fairly and this is confirmed by feedback and the measurement of customer experience.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

New Evidence

C215: Customer Engagement Team Satisfaction Monitoring Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Customer Engagement Team is the corporate first point of contact across many channels and satisfaction is continually monitored across these and across a range of metrics including fairness as per the Customer Charter.

C224: Customer Engagement Team EqSEIA Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Every significant strategy, policy or operational change requires an EqSEIA and stakeholder consultation to ensure fairness to Protected Groups is embedded in these. This example is regarding fairness to remote communities if their Service Points were closed.

C229: An Equality and Fairness Focused Council Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Equality and Fairness is a core value of the Council and this Digest of key docs and Online Resources highlights this; Particularly the Equalities Mainstreaming Report.

2.1.4.1 : We ensure that all customers and customer groups are treated fairly

2.1.4.2 : and this is confirmed by feedback and the measurement of customer experience.

2.1.5 : We protect customers' privacy both in face-to-face discussions and in the transfer and storage of customer information.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C230: Cyber Essentials and PSN Security Certification Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Argyll and Bute has the Highest Possible standards of Cyber Security to protect our systems and customer data. We have not one but two major certifications and the PSN one is specifically for data transfer and storage.

C231: Excellent Face to Face Service Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Argyll and Bute has 11 Service Points for Face to Face Customers and ALL have at least one Interview Room so our Charter Standard on Privacy can be adhered to.

C232: Data Protection and Privacy Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council takes GDPR duties regarding Data Protection, Privacy and Rights of Access to Information very seriously and has dedicated resources for this as shown in this evidence

2.1.5.1 : We protect customers' privacy both in face-to-face discussions

2.1.5.2 : and in the transfer and storage of customer information.

2.1.6 : We empower and encourage all employees to actively promote and participate in the customer focused culture of our organisation.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

New Evidence

C233: Customer Care Related Training Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Customer Care Related Training is a fundamental part of the Council's Learning and Development Strategy and is both a sign of Management Commitment and a vital enabler for empowering staff witht the skills to participate in our customer focused culture.

C234: Customer Complaints Management L&D Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council takes a Corporate Approach to Complaints Managers that has at its heart the early resolution of complaints by empowering staff to fix things that have may have gone wrong at Stage 1 of the complaint. Comprehensive Training is key to early, good outcomes.

C235: Trauma Informed Practice Training Assessor Acceptance: Yes

An increasing number of customers have experienced trauma at some point and need to be assistedwith particular sensitivity. In order to empower our staff to do that many employees did a short course on Trauma Informed Practice:

2.1.6.1 : We empower and encourage all employees to actively promote

2.1.6.2 : and participate in the customer focused culture of our organisation.

2.2 : Staff Professionalism and Attitude

2.2.1 : We can demonstrate our commitment to developing and delivering customer focused services through our recruitment, training and development policies for staff.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C222: New Employee Onboarding Development Assessor Acceptance: Yes

A new Corporate Employee Onboarding (induction) Process was develped by HR and it focuses heavily on Customer Care and related training such as data protection. See Highlighted elements on doc. See also C213 and C233

C223: SSSC Policy and Commitment 2023 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Social Care's application of the Scottish Social Care Council standards and mandatory code of conduct also has strict requirements for the council in terms of recruitment, induction and L&D so Social Workers are equipped to support their clients.

C237: Mandatory Job Description for Every Post Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Every recruitment requires a Job Description to be created specific to the new post, even temporary ones. These all include elements of customer focus as part of the job evaluation and this example shows a recent new post. Every employee has a JD.

2.2.1.1 : We can demonstrate our commitment to developing and delivering customer focused services through our recruitment,

2.2.1.2 : training and development policies for staff.

2.2.2 : Our staff are polite and friendly to customers and have an understanding of customer needs.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C238: CSC Telephone Satisfaction Survey FQ4 22-23 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The quarterly satisfaction Survey of callers to CSC had comments left by 69 customers and they were overwhelmingly positive, see pages 3 and 4 of the attached and Highlighted Comments.

C239: Our Polite and Friendly Standards. Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council's Customer Service Charter has a specific standard on polite and friendly service and this evidence shows that and how performance against it is monitored by Services for internal and external customers, with recent examples.

C240: Annual Complaints Report Assessor Acceptance: Yes

See Pages 23 and 24 of this Report which although it is about Complaints, it highlights a number of instances of polite and friendly behaviours shown by staff. Note report too large to upload so link to website provided.

2.2.2.1 : Our staff are polite and friendly to customers

2.2.2.2 : and have an understanding of customer needs.

2.2.3 : We prioritise customer focus at all levels of our organisation and evaluate individual and team commitment through the performance management system.

Applicant Self Assessment:

New Evidence

C227: Internal Audit Customer Service Centre Audit Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The priority given to customer care is shown by the fact that Corporate Internal Audit Team have an annual audit programme that targets Audits of Service Delivery across the council to provide public assurance of standards. This is a recent example for Contact Centre.

C242: Tiered Approach to Performance Reporting Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council has a Tiered Approach to Performance Reporting with Quarterly and Annual Reports to the Elected members through Committees and Area Committees and Via Policy Leads, then to Senior management Reports and Service and Team Operational Reports all have customer related elements.

C243: Performance and Career Conversations Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council has a new continual assessment of employee performance and development called Performance and Career Conversations. For customer facing staff these determine the standards/deliverables to be achieved, a review of performance and L&D required to deliver what is being asked. An Example.

2.2.3.1 : We prioritise customer focus at all levels of our organisation

2.2.3.2 : and evaluate individual and team commitment through the performance management system.

2.2.4 : We can demonstrate how customer-facing staffs' insight and experience is incorporated into internal processes, policy development and service planning.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C220: Member Zone Sounding Board Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The new Member Zone was designed and built with considerable staff and elected member input And continues to evolve with this through the Sounding Board.

C241: Hybrid Working Policy Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The pandemic has had a lasting effect on how workers actually operate to deliver services to customers. After a widespread consultation involving all staff and managers a new Hybrid Working Policy was adopted in 2023 to allow flexibility in where staff are based and how they work.

C247: Short term Lets In House Application Development Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This new application has extensive input from Customers via a consultation and staff and managers and external stakeholders e.g. Scotgov throughout its initial development and long term evolution.

2.2.4.1 : We can demonstrate how customer-facing staffs' insight and experience is incorporated into internal processes, policy development and service planning.

2.2.5 : We value the contribution our staff make to delivering customer focused services, and leaders, managers and staff demonstrate these behaviours.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C244: Chief Executive Commitment and Recognition Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Chief Executive sets the tone for the whole organisation and her commitment to communities and customers is an example and one that she displays through recognition of staff and team achievements by podcasts, weekly emails, Articles in the staff magazine Cascade and strategy setting

C245: Culture of Continual Praise and Feedback Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The culture at ABC is for managers and colleagues to give praise and recognition for delivery of excellent services and around achieving qualifications that will allow them to do that. This is a small digest of examples.

C246: COSLA Award for Customer Engagement Assessor Acceptance: Yes

COSLA - the Scottish body for Local Councils has an Annual Awards competition and the Senior Mgt Team sift those to go forward from ABC. Customer Service related entries like this one are regularly featured.

2.2.5.1 : We value the contribution our staff make to delivering customer focused services,

2.2.5.2 : and leaders, managers and staff demonstrate these behaviours.

3: Information and Access

3.1 : Range of Information

3.1.1 : We make information about the full range of services we provide available to our customers and potential customers, including how and when people can contact us, how our services are run and who is in charge.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C221: Customer Led Website Redesign Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In 2023 we launched a brand new Corporate Website whose design was driven by customer insight and customer testing including a MyCouncil section that holds all the key council info in one place. The design was recommended by Drupla Local Gov and has 98% Accessibility rating. https://www.argyll-bute.

C244: Chief Executive Commitment and Recognition Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Our Chief Executive issues a monthly Audio Podcast Called "Pippa's Podcasts" whose purpose is inform customers and staff about Services we provide. She Cohosts them with the people in charge of the service and chooses topical subjects

C248: Weekly News roundup Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council offers a "Weekly News Round-up" email subscription newsletter that provides updates on council activities, new services, and changes to existing services. This newsletter is sent directly to subscribers, ensuring that customers are kept informed about all relevant developments.

3.1.1.1 : We make information about the full range of services we provide available to our customers and potential customers,

3.1.1.2 : including how and when people can contact us,

3.1.1.3 : how our services are run and who is in charge.

3.1.2 : Where there is a charge for services, we tell our customers how much they will have to pay.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C221: Customer Led Website Redesign Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Our customers told us they wanted clarity over Fees and Charges, so when we redesigned our website we set up a comprehensive section on Fees and Charges
https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/my-council/council-fees-and-charges

C249: Oban Pontoons Case Study Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council recently built an in house application for booking and payment of boats berthing at the Oban Pontoons, including a sophisticated calculator of charges based on boat length and duration of stay.

C250: Oban Airports landing Fees Case Study Assessor Acceptance: Yes

We recently built a landing Fees payment solution for Oban Airport that calculates the indemnity and landing charges based on aircraft size and stay. It is integrated to our 24/7 voice auto payment system so pilots are notified of charge by email and can pay wherever they have phone signal.

3.1.2.1 : Where there is a charge for services, we tell our customers how much they will have to pay.

3.2 : Quality of Information

3.2.1 : We provide our customers with the information they need in ways which meet their needs and preferences, using a variety of appropriate channels.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C207: Keep in the Loop Notification Service Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This service is a powerful, pro-active means to engage with Hard to reach (geographically and other attributes) groups to both seek their input to service design and to alert them to issues so they can help us manage specific needs.

C211: Dog Fouling Campaign Strategy Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This is an example of a campaign strategy on a dedicated topic - Dog Fouling. Note the Community Group based approach and blend of digital and hard copy products approved for the Campaign.

C251: All Accessibility & Translation Service Assessor Acceptance: Yes

TO BE AN ON THE DAY DEMO The council has invested in a powerful new AI powered Accessibility toolbar and language service that can translate the whole website into over 100 languages AND read it aloud. This gives unparalled access to our online information to almost everyone.

3.2.1.1 : We provide our customers with the information they need in ways which meet their needs and preferences,

3.2.1.2 : using a variety of appropriate channels.

3.2.2 : We take reasonable steps to make sure our customers have received and understood the information we provide.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C215: Customer Engagement Team Satisfaction Monitoring Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Customer Engagement Team is the corporate first point of contact across many channels so satisfaction is continually monitored across these and metrics including information quality and outcome quality .

C219: Member Zone Performance Management Briefing Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Member Zone was set up to provide information in response to Councillor Enquiries and so the Quality of responses thay receive is monitored by a survey they complete when they close a case as well as internal checks. Satisfaction is over 90%.

C252: Feedback Mechanisms on the Website Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Council's website has many ways for users to provide feedback on usefulness of information presented, which is reported on and used to improve content. Users are prompted with a "Did you find what you were looking for?" option that gets 1500+ responses a month and uses external Independent Assrs

3.2.2.1 : We take reasonable steps to make sure our customers have received

3.2.2.2 : and understood the information we provide.

3.2.3 : We have improved the range, content and quality of verbal, published and web based information we provide to ensure it is relevant and meets the needs of customers.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C221: Customer Led Website Redesign Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In 2023 we launched a brand new Corporate Website whose design was driven by customer insight and customer testing of early versions. It had a complete review of content and 40Gb of old data was deleted . This paper summarises that.

C253: Gaelic Language Plan Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Section 6.2 of the Council's https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-05/GLP_updated_2022-26.pdf Gaelic Language Plan is to promote the range of Gaelic services and resources which are available to our service users.

C254: Council Community Hubs Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Council is pioneering Community Hubs, which are hyper local, volunteer service points offering council related information, resources and services to remote communities. SLA is for the first Hub at Cove and Kilcreggan. We will use outcomes here ensure relevant info is provided at subsequent Hubs

3.2.3.1 : We have improved the range, content and quality of verbal,

3.2.3.2 : published

3.2.3.3 : and web based information we provide to ensure it is relevant and meets the needs of customers.

3.2.4 : We can demonstrate that information we provide to our customers is accurate and complete, and that when this is not the case we advise customers when they will receive the information they requested.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C227: Internal Audit Customer Service Centre Audit Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In 2023 Internal Audit performed a full audit of the Customer Service Centre and focused on quality of information provision, giving the CSC the Highest possible HIGH Assurance level. They particularly commented on the extensive training and Agent Assurance activities. P26-42

C240: Annual Complaints Report Assessor Acceptance: Yes

See Pages 23 of this Report which shows only 42/616 recorded complaints (7%) were related to quality of information and all of the 52% of upheld/partially upheld complaints will have had a response with the info or when it would be provided. complaints . Note report too large to upload so link to we

C255: Customer Service Charter 2024 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Pledge 4 of the new Customer Service Charter says explicitly we will "proactively tell customers when there may be issues or changes" and this is supported in the CS Strategy Fixing Things That Go Wrong

3.2.4.1 : We can demonstrate that information we provide to our customers is accurate and complete,

3.2.4.2 : and that when this is not the case we advise customers when they will receive the information they requested.

3.3 : Access

3.3.1 : We make our services easily accessible to all customers through provision of a range of alternative channels.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C254: Council Community Hubs Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Council is pioneering Community Hubs, which are hyper local, volunteer service points offering council related information, resources and services to remote communities. This SLA is for the first Hub at Cove and Kilcreggan. We will use outcomes here ensure relevant info is provided at subsequent

C257: Audit Scotland Tackling Digital Exclusion Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council worked with Audit Scotland on their recent Report on Digital Exclusion and was commended for its alternative channels (see Paras 78-79) for digital strugglers.

C258: My Council Works - Employee Website Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Employee Survey had a recurring issue with communications to 2k+ staff not on the council network who couldn't get information from the council intranet. So we built a dedicated staff section on the corporate website, so ALL staff have equality of access.

3.3.1.1 : We make our services easily accessible to all customers through provision of a range of alternative channels.

3.3.2 : We evaluate how customers interact with the organisation through access channels and we use this information to identify possible service improvements, and offer better choices

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C221: Customer Led Website Redesign Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In 2023 we launched a brand new Corporate Website whose design was driven by customer insight and customer testing of early versions. It had a complete review of content and 40Gb of old data was deleted . This paper summarises that.

C259: CS Strategy Consultation and Outcomes Report P&R 2024 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The new Customer Service Strategy including the channel elements were subject to wide consultation. This report shows how that input greatly influenced the final Strategy and Action Plan of improvements - See Appendix 2 in particular.

C260: RIS BPR Consultant Review Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Council commissioned independent consultants to undertake an end to end review if Roads and Infrastructure Services, with Customer Relations a dedicated workstream. Appendix 1 Section 9 lists many service improvements approved by EDI Committee.

3.3.2.1 : We evaluate how customers interact with the organisation through access channels

3.3.2.2 : and we use this information to identify possible service improvements,

3.3.2.3 : and offer better choices

3.3.3 : We ensure that where customers can visit our premises in person facilities are as clean and comfortable as possible.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C231: Excellent Face to Face Service Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Argyll and Bute has 11 Service Points for Face to Face Customers and we continually survey customers on all aspects of their visit from signage to cleanliness of the offices and scores are 90%+. All are also subject to regular H&S Risk Assessments.

C261: Independent LGBF Assessment of our Estate Assessor Acceptance: Yes

These screenshots from the most recent Local Gvt. Benchmarking Framework show that our buildings are fit for purpose and above the national and Family Group averages - and our road cleanliness too for folk on their way to them!

C262: New Service Point Rothesay Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In addition to refurbishing service points in Islay and Dunoon, the Our Modern workspace project relocated the Rothesay CSP to a new town centre site in a fully refurbished old bank building and footfall has increased.

3.3.3.1 : We ensure that where customers can visit our premises in person facilities are as clean and comfortable as possible.

3.4 : Co-operative working with other providers, partners and communities

3.4.1 : We have made arrangements with other providers and partners to offer and supply co-ordinated services, and these arrangements have demonstrable benefits for our customers

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C263: Health and Social Care Partnership Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council is part of the Integrated Joint Board of the Health and Social Care Partnership. This Report Highlights some of the benefits arising form joined up services and shared funding to help our citizens.

C264: Community Planning Partnership Outcome Improvement Plan Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council works with NHS, Police, Fire & Rescue Service, 3rd Sector, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, to deliver co-ordinated services for the benefit of the residents of Argyll and Bute. This Community Planning Partnership has a new Outcome Improvement Plan.

C265: Partnership Working with Scottish Public Service Ombudsman Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council adopts the standards of the SPSO in dealing with complaints and co-ordinates its activities for Stage 3 complaints. Most recently it has adopted SPSO guidelines for Child complaints following Scotgov's adoption of the UN Convention on Children's Rights (UNCRC).

3.4.1.1 : We have made arrangements with other providers and partners to offer and supply co-ordinated services,

3.4.1.2 : and these arrangements have demonstrable benefits for our customers

3.4.2 : We have developed co-ordinated working arrangements with our partners that ensure customers have clear lines of accountability for quality of service.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C264: Community Planning Partnership Outcome Improvement Plan Acceptance: Yes

Great lengths have been taken to explain The CPP Outcome Improvement and accountability to citizens including a Detailed Support Document, a set of FAQs and even a video. There is a dedicated web resource for the governance.

C265: Partnership Working with Scottish Public Service Ombudsma Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council makes it clear that access to SPSO is only available at Stage 3 of the complaints process and provides clear signposting to SPSO but has a high quality of complaints management - such that under 5% of complaints go to SPSO.

C266: HSCP/IJB Coordinated working and Communications. Assessor Acceptance: Yes

C263 showed benefits of the HSCP and activity is co-ordinated through its Integrated Joint Board of Council/NHS/HSC leaders with clear information provided for citizens.
https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/about/argyll-and-bute-health-and-social-care-partnership/

3.4.2.1 : We have developed co-ordinated working arrangements with our partners that ensure customers have clear lines of accountability for quality of service.

3.4.3 : We interact within wider communities and we can demonstrate the ways in which we support those communities.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C267: Supporting Community Councils Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Community Councils are the gateway into 2way engagement with local communities and halp drive local improvements by being consultees on major planning decisions raising matters that may be causing concern in our communities. Hence the strong support we give them.

C268: Town Centre Regeneration Assessor Acceptance: Yes

From 2007-2024 Argyll and Bute Council working in partnership with the community, private and social enterprise sector delivered an extensive programme of heritage led regenerations, transforming our communities. None would have happened without council leadership.

C269: Grant Funding for Communities Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council votes its own funds and distributes Scotgov and Windfarm Grant funding for a large number of supportive grants: https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/my-community/grants-and-funding

3.4.3.1 : We interact within wider communities and we can demonstrate the ways in which we support those communities.

4: Delivery

4.1 : Delivery standards

4.1.1 : We have challenging standards for our main services, which take account of our responsibility for delivering national and statutory standards and targets.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

New Evidence

C240: Annual Complaints Report Assessor Acceptance: Yes

There are National targets for timeliness of response to complaints set by SPSO and P15-16 of this report show reporting against that, whilst the wider report shows quality of responses and the low % that go to SPSO.

C270: Corporate Outcome Indicators Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council delivers a range of Services to national and ABOIP related targets, this shows the quarterly reports of performance for each Dept that relate to those ABOIP targets.

C271: ABC Education Strategic Plan and Impact Report 2020-24 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Parents and Pupils are a large cohort of council customers and this reports details the array of literact, attainment and pass rate targets set in the Education sphere. Many linked to national targets.

4.1.1.1 : We have challenging standards for our main services,

4.1.1.2 : which take account of our responsibility for delivering national and statutory standards and targets.

4.1.2 : We monitor and meet our standards, key departmental and performance targets, and we tell our customers about our performance.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C240: Annual Complaints Report Assessor Acceptance: Yes

There are National targets for timeliness of response to complaints set by SPSO and P15-16 of this report show achievement against that and the low % that go to SPSO. This is published, reported to committee and publicised.

C242: Tiered Approach to Performance Reporting Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council has a Tiered Approach to Performance Reporting with Quarterly and Annual Reports to the Elected members through Committees and Area Committees and Via Policy Leads, then to Senior management Reports and Service and Team Operational Reports all have customer related elements.

C272: Corporate Annual Report 2022-23 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

All key ABOIP and Corporate Outcome indicators are monitored and reported through Our Annual Report which is published on our website and widely publicised. In 2022-23 39 out of 47 indicators were on track.

4.1.2.1 : We monitor and meet our standards, key departmental and performance targets,

4.1.2.2 : and we tell our customers about our performance.

4.1.3 : We consult and involve customers, citizens, partners and staff on the setting, reviewing and raising of our local standards.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C273: Review of Performance Management 2021 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In 2020/21 There was widespread consultation of our new performance management framework amongst staff, management and members. See para 4.3 This report on progress then led to adoption of the standards at C270.

C274: CPP Development Day Presentation Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The targets and priorities set in the Corporate Plan and Outcome Improvement Plan came from an exhaustive citizen and partner engagement programme detailed in this presentation.

C275: HSCP Joint Strategic Plan 2022-24 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

See pages 23-31 about the extensive customer consultation that informed the priorities and performance measures at Pages 35-38 and how they will be measured at page 92.along with the statutory national indicators.

4.1.3.1 : We consult and involve customers, citizens, partners and staff on the setting, reviewing and raising of our local standards.

4.2 : Achieved Delivery and Outcomes

4.2.1 : We agree with our customers at the outset what they can expect from the service we provide.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

New Evidence

C255: Customer Service Charter 2024 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This new Customer Service Charter details our pledges of service they can expect and what we need from them to help us achieve that for them.

C264: Community Planning Partnership Outcome Improvement Plan Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The service improvements detailed in the CPP ABOIP were reached through extensive consultation (see C274) and approved by customers' elected representatives.

C267: Supporting Community Councils Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Community Councils are customers of the council and the Scheme of Establishment and the Best Practice Agreement details exactly what support and services the Council will provide them with.

4.2.1.1 : We agree with our customers at the outset what they can expect from the service we provide.

4.2.2 : We can demonstrate that we deliver the service we promised to individual customers and that outcomes are positive for the majority of our customers.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C270: Corporate Outcome Indicators Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council delivers a range of Services to national and ABOIP related targets, th quarterly reports of performance for each Dept show mostly positive performance. C240 Complaints report shows how few complaints are made for these Services considering high volumes of contact.

C272: Corporate Annual Report 2022-23 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

All key ABOIP and Corporate Outcome indicators are monitored and reported through Our Annual Report which is published on our website and widely publicised. In 2022-23 39 out of 47 indicators were on track.

C276: LGBF Benchmarking Outcomes 2020-23 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Local Government Benchmarking Scheme looks at over 100 Cost, Performance and Satisfaction Indicators across all council activities and last report 64% of Argyll and Bute Indicators have improved or stayed same @ on Performance Specific Indicators 49 out of 70 have improved better than most councils

4.2.2.1 : We can demonstrate that we deliver the service we promised to individual customers

4.2.2.2 : and that outcomes are positive for the majority of our customers.

4.2.3 : We can demonstrate that we benchmark our performance against that of similar or complementary organisations and have used that information to improve our service.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C276: LGBF Benchmarking Outcomes 2020-23 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This evidence on Local Government Benchmarking Scheme not only looks at our benchmarked performance but also how we use that to improve services and contribute to helping other councils.

C277: SOCITM Benchmarking 2022 Outcome Report Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council subscribes to the national Socitm ICT benchmark service that carries out a comprehensive review of our Corporate ICT systems and service every other year. The performance is scrutinised and areas for improvement tackled e.g 15 minute response time highlighted.

C278: Silktide Web Accessibily Benchmarking Service. Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Web Team invested in the SOCITM recommended independent auditor (Silktide) of websites to benchmark the quality of our website and ID areas for improvement. Our score increased from 46/100 to 98/100 over 3 years.

4.2.3.1 : We can demonstrate that we benchmark our performance against that of similar or complementary organisations

4.2.3.2 : and have used that information to improve our service.

4.2.4 : We have developed and learned from best practice identified within and outside our organisation, and we publish our examples externally where appropriate.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C257: Audit Scotland Tackling Digital Exclusion Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council worked with Audit Scotland on their recent Report on Digital Exclusion and was commended for its alternative channels (see Paras 78-79) for digital strugglers.

C279: Data Strategy and Action Plan 2024-28 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Following an assessment using Scottish Government's Data Maturity programme we developed This new Data Strategy and published a case study in a Scotgov Report using data in the Care Sector.

C280: Award Winning Council Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council enters for and wins numerous Awards and all winning entries are published so others can learn from them e.g. our COSLA winning Drone Service in Education
https://www.cosla.gov.uk/excellence-awards/our-previous-winners

4.2.4.1 : We have developed and learned from best practice identified within

4.2.4.2 : and outside our organisation,

4.2.4.3 : and we publish our examples externally where appropriate.

4.3 : Deal effectively with problems

4.3.1 : We identify any dips in performance against our standards and explain these to customers, together with action we are taking to put things right and prevent further recurrence.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C207: Keep in the Loop Notification Service Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This service is a powerful, pro-active means to engage customers and communities to inform of changes and disruptions likely to affect performance and when things will return to normal.

C240: Annual Complaints Report Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The most obvious manifestation of a performance dip is when there are complaints and this report is published widely and explains to customers in section 8 how we have learned from them. .

C270: Corporate Outcome Indicators Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council delivers a range of Services to national and ABOIP related targets, the key ones are tracked through this Corporate Outcome scorecard, which has a narrative element explaining wdips in performance and what improvements are being made to rectify them. See also C272 Corp Annual Report.

4.3.1.1 : We identify any dips in performance against our standards

4.3.1.2 : and explain these to customers,

4.3.1.3 : together with action we are taking to put things right and prevent further recurrence.

4.3.2 : We have an easy to use complaints procedure, which includes a commitment to deal with problems fully and solve them wherever possible within a reasonable time limit.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C265: Partnership Working with Scottish Public Service Ombudsma Assessor Acceptance: Yes

As the final appeal level for Complaints the number that go to the SPSO is a strong litmus of the council's commitment to resolve complaints speedily and effectively and under 5% go to SPSO, due to stringent performance mgt (See C240 and Scrutiny Cttee).

C281: Comprehensive Corporate Complaints Procedure Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council operates a simple to use centralised complaints process for customers with easy access, a council wide (and HSCP) case management system and comprehensive training and guidance for staff, with excellent performance reporting. (C240).

C282: Member Zone Update Report 2022-24 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council operates a simple to use centralised complaints process for customers with easy access, a council wide (and HSCP) case mgt system and comprehensive training and guidance for staff, with excellent performance reporting. (C240).

4.3.2.1 : We have an easy to use complaints procedure,

4.3.2.2 : which includes a commitment to deal with problems fully

4.3.2.3 : and solve them wherever possible within a reasonable time limit.

4.3.3 : We give staff training and guidance to handle complaints and to investigate them objectively, and we can demonstrate that we empower staff to put things right.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C234: Customer Complaints Management L&D Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council takes a Corporate Approach to Complaints Managers that has at its heart the early resolution of complaints by empowering staff to fix things that have may have gone wrong at Stage 1 of the complaint. Comprehensive Training is key to early, good outcomes.

C283: CSC Agents Complaints Training Manual Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Contact Centre Agents are the front line for Complaints Logging and resolution and so we have developed separate training for them and empower them where possible (P.5) to resolve matters before logging as a formal complaint. Stats to be shown on day.

C284: Child Friendly Complaints Procedure Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Complaints law was recently extended to apply to Children following UNCRC being adopted in Scotland. This shows how we empowered staff by supplying mandatory training and updated guidance for child friendly complaints mgt.

4.3.3.1 : We give staff training and guidance to handle complaints

4.3.3.2 : and to investigate them objectively,

4.3.3.3 : and we can demonstrate that we empower staff to put things right.

4.3.4 : We learn from any mistakes we make by identifying patterns in formal and informal complaints and comments from customers and use this information to improve services and publicise action taken.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C220: Member Zone Sounding Board Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In 2022 we completely reviewed the way we engage operationally with elected members (as customers of Services) and set up a collaborative approach using a Sounding Board to gather feedback and mandate improvements, giving great outcomes, See C282

C240: Annual Complaints Report Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Section 8 pages 18-20 of the Complaints Annual Report has a section with case studies of Learning From Complaints and EVERY complaint made requires the handler to say if changes have been made as a result of the complaint.

C252: Feedback Mechanisms on the Website Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council's website has many ways for users to provide feedback on the usefulness of the information presented, which is reported on and used to improve content. This evidence is a digest of those pathways and what we do with the feedback.

4.3.4.1 : We learn from any mistakes we make by identifying patterns in formal

4.3.4.2 : and informal complaints and comments from customers

4.3.4.3 : and use this information to improve services and publicise action taken.

4.3.5 : We regularly review and improve our complaints procedure, taking account of the views of customers, complainants and staff.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C240: Annual Complaints Report Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Page 17 and 18 of the report shows the outcome of complaints satisfaction Survey and page 22 the complaints themes thatare analysed and used to improve the service and discuss at Local Authority Complaints Handlers Network (LACHN).

C284: Child Friendly Complaints Procedure Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Complaints law was recently extended to apply to Children following UNCRC being adopted in Scotland. So we had to review and update whole complaints procedure and supporting system with input from handlers, co-ordinators and managers. (Also C265 and 281)

C285: Corporate Complaints Survey and Analysis Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In 2018 we introduced a Complaints process satisfaction survey for customers whose complaints are upheld and analyse this quarterly to identify improvements and we publicise results in the Annual Report (C240).

4.3.5.1 : We regularly review and improve our complaints procedure,

4.3.5.2 : taking account of the views of customers, complainants and staff.

4.3.6 : We ensure that the outcome of the complaint process for customers (whose complaint is upheld) is satisfactory for them.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C281: Comprehensive Corporate Complaints Procedure Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council has a 2 tier compaints system, so if a customer is not satisfied with how their complaint is handled we review by a second officer. In 2022-23 (C240) showed that 138 out of 467 (29%) Complaints went to Stage 2 and only 22 (5%) were upheld. Assuring the process is satisfactory for most.

C285: Corporate Complaints Survey and Analysis Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In 2018 we introduced a Complaints process satisfaction survey for customers whose complaints are upheld and analyse this quarterly to identify improvements and we publicise results in the Annual Report (C240).

C286: Ensuring Completion of Complaint Improvement Actions Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This evidence shows monitoring of fulfilment of improvement actions promised to customers with upheld complaints, which is vital to the process being satisfactory for them.

4.3.6.1 : We ensure that the outcome of the complaint process for customers (whose complaint is upheld) is satisfactory for them.

5: Timeliness and Quality of Service

5.1 : Standards for Timeliness and Quality

5.1.1 : We set appropriate and measurable standards for the timeliness of response for all forms of customer contact including phone calls, letters, e-communications and personal callers.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C255: Customer Service Charter 2024 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Pledge 1 of new Charter is: We will provide a responsive service to requests and enquiries, seeking to minimise bureacracy and telling customers our timescales based
on the complexity of the service being provided.

C282: Member Zone Update Report 2022-24 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Enquiries raised by elected members have a strict 5 day initial response and 20 day full/complex response timescales that are reported on to Snr Mgt and Members. The first 2 years of timeliness and quality outcomes are in this report.

C287: Customer Engagement Team Targets Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The CET is first point of contact for all customer channels and reviews its targets annually as shown here for 2024/25 and they encompass both Timeliness and Quality See C226 and C215 for how these are monitored and reported.

5.1.1.1 : We set appropriate and measurable standards for the timeliness of response for all forms of customer contact including phone calls, letters, e-communications and personal callers.

5.1.2 : We set comprehensive standards for all aspects of the quality of customer service to be expected in all dealings with our organisation.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C270: Corporate Outcome Indicators Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council delivers a range of Services to national and ABOIP related targets, these include timeliness, cost and quality e.g. Indicator 7 for Quality of School meals. See also C242 re tiered reporting of these.

C287: Customer Engagement Team Targets Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The CET is first point of contact for all customer channels and reviews its targets annually as shown here for 2024/25 and they encompass both Timeliness and Quality See C215 and C226 for how these are monitored and reported.

C288: Council Annual Business Plan 2023/24 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council Sets and Annual Business Plan of priority success measures for the year ahead and most of these are qualitative in nature and span all council Services. This is the 2023-24 Plan. The Annual Report C272 details achievement.

5.1.2.1 : We set comprehensive standards for all aspects of the quality of customer service to be expected in all dealings with our organisation.

5.2 : Timely Outcomes

5.2.1 : We advise our customers and potential customers about our promises on timeliness and quality of customer service.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C228: Member Zone Performance Management Regime Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Members have a dedicated MZ Performance Management Regime with Updates on the website and to the MZ Sounding Board as well as their own dashboards. See also C219 and C282.

C242: Tiered Approach to Performance Reporting Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council has a Tiered Approach to Performance Reporting with Quarterly and Annual Reports to the Elected members through Committees and Area Committees and Via Policy Leads, these meetings are now even webcast.

C256: ABC CS Strategy, Charter and CS Action Plan 2024-27 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council's New Customer Service Charter, Strategy and Strategy Action Plan are being widely publicised and have a dedicated web page resource with related performance reports.
https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/my-council/plans-and-policy/customer-service-charter-and-strategy

5.2.1.1 : We advise our customers and potential customers about our promises on timeliness and quality of customer service.

5.2.2 : We identify individual customer needs at the first point of contact with us and ensure that an appropriate person who can address the reason for contact deals with the customer.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C221: Customer Led Website Redesign Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In 2023 we launched a brand new Corporate Website whose design was driven by customer insight and customer testing of early versions. This paper details the navigation and usability improvements built into the design so user find what they need at first point of contact.

C226: Customer Engagement Team Performance Monitoring Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Customer Engagement Team' embedded technology, staff training and and procedures ensure the vast majority of contacts are resolved at first point of contact and this is zealously monitored See also C207 KITL and C215 Satisfaction Monitoring .

C235: Trauma Informed Practice Training Assessor Acceptance: Yes

An increasing number of customers have experienced trauma or have neurodivergent conditions and need to be assisted with particular sensitivity. We've empowered our staff to do that with training on Trauma Informed Practice to help them meet customer needs.

5.2.2.1 : We identify individual customer needs at the first point of contact with us

5.2.2.2 and ensure that an appropriate person who can address the reason for contact deals with the customer.

5.2.3 : We promptly share customer information with colleagues and partners within our organisation whenever appropriate and can demonstrate how this has reduced unnecessary contact for customers.

Applicant Self Assessment: Satisfactory

New Evidence

C263: Health and Social Care Partnership Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council is part of the Integrated Joint Board of the Health and Social Care Partnership. We share information, skills and resources for the benefit of mutual customers and this will be operationally demonstrated at assessment.

C289: Tell us Once Service Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In 2012 the council implemented the "Tell Us Once Service" for notification of Deaths to all other services so customers don't need to make multiple calls at a difficult time. More Services are added each year as shown here.

C290: ABC Emergency Response Plan Assessor Acceptance: Yes

ABC has a detailed multi agency response plan that is triggered during an emergency event and has extensive arrangements for info sharing so customer groups are informed and dealt with in a joined up way. E.g. Severe Weather events.

5.2.3.1 : We promptly share customer information with colleagues and partners within our organisation whenever appropriate

5.2.3.2 : and can demonstrate how this has reduced unnecessary contact for customers.

5.2.4 : Where service is not completed at the first point of contact we discuss with the customer the next steps and indicate the likely overall time to achieve outcomes.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C255: Customer Service Charter 2024 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In addition to Pledge 1 of the CS Charter telling customers of timescales involved, Pledge 4 says We will deliver information and services in an open and transparent way, providing clear and accessible information about what we can deliver and proactively telling customers when there may be issues.

C281: Comprehensive Corporate Complaints Procedure Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Our Complaints Process details the timescales for dealing with stage 1 and stage 2 complaints although it states that if an investigation will take longer than the SLA we will keep them informed. A similar approach is used for FOIs and SARs.

C291: Member Zone Employee Guidance Assessor Acceptance: Yes

A fundamental part of the Member Zone query management process is when member's query cannot be completed at Initial Response stage it moves to Follow Up Response Pending and Services agree a new SLA depending on the query (though there is a 20 day default). See also C219/20/28/82

5.2.4.1 : Where service is not completed at the first point of contact we discuss with the customer the next steps

5.2.4.2 : and indicate the likely overall time to achieve outcomes.

5.2.5 : We respond to initial enquiries promptly, if there is a delay we advise the customer and take action to rectify the problem.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C207: Keep in the Loop Notification Service Assessor Acceptance: Yes

This service is a powerful, pro-active means notify specific customers or segments of customers when thee are delays or disruptions affecting their enquiries and work in tandem with our disruption notification systems on website and voice services.

C292: Netcall Emergency IVR Procedure Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The CSC's Call Distribution Service has a dormant Emergency IVR to be triggered if an emergency event (C290, C293) means we cannot provide a normal service and it gives an alternative number to call that will have relevant info to help and topical updates on delays etc.

C293: COSLA Award Entry Weather Event Response Assessor Acceptance: Yes

In 2023 a storm caused huge damage and our Roads & Amenity and Social Care Services triggered our Emergency Plan (C290), so a huge communication and recovery exercise was put in place P.3 explaining that we were suspending normal operations to focus on emergency priorities.

5.2.5.1 : We respond to initial enquiries promptly,

5.2.5.2 : if there is a delay we advise the customer and take action to rectify the problem.

5.3 : Achieved Timely Delivery

5.3.1 : We monitor our performance against standards for timeliness and quality of customer service and we take action if problems are identified.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C215: Customer Engagement Team Satisfaction Monitoring Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Customer Engagement Team monitors all aspects of satisfaction, but particularly, information, professionalism and access across multiple channels and services and take remedial action on issues e.g. on hold music.

C216: Tiered Corporate Approach to Customer Satisfaction Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Council has a tiered approach to monitoring customer and employee satisfaction with top level metrics reported to Committees and then Service and Team level reporting for performance and improvements identified and published.

C294: Procurement Service Annual Satisfaction Survey Report Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Corporate Procurement do a yearly Satisfaction Survey of timeliness cost and quality (Para3.5) and take remedial action on feedback and data - see appendices.

5.3.1.1 : We monitor our performance against standards for timeliness

5.3.1.2 : and quality of customer service

5.3.1.3 : and we take action if problems are identified.

5.3.2 : We are meeting our current standards for timeliness and quality of customer service and we publicise our performance against these standards.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C272: Corporate Annual Report 2022-23 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

All key ABOIP and Corporate Outcome indicators are monitored and reported through Our Annual Report which is published on our website and widely publicised. In 2022-23 39 out of 47 indicators were on track.

C276: LGBF Benchmarking Outcomes 2020-23 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Local Government Benchmarking Scheme looks at many Cost, Performance and Satisfaction Indicators across all council activities and last report 64% of Argyll and Bute Indicators have improved or stayed same + on Performance Specific Indicators 49 out of 70 have improved, better than most councils.

C277: SOCITM Benchmarking 2022 Outcome Report Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The council uses the national Socitm ICT benchmark service every other year. The 2022 report showed performance efficiency increased 27.45% across 12 metrics (para 3.5) and satisfaction levels rise from 5.35 to 5.9 para 3.6.

5.3.2.1 : We are meeting our current standards for timeliness

5.3.2.2 : and quality of customer service

5.3.2.3 : and we publicise our performance against these standards.

5.3.3 : Our performance in relation to timeliness and quality of service compares well with that of similar organisations.

Applicant Self Assessment: Strong

New Evidence

C276: LGBF Benchmarking Outcomes 2020-23 Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Local Government Benchmarking Scheme looks at many Cost, Performance and Satisfaction Indicators across all council activities and last report 64% of Argyll and Bute Indicators have improved or stayed same + on Performance Specific Indicators 49 out of 70 have improved, better than most councils.

C277: SOCITM Benchmarking 2022 Outcome Report Assessor Acceptance: Yes

Socitm national benchmark concluded that the A&B ICT service had the lowest cost base combined with excellent performance and excellent customer satisfaction levels for its ICT platforms and services.

C278: Silktide Web Accessibily Benchmarking Service. Assessor Acceptance: Yes

The Web Team invested in the SOCITM recommended independent auditor (Silktide) of websites to benchmark the quality of our website and ID areas for improvement. Our score August score is 98/100 and top 40 out of 420 Uk Councils.

5.3.3.1 : Our performance in relation to timeliness

:

5.3.3.2 : and quality of service compares well with that of similar organisations.