



Title of Report:	The Association of Public Sector Excellence (APSE) Performance Benchmarking
Committee Report Submitted To:	The Leisure and Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	17th November 2020
For Decision or For Information	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	
Outcome	
Lead Officer	Director

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	N/A
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on progress with the APSE Performance Benchmarking process within Leisure and Development including proposed indicators.

2.0 Background

The context for Council's benchmarking activity is set out in its Duty to Improve within the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, **Part 12, Section 91-(1)-(b)** which states that "A council must use the information it collects under section 90 to compare its performance, in so far as is reasonably practicable, with the performance of other councils in exercising those or similar functions during the financial year to which the information relates and during previous financial years."

Council's level of regional and national benchmarking of its performance has been limited and has regularly been the subject of NIAO Audit Recommendations. Council's Section 95 Audit and Assessment Report 2019/20 from the NIAO stated that:

- "Council should continue working with other councils and the Department to agree a suite of self-imposed indicators and standards. This will enable meaningful comparisons to be made and published in line with its statutory responsibility. Significant progress by all councils is essential in the coming year to allow a broader range of functions to be compared."

- "We expect that further progress by all councils will be necessary in the coming year to allow a broader range of functions to be compared."

3.0 APSE led National Performance Benchmarking

Council has taken the positive step and joined with 9 of the 10 other Northern Ireland Councils to be part of the "Northern Ireland Project". This is the National Performance Benchmarking Framework that is led and facilitated by APSE Performance Networks. Through membership of this network, Council will now be subject to and contribute data against over 160 Performance Indicators across 12 Services areas. Council will now be able to extensively benchmark its performance against that of other Councils in Northern Ireland in order to comply with its statutory duties, identify areas for improvement, share good practice and increase accountability of its performance through public reporting.

APSE performance networks is the largest voluntary public sector benchmarking service across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The network has been collecting performance data on key frontline service areas since 1999, and the Northern Ireland project has been benchmarking data across Councils here since 2015. APSE is used by over 200 local authorities across the UK and it leads the way in local government benchmarking. The size of APSE's membership gives added benefits to members by being able to offer a wide variety of comparator groups.

The Leisure and Development Directorate will be reporting against 42 Performance Indicators over 4 Service areas and these are set out in the tables below. Members are asked to note that the proposed indicators for arts, heritage and community development may be subject to amendments, pending further clarification from APSE representatives in relation to queries regarding datasets.

The training and development for staff who will be involved in this process has been ongoing, and Council believes that this is a valuable and positive step towards our ongoing aim to foster a culture of service improvement.

4.0 Benchmarking Indicators

All dry only Leisure facilities	
Indicator Description	2019 NI Council Average
Financial performance indicators	
PI 02a - Subsidy per visit (excluding CEC* and free school use)	£2.82
PI 13a - Net cost per head of population (excluding CEC*)	£2.43
PI 04a - Customer spend per head	£2.05
PI 07a - Staff costs per admission	£3.17
PI 42f - Energy cost per user	£0.47
Usage performance indicators	
PI 29 - Usage per household within catchment area	7.94
31a - Usage per opening hour	40.22
Staff performance indicators	
PI 26a - Percentage staff absence for leisure services (all staff)	6.58%
PI 30a - Percentage short term absenteeism / lost time rate for Leisure services	1.53%
PI 48a - Percentage long term absenteeism / lost time rate for Leisure services	5.05%

All wet and dry Leisure Facilities	
Indicator Description	2019 NI Council Average
Financial performance indicators	
PI 02a - Subsidy per visit (excluding CEC* and free school use)	2.90
PI 13a - Net cost per head of population (excluding CEC*)	4.82
PI 04a - Customer spend per head	2.25
PI 07a - Staff costs per admission	3.65
PI 42f - Energy cost per user	0.61
Usage performance indicators	
PI 29 - Usage per household within catchment area	12.54
31a - Usage per opening hour	83.06
Staff performance indicators	
PI 26a - Percentage staff absence for leisure services (all staff)	7.40%
PI 30a - Percentage short term absenteeism / lost time rate for Leisure services	1.85%
PI 48a - Percentage long term absenteeism / lost time rate for Leisure services	5.55%

Community Development	
Indicator Description	2019 NI Council Average
Financial performance indicators	
PI 12d - Net investment for the 3 community support services per head of population (excluding CEC*)	£6.50
PI 05a - Total grant-aid awarded to the community and voluntary sector per head of population	£3.63
PI 06a - Total cost of staff and direct operational expenditure per head of population	£7.16
PI 07a - Cost per user for directly managed centres (excluding CEC*)	£3.07
PI 08a - Cost per user for supported centres (excluding CEC*)	£2.33
PI 09a - Cost per contact / enquiry	£33.10
Community development performance indicators	
PI 10a - Number of users per directly-managed project	474

Arts and Heritage	
Indicator Description	2019 NI Council Average
Financial performance indicators	
PI 01a - Net cost of direct delivery for venue-based Arts and Heritage events per head of population (excluding CEC*)	£10.05
PI 01b - Net cost of direct delivery for non venue-based Arts and Heritage events per head of population (excluding CEC*)	£3.31
Usage performance indicators	
PI 03a - Number of ticketed audience for Arts events per head of population	0.24
PI 03c - Number of ticketed audience for Arts events per 1,000 head of population per venue 6	85.44
PI 04a - Active participants in Arts events per head of population	0.16
PI 04b - Active participants in Heritage events per head of population	0.06
PI 05a - Number of users of Arts facilities per head of population	0.79
PI 05b - Number of users of Heritage facilities per head of population	1.11
Statistics	
STAT 01 - Number of venue based services which are direct supported for Arts and Heritage	7.33
STAT 02 - Number of non-venue based services which are direct supported for Arts and Heritage	4.40
STAT 03 - Number of venue based services which are indirectly supported for Arts and Heritage	1.00
STAT 04 - Number of non-venue based services which are indirectly supported for Arts and Heritage	338

Economic Development	
Indicator Description	2019 NI Council Average
Applications performance indicators	
PI 01a - Number of business plan applications approved per 1,000 head of population	1.57
PI 02c - Percentage of business plan applications approved for 'a business start-up' against number of business start-up enquiries made within the financial year.	50.81%
Jobs performance indicator	
PI 03a - Percentage of jobs promoted against target (DETI communications)	128.05%

*CEC (Central Establishment Charges): annual/end of year re-charges made by central departments to the in-house contractor/service provider and/or to the commissioning organisation/service purchaser. This can include for example a recharge for central HR, IT, legal services, etc.

5.0 Next Steps

Council will be involved in the "Second Batch" data submission exercise in January 2021, which will provide an opportunity to accurately benchmark significant areas of performance in 2019/20 against nine other Councils in Northern Ireland. Moving forward the relevant and applicable APSE performance indicators will be included in, and reported through, Service Business Plans and will act as a valuable set of supplementary performance indicators to each Service area's own business related measurable outcomes and indicators.