



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

### AGENDA

**22nd Meeting, 2014 (Session 4)**

**Wednesday 20 August 2014**

The Committee will meet at 9.30 am in the David Livingstone Room (CR6).

1. **Decision on taking business in Private** The Committee will decide whether to take item 4 in private.
2. **Local government benchmarking system:** The Committee will take evidence from—

David Martin, SOLACE Scotland;

Mark McAteer, Director of Governance and Performance Management, Improvement Service;

and then from—

Steve Grimmond, Chief Executive, Fife Council;

Elma Murray, Chief Executive, North Ayrshire Council;

and then from—

Maureen McKenna, Executive Director of Education Services, Glasgow City Council;

Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education, East Renfrewshire Council;

Councillor Stephen Curran, Executive Member for Education and Young People, Glasgow City Council;

Councillor Elaine Green, Chair of the Education Committee, East Renfrewshire Council.

3. **Public petitions:PE01469** The Committee will consider the following petition-

PE1469 by Aileen Jackson, on Neighbour notification distances for wind turbine applications

4. **Local government benchmarking system:** The Committee will consider the evidence received.
5. **Draft Budget Scrutiny 2015-16 (in private):** The Committee will consider its approach to the scrutiny of the Scottish Government's Draft Budget 2015-16.
6. **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill (in private):** The Committee will consider its approach to the scrutiny of the Bill at Stage 1.

David Cullum  
Clerk to the Local Government and Regeneration Committee  
Room T3.60  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
Tel: 0131 348 5223  
Email: david.cullum@scottish.parliament.uk

The papers for this meeting are as follows—

**Agenda Item 2**

PRIVATE PAPER	LGR/S4/14/22/1 (P)
National Benchmarking Overview Report 2014	LGR/S4/14/22/2
SPICe Briefing Paper	LGR/S4/14/22/3
Glasgow City Council Annual Benchmarking Report	LGR/S4/14/22/4
Glasgow City Council Submission on Local Government Benchmarking framework	LGR/S4/14/22/5
East Renfrewshire Council Annual Benchmarking Report	LGR/S4/14/22/6
East Renfrewshire Council - Education Department submission on Local Government Benchmarking Framework	LGR/S4/14/22/7
Submission from the Convener of East Renfrewshire Council Education Committee	LGR/S4/14/22/8
Local Government and Regeneration Committee - Official Report - 20 March 2013	LGR/S4/14/22/9
Accounts Commission for Scotland School Education Report	LGR/S4/14/22/10

**Agenda item 3**

Paper from the Clerk	LGR/S4/14/22/11
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**Agenda item 5**

PRIVATE PAPER	LGR/S4/14/22/12 (P)
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**Agenda item 6**

PRIVATE PAPER	LGR/S4/14/22/13 (P)
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# National Benchmarking Overview Report 2014



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# Preface

This is the second annual report for the Scottish Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF). All 32 Scottish councils having been working with the Improvement Service (IS) over the last three years on developing a common approach to benchmarking, which is grounded in reporting standard information on the services councils provide to local communities across Scotland.

The core purpose of local government's efforts through this work is to support all councils to improve their services by working and learning together. By engaging in benchmarking we will learn how to keep improving our use of performance information, improve our understanding of why councils vary in terms of what we achieve for our communities and how effective service practices can be better shared across all councils. We will also continue to make this information available to all citizens and users of council services, so that they in turn can hold us to account for what is achieved on their behalf. As local government we will use the information generated to ask questions of our services in order to make them better. We would encourage citizens and service users to do likewise and engage with us in the improvement process via this information.

It is important to remember though, that councils across Scotland do not have common service structures. Each council has the structure and service arrangements that it believes are the most appropriate and cost effective to support its local community. Equally, all councils report their performance locally within locally developed and agreed public reporting frameworks. To ensure comparability across councils, it has been necessary to develop standard service definitions, and standard classifications for spending and performance.

As part of our work we are piloting a process to drill into the information collated through the LGBF to understand, in more detail, why the variations we highlight in this report are occurring. This process has been organised around 'family groups' of councils so that we are comparing councils that are similar in terms of the socio economic make up of their area and also population sparsity. The outputs of the first phase of this work will be reported by the IS in summer 2014 and it will focus on work being undertaken with Road Services and around the post-school destinations of children.

The information presented below covers how much councils spend on particular services, service performance and how satisfied people are with the major services provided by councils. All the information that this report draws upon is in a standard and therefore comparable form to a high degree of accuracy.

Our ambition in undertaking this important work is to continue to improve the lives of citizens throughout Scotland's many diverse communities. Good public services can help contribute significantly to helping people make their lives better. The cumulative impact of the whole public sector can add further value. To that effect we also encourage other public service partners to share in and learn from our work to date, so we will work with colleagues across the wider public service in the years ahead to broaden the range of indicators being deployed to support benchmarking. To achieve our ambition will require a collective public service effort but we think that effort will be more than rewarded by further improvements in the lives lived by people across Scotland's many and diverse communities.

David O'Neil  
Chairman, Improvement Service  
and COSLA President

George Black  
Chair of SOLACE (Scotland)



# Introduction

Councils and their partners face very significant pressures across the next few years. Financial projections show that the spending available to councils will fall in both cash and real terms, which means adjusting for the impact of inflation. At the same time service demands driven by demographic change is likely to rise sharply in health and social care. In other service areas such as schools there will be an overall small reduction in the number of pupils in schools but this will be unevenly spread across Scotland and in some areas pupil rolls will rise. In yet other service areas such as economic development and employment support, significant demand for support is being driven by the fragile economic recovery and the impact of major reforms in the welfare system.

Over the last five years all councils have been making major efforts to drive improvements in both the cost and quality of their services. These efforts have seen substantial efficiencies made both within councils and within public sector partnerships that councils are part of. The on-going challenge councils face is to continue to drive these productivity and efficiency gains across their services and partnerships while demand for many services continues to rise.

Dealing with these pressures is at the heart of the current reform programmes that councils and other public sector partners in Scotland are implementing. These reforms include:

- The renewed framework for Community Planning and the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). This emphasises the importance of partners working more closely together to plan service delivery in local areas, integrating their services where appropriate, and working jointly to share resources to help meet local needs across Scotland.
- The emphasis on prevention and early intervention across key areas such as early years development, youth unemployment and reshaping care for older people will continue to grow as councils and their partners seek to intervene earlier to help improve lives for people while seeking to reduce costs to the public purse.
- The public service reform agenda also challenges councils and their partners to work together to target and reduce persistent patterns of inequalities by supporting the most disadvantaged and vulnerable communities “in the round”.
- The reform challenge councils face is to continue to develop new ways of working with communities that build on their resources and talents to help attune public services more fully to their needs.

How to make these and other changes happen in ways that work best to reduce inequalities between and within communities is the basis for councils’ improvement activities and their collective efforts embodied in projects such as the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF). But the challenges are complex and will require major change in how the whole public sector, including councils, operates. It is against this backdrop that the work set out in this report should be read. The LGBF forms a key element in councils’ collective and individual responses to the challenges they and their communities face.

## Our Approach

The core purpose of the exercise is benchmarking. That is making comparisons on spending, performance and customer satisfaction between similar councils so that all councils can identify their strengths and weaknesses and learn from those who are achieving the best performance to improve local service delivery throughout Scotland. This work is on-going and all councils continue to participate in these collective efforts towards self-improvement.

Our approach means that there are three core points to bear in mind:



1. It is important when looking at councils to compare like with like.
2. The focus presented in this report is on variations in spending and performance that councils can directly control
3. The aim is to help councils improve and become more cost effective in delivering local services and, through that, support people in improving their life outcomes.

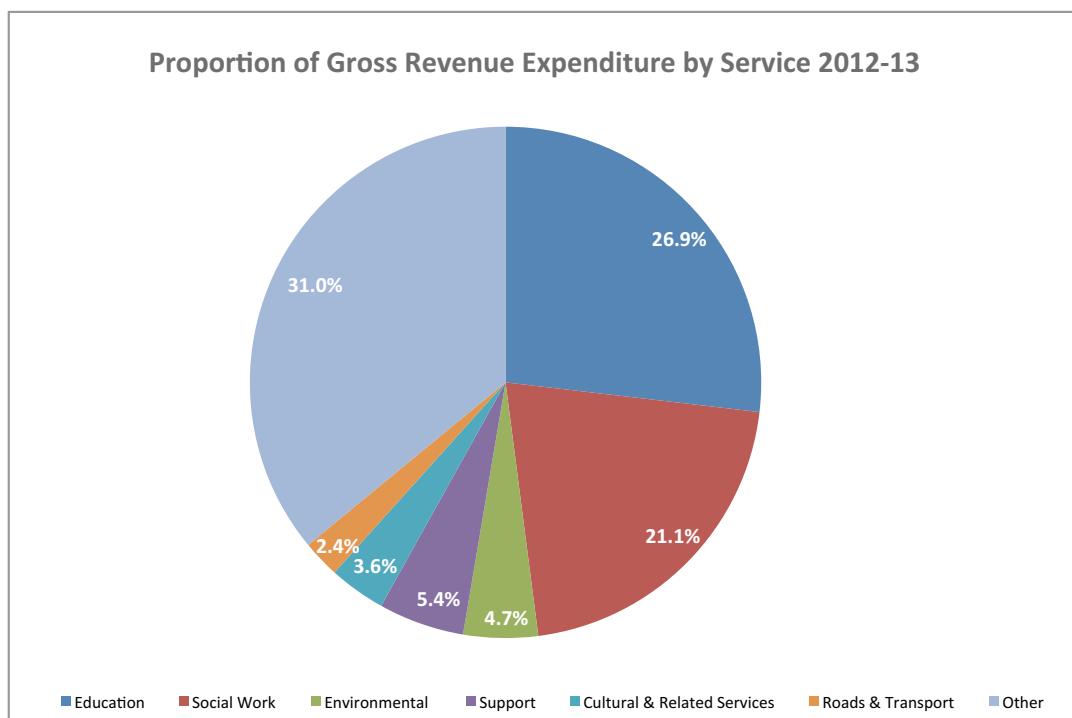
The benchmarking framework reported here lends itself to any type of comparison councils, or citizens, wish to make. What it does not support is a crude “league table” assessment: it would be as misleading to assess the performance of councils with high levels of deprivation without taking account of that as it would be to explore the performance of island councils without noting they are island groups with a very distinctive population distribution. However, within family groups of councils the variations against the indicators between similar types of councils will be fully explored and good practices exchanged within and between those family groups. The point of comparing like with like is that this is more likely to lead to useful learning and improvement. However, that should not be a straitjacket, where comparing between “families” is useful we will do that.

The purpose, therefore, is to create a framework that supports evidence-based comparisons and, through that, shared learning and improvement. The indicators in the LGBF are very high level and are designed to focus questions on why variations in cost and performance are occurring between similar councils. They do not supply the answers. That happens as councils engage with each other to “drill down” and explore why these variations are happening. That provides the platform for learning and improvement. We will report in summer 2014 on our first phase of this aspect of benchmarking. Once we report on our first phase of this work successive areas within the LGBF will be targeted for subsequent exploration and reporting.

## The Local Government Benchmarking Framework

The framework is based on seven overall service groupings which cover the major services provided to the public, and the support services necessary to do that. Chart 1 gives the service categories and the distribution of council spending between them and also the proportion of spending by councils currently outwith the LGBF.

Other Services include Police, Fire, Planning and Trading Services — areas not included within



the benchmarking framework. The above breakdown does not include spend on housing services as not all councils have responsibility for the provision of this service.

As can be seen, services to children (education, child protection and child care) and social work and social care to adults account for just under half of all spend. Despite some perceptions, the cost of corporate administration and the costs of democracy (support for elected members) together account for around 5% of total spending.

To develop precise indicators of cost and performance for comparison between councils, these broad service categories are divided into more specific sub-categories. For example, children's services divide into: preschool education; primary education; secondary education, and child care and protection. A full list of service categories and indicators is attached (see Appendix 1).

For each category, standard indicators of spend and performance have been applied. Spending has been standardised by expressing it as expenditure per standard unit (e.g. spending per pupil; spending per kilometre of road maintained; spending per residence for waste collection, etc.). These indicators have been standardised by application of rigorous protocols and provide a reliable basis for comparison between councils. Indicators of performance have proven to be more difficult.

For some services, well-accepted measures of performance exist (e.g. pupil attainment at standard grade or higher level for secondary education). For others, no standard measures of performance are currently available (e.g. children's educational attainment at the end of primary school). For others again, performance is defined against policy requirements (e.g. percentage of older people with intensive needs receiving care at home). Finally, in some cases, community satisfaction with the service is used but is not equally available for all services.

## The Purpose of this Report

All of the information generated by the LGBF has been placed in a dedicated website. It contains "dashboards" for each council showing movement on indicators across the three years covered, and a comparison with the Scottish average for all indicators. It contains all Scotland and, where relevant, "families" data for every listed indicator.

This report is an overview report and does not seek to replicate the depth and detail of the website. The focus in this report is on three important areas:

1. Trends across Scotland for the service groupings and key indicators covered by the framework covering the period 2010 to 2013. For consistency we report the data in financial rather than calendar years. For each unit cost indicator we have calculated the change over the three years covered by this report in cash and in real terms, that is taking account of impact of inflation over time. **However, to demonstrate change over time we have opted to focus on the real term change but to allow for other comparisons we have included the cash figures in a table with each relevant indicator.**
2. Factors shaping these trends across Scotland including physical geography, population distribution, size of council and the impact of deprivation.
3. Identification of areas where unexplained variation exists and significant improvement might be achieved by all councils getting close to the "best in class".

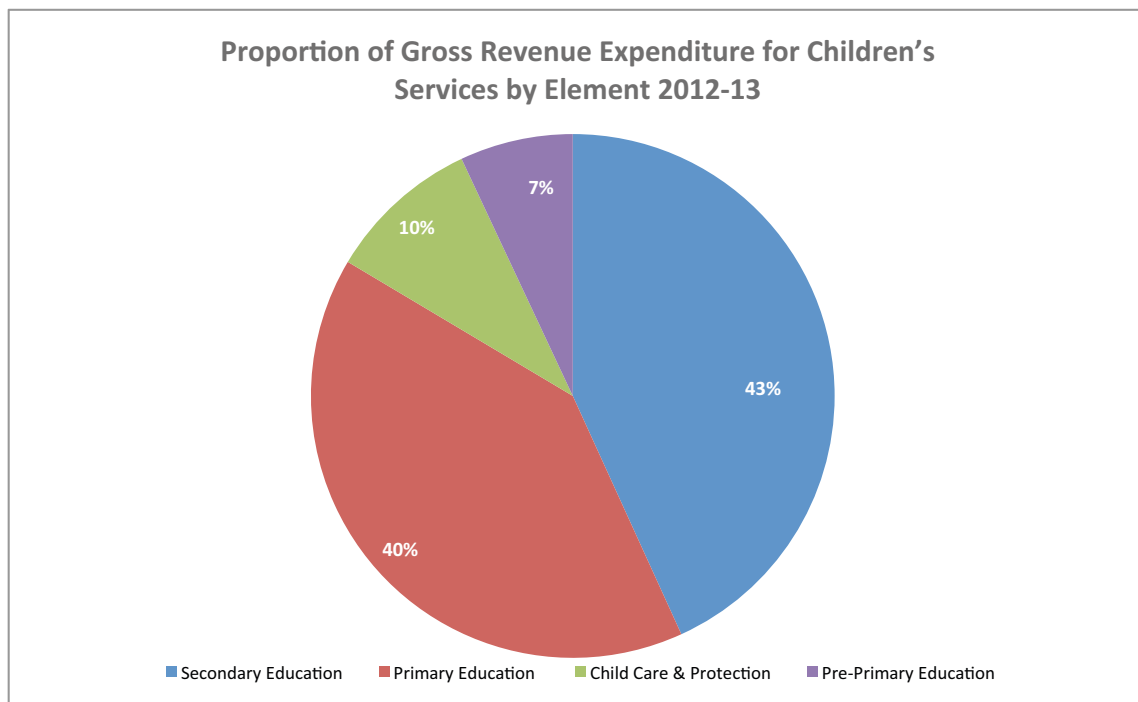
## Executive Summary

1. The benchmarking framework covers approximately 70% of local government spend in 2012/13, covering the major services provided to the public and the support services necessary to do that.

2. In terms of education, in real terms there has been a reduction in costs across primary, secondary, and pre-school since 2010/11, although the rate of this reduction has slowed in the last 12 months.
3. This reduction in education costs has been accompanied by a continued improvement in relation to all measures of attainment, including the demanding criterion of percentage achieving 5+ awards at SQA level 6 and the percentage of pupils entering positive destinations.
4. Continued progress is being made in relation to closing the attainment gap in relation to SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation). The attainment gap between the highest 20% and lowest 20% is narrowing. The rate of improvement in attainment for those 20% most deprived communities was 20% at level 5 and 26% at level 6 – compared to an improvement rate of 9.1% and 11.7% on average.
5. In relation to corporate and support costs, these continue to account for around 5% of total gross revenue spend for local government across Scotland, with the percentage spent on support services holding steady at less than 5%, and a decrease observed in the costs of the democratic core and cost of collecting Council Tax from 2010/11. There has been continued improvement in relation to ensuring equal pay opportunities across genders, with an increase in the percentage of women in the top 5%, from 46% to 49% between 2010/11 to 2012/13.
6. For adult social care, there has been a real reduction in costs in relation to home care costs and residential care costs, while in relation to the balance of care, there has been an increase in the percentage of people with intensive needs cared for at home and the percentage of social work spend allocated to direct payment spend.
7. Across culture and leisure services at a Scotland-wide level, costs per visit/attendance have reduced. This has been against a backdrop of increasing visitor numbers across sports, museums and libraries. There were larger decreases in costs between 2010/11 and 2011/12 and a levelling off in 2011/12 to 2012/13. Customer satisfaction rates for all culture and leisure facilities, except libraries, have also risen in 2012/13.
8. In environmental services, unit costs have fallen across all but one of those areas included in the framework since 2010/11 while the associated outcome measures in relation to cleanliness index and satisfaction figures with both street cleaning and refuse collection continue to improve. Waste disposal costs show a slight increase of 3.7%.
9. Overall costs for roads maintenance per km have reduced in real terms since 2010/11 but increased in the last 12 months. Detailed work on this area is currently being undertaken within the Ffamily groups of councils and this work will be fully reported on in summer 2014. The condition of the roads network continues to improve.
10. In housing services there has been an increase in current tenants' arrears as a percentage of net rent due since 2010/11, with the rate of this increase accelerating in the past year. Meanwhile, when looking at council management of housing stock, the rent lost due to voids has decreased since 2010/11, with all of the decrease occurring between 2011/12 and 2012/13. In terms of housing quality, there have been consistent improvements over the past three years in terms of dwellings meeting Scottish Housing Quality Standards and energy efficiency standards.
11. For the first year, the framework includes a measure in relation to economic development focussing on the 'percentage of total unemployed people in an area assisted into work from council funded/operated employability programmes'. The Scotland average for 2012/13 was 9.6%.

# Children's Services

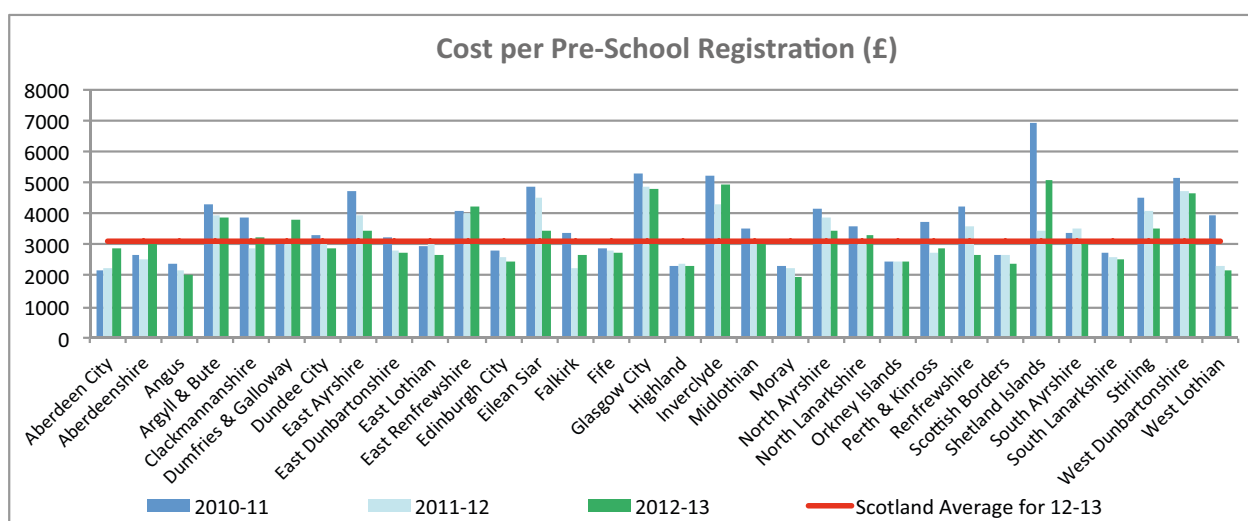
The major elements of children's services, and the percentage of total children's services spend on each one, are given in Table 2 below.



As can be seen, primary and secondary school provision are the major spend areas, with pre-school education and child care and protection accounting for a very much lower percentage of total spending on children. Each element is looked at in turn below.

## Pre-school Provision for Children

For pre-school educational provision for children ("nursery school"), spending has been standardised as total spend per pre-school place. As can be seen in 2012/13, there was substantial variation between councils, ranging from £1966 per place to £5062 per place. There is no systematic connection with the different scale, population distribution or levels of deprivation for different councils. The variation seems more likely to reflect specific local choices about the nature and quality of the service provided.



Over the three year period the Scottish average for the cost per pre-school place has reduced in real terms by -£393. In percentage terms this represents an average real terms reduction across Scotland of -11.2%.

The rate of reduction though has slowed in the last 12 months. From 2010/11 to 2011/12 there was a real terms reduction of -10.1%. However, from 2011/12 to 2012/13 there was a real terms reduction of -1.2%.

### Pre-School Provision Changes

% Change	Cash	Real
2010/11 – 2012/13	-7.6	-11.2
2010/11 – 2011/12	-8	-10.1
2011/ 12 - 2012/13	0.5	-1.2

Factors such as the age, experience and grade of staff deployed, and the cost of facilities, may be part of an explanation as these are major cost elements in delivering the service. In particular the impact of the nationally agreed wage freeze has been a major factor in the cost reductions in previous years. The number of hours/sessions per week offered to children, and the age from which they are offered is also an important cost factor. In many councils, the management of pre-school centres has been incorporated into the primary school that the nursery has been attached to.

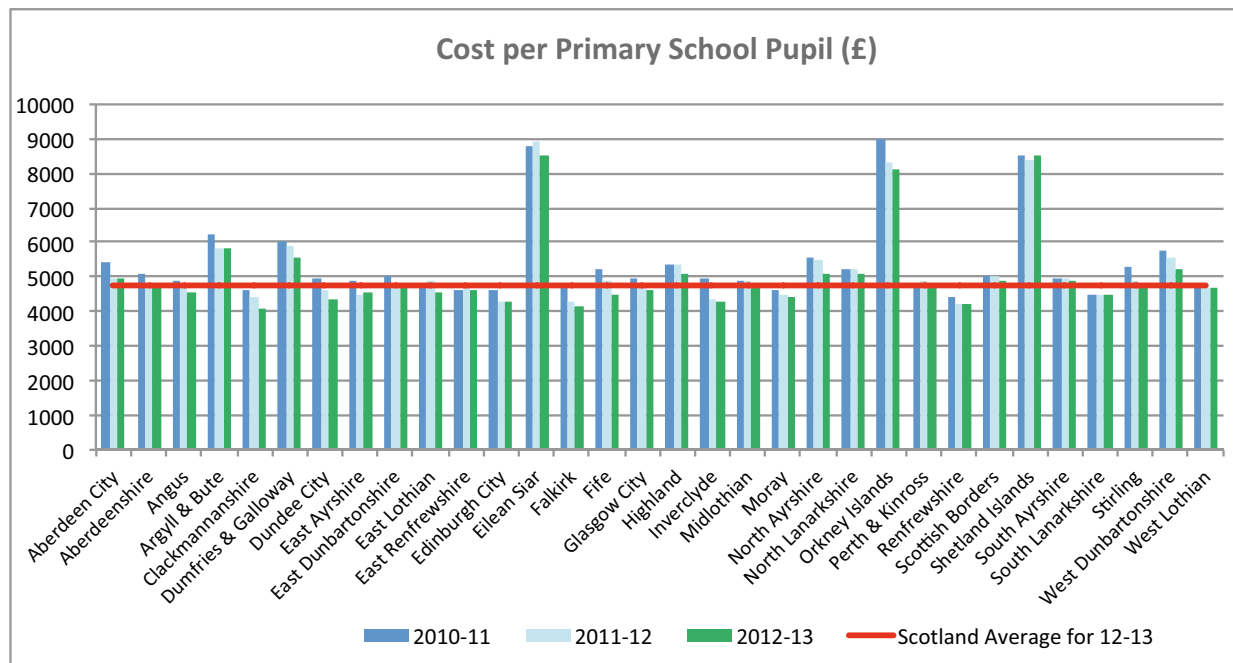
Currently there are no systematic and consistent measures deployed by all 32 councils for understanding children's development as they progress through the pre-school setting. In conjunction with the Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES) we are exploring how such measures will be developed going forwards. With ADES we will seek to work with colleagues across the wide range of early years services and generate a standardised and comparable set of indicators that captures how children are developing through the pre-school period. This will build from the summative forms of evaluation that each child currently experiences within the pre-school setting which are tailored towards their individual development needs. What we will seek is a complimentary set of indicators that will allow councils to compare on a standardised basis how children are progressing in the pre-school years in order that good practices can be identified and fully shared across councils and pre-school settings. We will report fully on these developments in future years.

## Primary and Secondary School Spending

The pattern of spend on primary and secondary schooling is standardised as 'total spend per pupil'. The data shows a very distinctive pattern across Scotland, with the island councils spending significantly more than others. For example, including the islands, the range per primary school pupil is from £4084 to £8527 and from £5425 to £13,657 for secondary schools. Excluding the islands, the range per pupil for primary comes down to £4084 to £5847, and for secondary it comes down to £5425 to £7757. The distinctive physical geography and population distribution of the island councils results in a distinctive spending pattern.

### Cost Per Primary Pupil

From 2010/11 to 2012/13 there was a real terms reduction of -£318 per primary pupil. This represents a -6.3% real terms reduction. The rate of reduction has slowed since 2010/11 and 2011/12 when there was a reduction of -3.8% while between 2011/12 and 2012/13 there was a reduction of -2.6%.

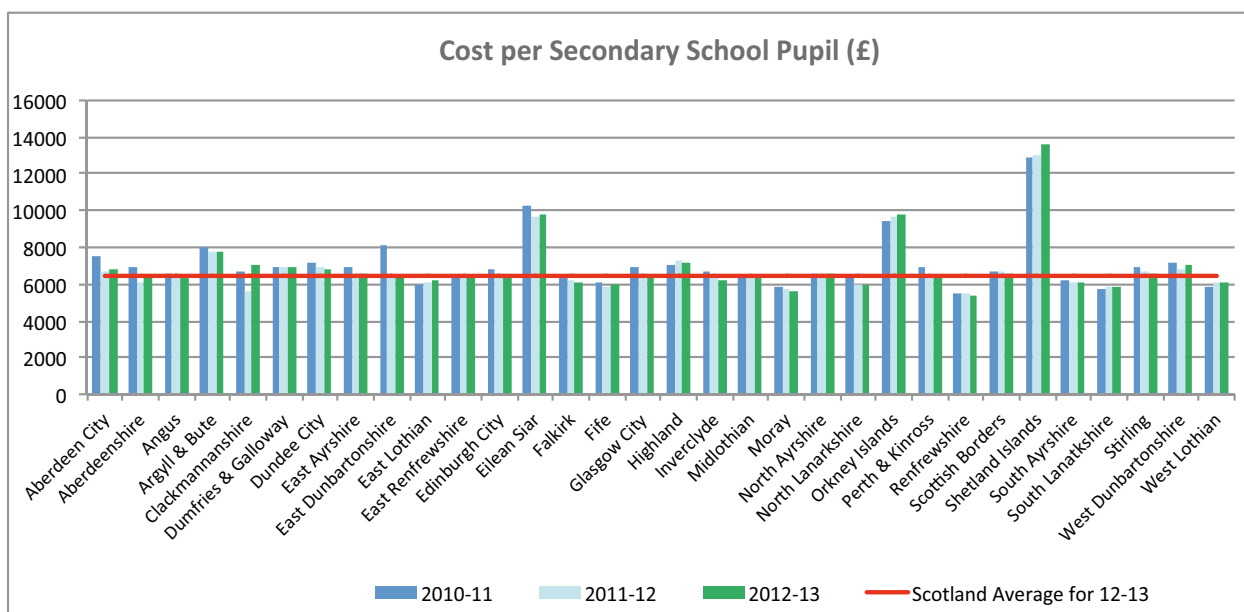


### Cost Per Primary School Pupil

% Change	Cash	Real
2010/11 – 2012/13	-2.4	-6.3
2010/11 – 2011/12	-1.6	-3.8
2011/ 12 - 2012/13	-0.9	-2.6

As with pre-school children's development we are in discussion with ADES to help agree a consistent method for assessing children's development through primary schools. Currently some councils deploy formal development measurement approaches while others adopt a different less formal approach to assessment. We will report in future years on this important area of development.

### Cost Per Secondary Pupil





From 2010/11 to 2012/13 there was a real terms reduction of -£260 per pupil, this represents a -3.9% real terms reduction. As before the rate of reduction has slowed in the most recent year as from 2010/11 to 2011/12 there was a -3.8% real terms reduction whereas between 2011/12 and 2012/13 it was a -0.1%.

### Cost Per Secondary School Pupil

% Change	Cash	Real
2010/11 – 2012/13	0.1	-3.9
2010/11 – 2011/12	-1.6	-3.8
2011/ 12 - 2012/13	1.7	-0.1

Around 60% of the cost per pupil is teaching staff costs and a further 20% represents operating costs of which the biggest element is the provision of school facilities themselves. This means that variation between councils is highly influenced by the age and salary costs of the teaching workforce, and the number and condition of the school buildings they provide. As a substantial proportion of the school estate has been renewed in the last 15 years using PPP/PFI vehicles, annual contract costs are also likely to be a significant factor.

Currently in Scotland an agreement has been reached by the Scottish Government and local authorities to ensure councils will maintain teacher numbers in line with pupil numbers. From August 2011, the class size maximum in all P1 classes was reduced from 30 to 25. In 2013 99% of primary school children were taught in classes of 25 or fewer with an overall teacher pupil ratio in primary schools of 16 pupils to 1 teacher being achieved.<sup>1</sup> This means that in managing costs, this element of the council workforce cannot be reduced below the stipulated levels and represents a fixed cost to councils. Data on secondary schools is not generally collated in the same way as in primary schools but the average teacher pupil ratio in 2013 in secondary schools was 12.2: 1 and in special support schools a ratio of 3.5: 1 was achieved. It is also worth noting that the current moratorium on school closures together with the complex issues involved with such closures inhibits further rationalisation of facilities, which in turn also acts to maintain costs within both primary and secondary school expenditure. The impact of both factors limit councils' efforts in seeking to generate further efficiencies in this major area of expenditure.

As the charts and analysis above indicate, despite the common factors that structure substantial areas of performance e.g. class sizes, there are still substantial variations between councils, particularly for secondary education. These variations have been examined in terms of scale of council, population distribution and levels of deprivation, but none explain the variation that exists. This suggests that this variation is most likely to be associated with choices made by councils in the past with respect to service delivery and design. The IS will work with all councils, ADES, Education Scotland and other relevant bodies to better understand the impact of these factors and fully share the insights gained into how some services are designed and delivered in ways that achieve greater benefits for children and share these insights with all councils.

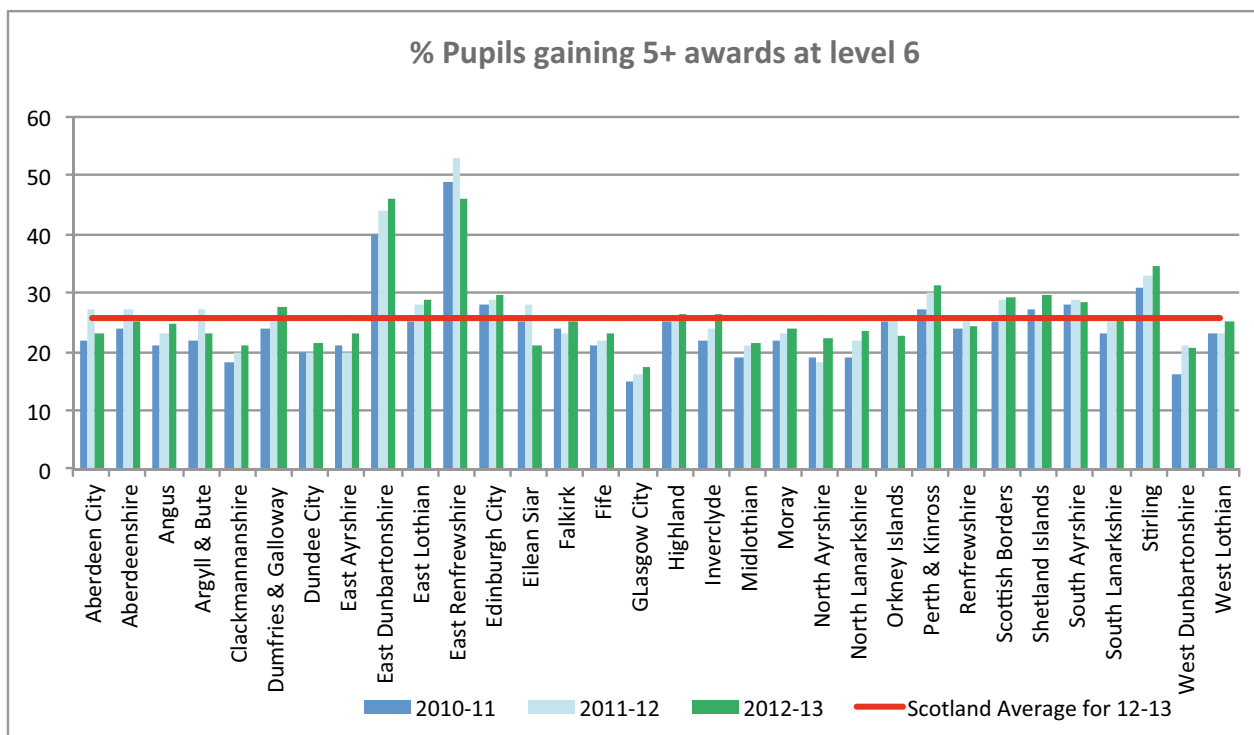
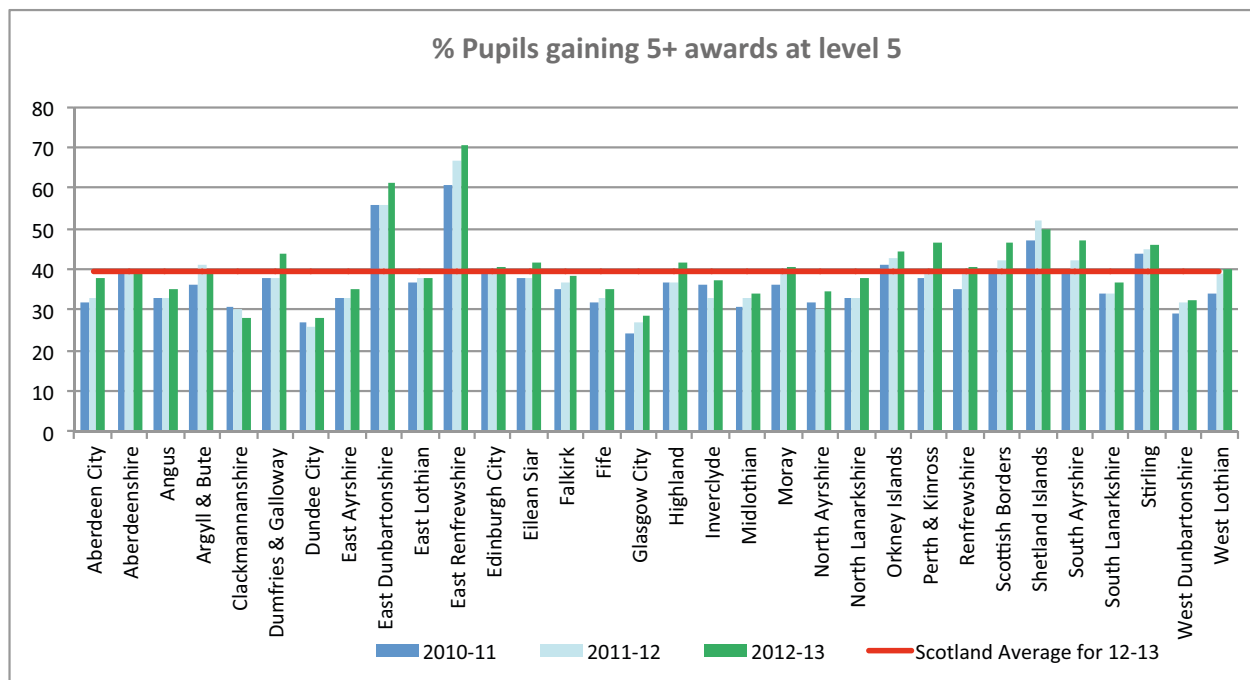
## Secondary School Performance

Performance at secondary level is measured by three indicators within the benchmarking framework: percentage of pupils achieving 5+ SQA level 5 qualifications (Standard Grade A – C equivalent); percentage of pupils gaining 5+ SQA level 6 qualifications (Higher A – C level); and the post-school destinations of pupils.

Within the level 5 and 6 qualifications indicators, very substantial variations can be identified. The range is from 27.9% to 70.7% for 5+ at level 5 and from 17.5% to 46.1% for 5+ at level 6. It should be noted that 5+ awards at SQA level 6 is a demanding criterion.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/TrendClassSizes>



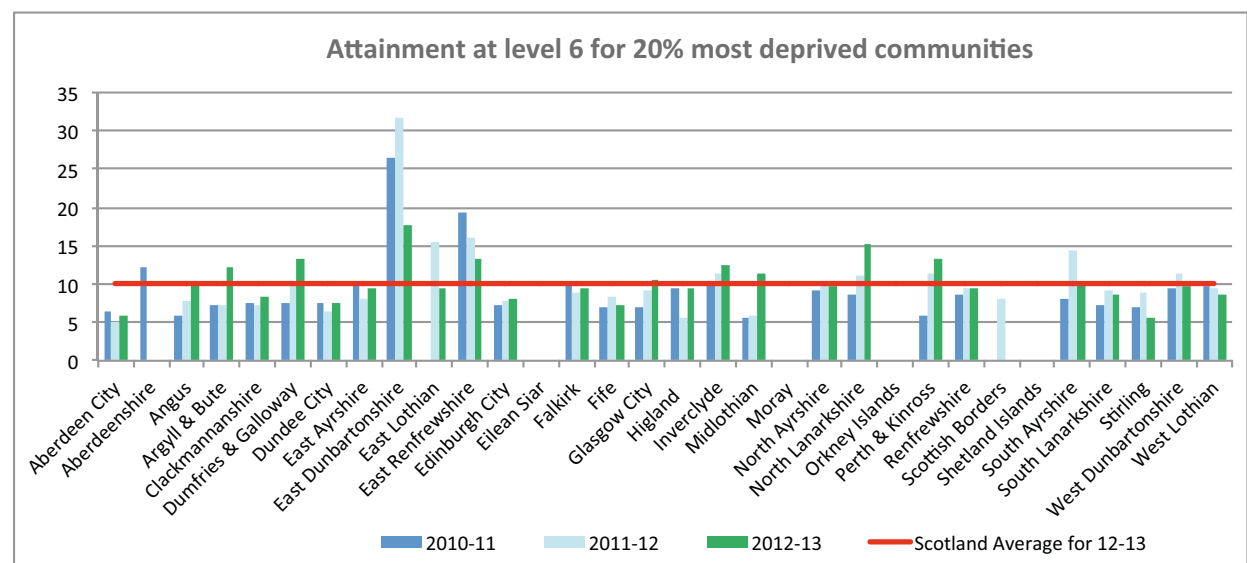
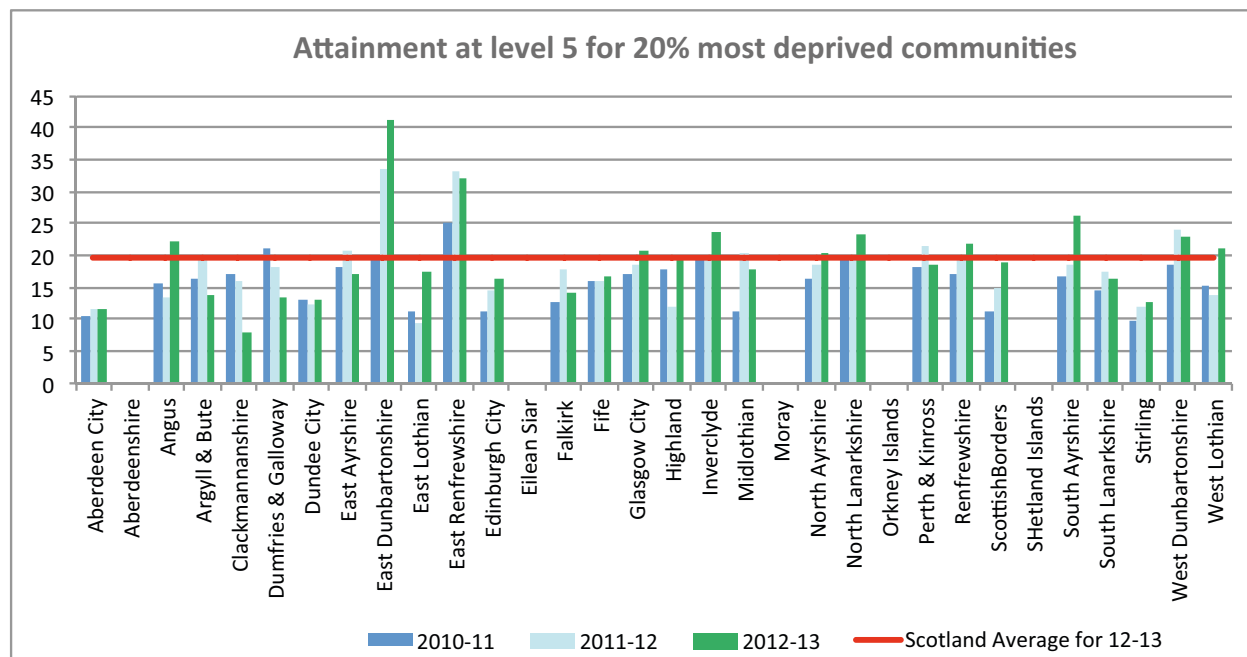


A clear relationship exists between multiple deprivation and educational attainment within and between councils. Within councils, the average performance of pupils from the 20% most deprived areas is well below the average for other pupils. Between councils, achievement on SQA levels 5 and 6 varies systematically with the overall level of deprivation in the council area: this accounts for around 40% of the variation in outcome between councils.

Two points that need further exploration can be seen in these tables. First, councils with very low levels of overall deprivation are often achieving exceptional results with pupils from deprived areas, spectacularly in some cases. However, when the overall level of deprivation is factored in, a clear link exists between higher levels of deprivation and low educational achievement.

Second, if councils are grouped into four “families” based on their overall levels of deprivation (see below), differences emerge within the families as well as between them. If in family group 1 we exclude the performance of the two highest performing councils in Scotland - East

Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire – as outliers even within their family group the range within that group narrows to around 12%. The pattern across all four groups still suggests that when councils are grouped on the basis of similar socio economic and deprivation levels, the range in performance is such that some councils seem to be achieving better results with children from similar backgrounds than others.



### Family group variation in attainment

	5 or More Awards at Level 5				5 or More Awards at Level 6			
GROUP	AVERAGE	MIN	MAX	RANGE	AVERAGE	MIN	MAX	RANGE
FG1 – least deprived	45.4	38.0	70.7	32.7	29.6	22.7	46.0	23.3
FG2	40.4	34.2	46.7	12.5	25.5	21.4	34.6	13.2
FG3	39.2	27.9	47.0	19.1	25.1	21.1	28.4	7.3
FG4 – most deprived	34.8	27.9	41.5	13.6	21.9	17.5	26.3	8.8
SCOTLAND	39.3	27.9	70.7	42.8	25.7	17.5	46.0	28.6

An improving trend can also be seen in the SQA level 5 and level 6 data across the three years for which we have collated data. The total percentage of young people gaining five awards at

level 5 and level 6 is increasing, and the percentage for young people from deprived areas achieving that level of award is also increasing. This trend can be tracked back across the last 10 years, with the performance of children from the most deprived backgrounds having improved by 17% across the period since 2002. The “equality gap” between the most and least disadvantaged pupils has narrowed by much less because all pupils have improved their performance across the period. The IS is currently undertaking further research into the connections between multiple deprivation and the patterns of outcomes achieved for people in Scotland including educational performance of children. The findings of this work will be published later in 2014.

#### Percentage of Pupils Achieving SQA Level 5 and Level 6 Awards

Year	% 5 or More Awards at Level 5	% 5 or More Awards at Level 6
2010/11	36	23
2011/ 12	37	25
2012/13	39	26

Between 2010/11 and 2012/13 this represents a rate of improvement of 9.1% for pupils achieving 5 or more awards at level 5 and a 11.7% rate of improvement for pupils achieving 5 or more awards at level 6.

#### Percentage of Pupils Living in the 20% Most Deprived Communities Achieving SQA Level 5 and Level 6 Awards

Year	% 5 or More Awards at Level 5	% 5 or More Awards at Level 6
2010/11	16	8
2011/ 12	18	9
2012/13	20	10

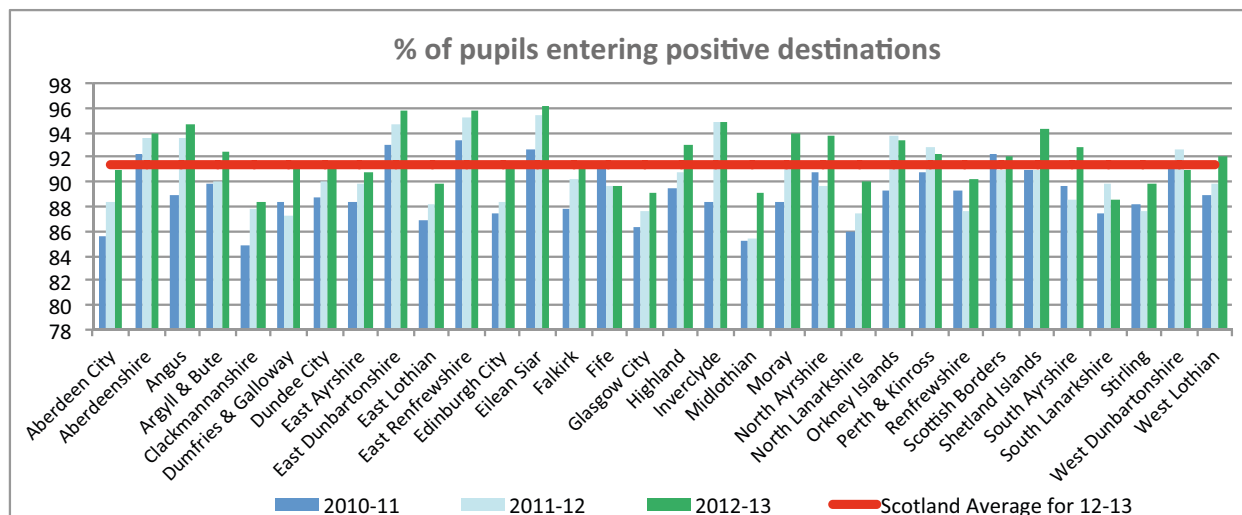
Between 2010/11 and 2012/13 this represents a rate of improvement of 22% for ‘pupils living in the 20% most deprived communities achieving 5 or more awards at level 5’ and a rate of improvement of 26% at level 6.

We should note however that the above figures are highlighting average performance across the whole council area. In reality there are clusters of higher and lower performance within each council area at school level. We will work with all councils, ADES and Education Scotland to better understand this level of variation and the factors that drive it at school and council levels. Working with colleagues, we will support education services to capture and share good practices both on how our ‘higher performing’ schools operate and also in terms of how schools work with a wider range of services to support children and their families to improve the life outcomes for children including their educational attainment.

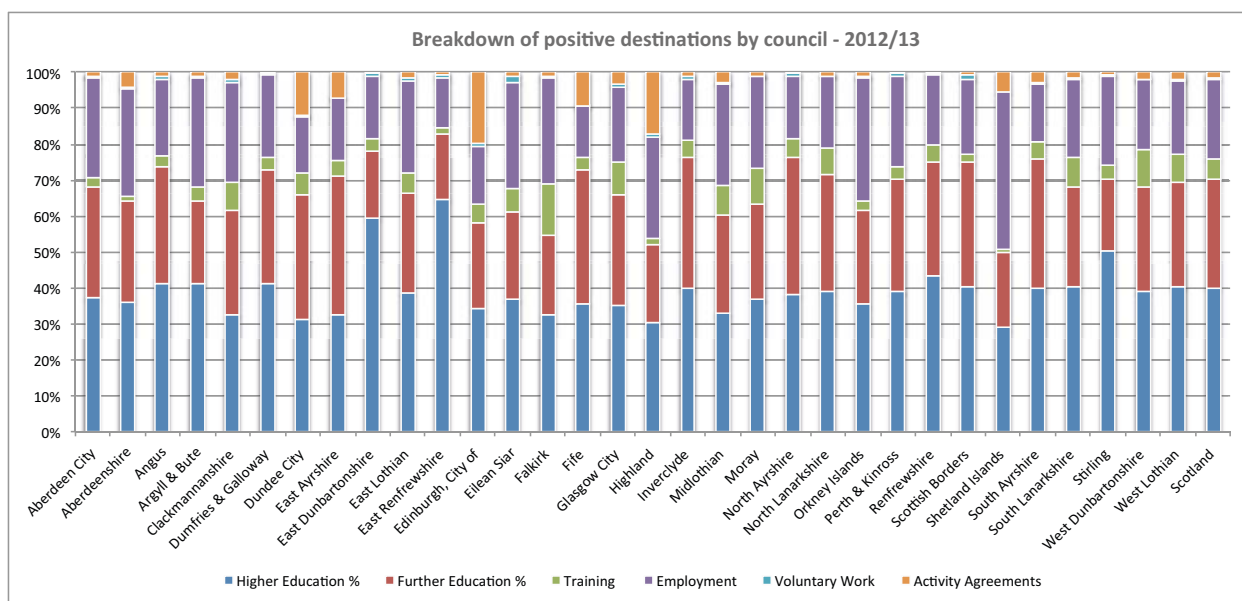
## Positive Destinations

The data for “positive destinations” after school (participation in further education, higher education, training/apprenticeships, or employment) are much more even and very positive. The average for positive destinations across Scotland in 2012/13 was 91%, with a range from 88.3% to 96.1%. This represents a 2.8% rate of improvement since 2010/11. No strong link exists with overall positive destinations and deprivation, urban/rural context, or scale of authority.

However, if “positive destinations” is broken down into its component parts, more interesting trends can be identified. The balance of participation in colleges and universities more or less



reverses between councils with higher levels of deprivation and councils with lower levels of deprivation. There is a clear link between deprivation and lower participation in higher education across Scotland. (The participation rate is still high: Glasgow, with the highest level of deprivation in Scotland, still has over 30% of all its pupils going to university). The percentage of pupils moving directly into unemployment is higher for councils with higher levels of deprivation although the relationship is not statistically significant.



The final point to note is that measuring performance at council level provides only a very high level indicator. As noted earlier, pupils are educated in particular schools, and different pupils come from different backgrounds. For example, Glasgow's 31% university participants may disproportionately come from a limited number of schools, and the participation rate from some of those schools may be significantly above the average for the City as a whole. The pupils in these schools may disproportionately come from the less deprived areas in the city, and may be very similar to their peers in more affluent council areas.

This area was selected as an area for further exploration. All 32 councils are currently (at the time of writing this report) working with the IS to explore matters in detail. The four family groups of councils are working towards a detailed report to be published in June 2014. The report will contain a more detailed analysis of this and more detailed underpinning information to better explain why the variation we observe in this high level indicator occurs. It will also detail the good practices of the higher achieving councils that the family groups have identified.

## Percentage of Adults Satisfied with Education Services

In terms of adults satisfied with their local schools service, the range across Scotland is from 72% to 94%. The overall Scottish average satisfaction rate in 2010/11 was 83% which remained the same in 2012/13. These satisfaction rates achieved by local schools remain among the highest rates achieved by local council services. There appears to be no firm link in the trends related to the size of the councils, the urban/ rural nature of the councils or the level of deprivation in the council area.

### Percentage of Adults Satisfied with Local Schools

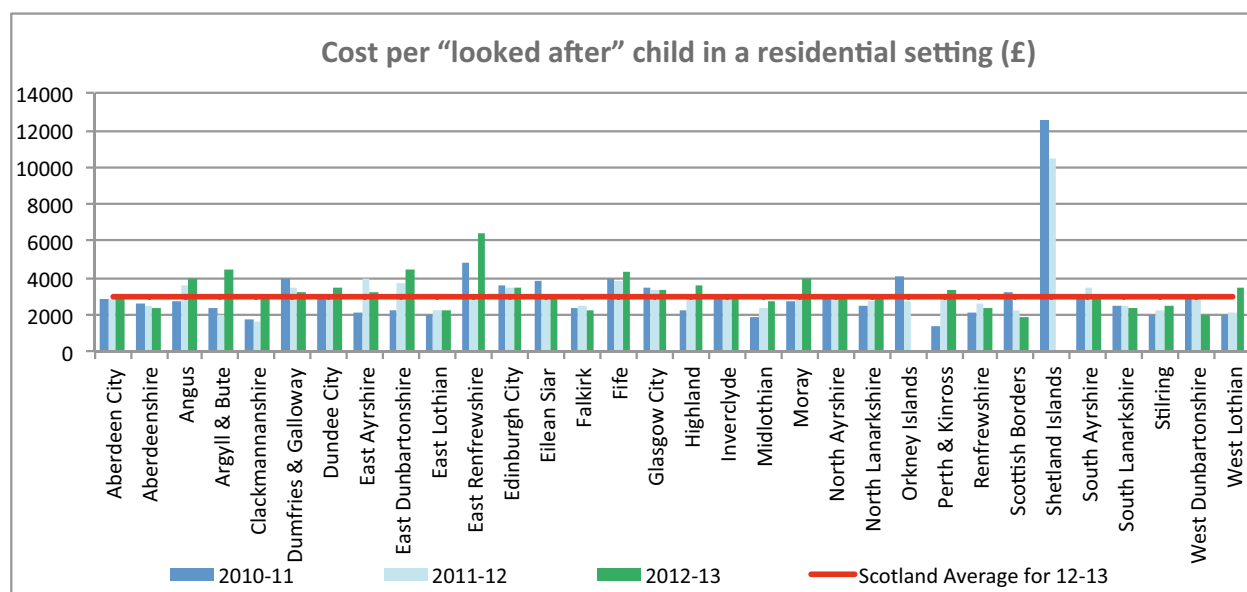
Year	% Satisfied
2010/11	83
2012/13	83

## Looked After Children

As well as providing education services to all children, councils have a duty to provide care, protection and supervision to children who need it. The data reported here relates to children who are under formal arrangements for care, protection and supervision, typically decided by a Childrens Hearing, or a court in exceptional circumstances. This may be because of family breakdown or risk, the child's behaviour or particular identified needs of the child.

There are three indicators in the benchmarking framework for "looked after children": the weekly gross cost per "looked after" child in a community setting; the weekly gross cost per child in a community setting; and the percentage of all "looked after" children in a community setting.

### Weekly Cost Per "Looked After" Child in a Residential Setting



In 2012/13, the average weekly cost per looked after child in a residential setting was £2928. Over the three year period the Scottish average cost has reduced in real terms by -£54, a reduction of -1.8%. The rate of change has gone from a growth of 2.9% between 2010/11 and 2011/12 to a real reduction of -4.5% from 2011/12 to 2012/13.

### Cost Per Looked After Child in a Residential Setting

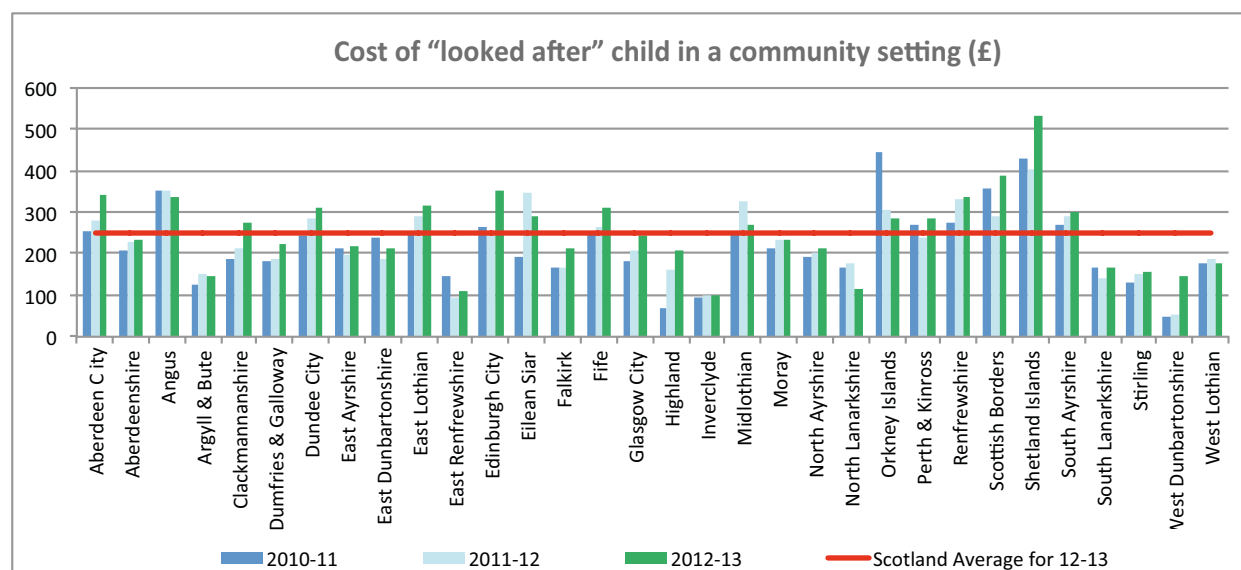
% Change	Cash	Real
2010/11 - 2012/13	2.3	-1.8
2010/11 - 2011/12	5.3	2.9
2011/12 - 2012/13	-2.9	-4.5

### Weekly Cost Per “Looked After” Child in a Community Setting

The average cost per looked after child in a community setting in 2012/13 was £249 per week, which represented a 17.1% increase in real terms since 2010/11, with the rate of increase accelerating in the last 12 months. This change reflects an increase in gross spending in this area whilst the numbers of children being looked after has remained relatively constant.

### Cost Per Looked After Child in a Community Setting

% Change	Cash	Real
2010/11 - 2012/13	21.9	17.1
2010/11 - 2011/12	8	5.6
2011/12 - 2012/13	12.9	10.9

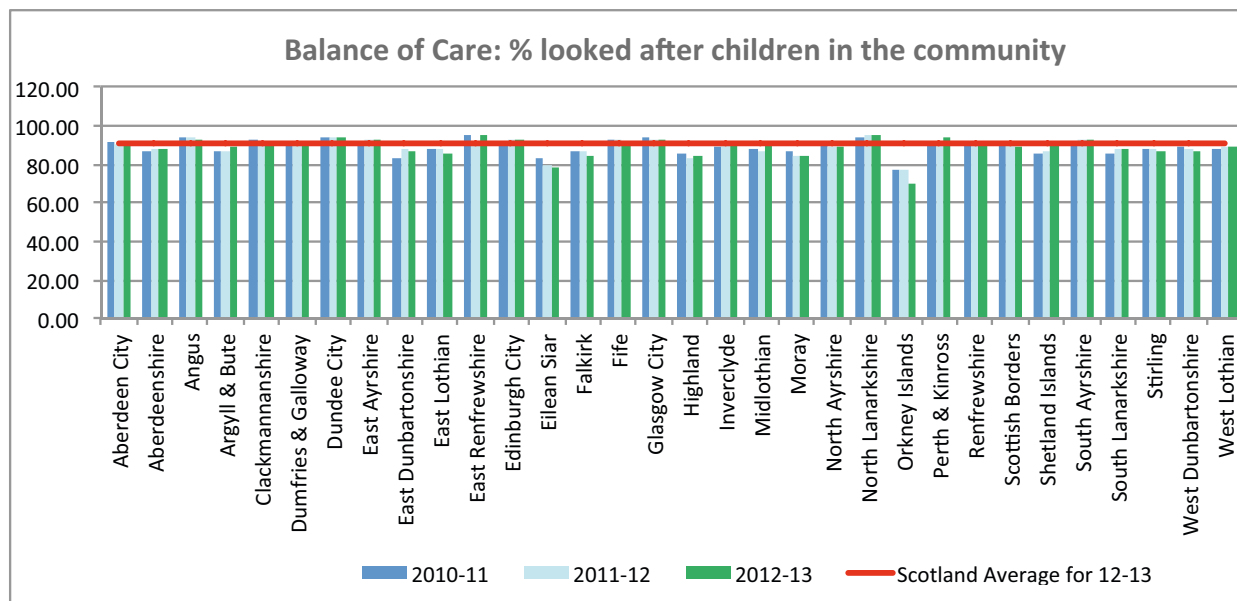


The average gross weekly cost per child of community and residential placements shows very wide variation. The range is from £99 to £529 for community placements and £1846 to £6455 for residential placements.

No clear relationship could be found between cost variation and urban/rural context, scale of council or deprivation. The key factors explaining variation may be: the needs and circumstances of the children being looked after; local availability of placements; the policy choices and service models adopted by councils; and the specific decisions of Children’s Hearings. There is currently no standard measure(s) of the outcomes of care for looked after children and therefore no capacity to link spending to results. This is a development priority for the next year. In the meantime, there is clear scope for councils to collaborate in reaching a better understanding of the reasons behind this variation in cost.

## The Balance of Care

The overwhelming majority of children are looked after in community settings. This has remained consistent at 90% on average across Scotland over the past three years. The range is relatively narrow: from 85% to 95% (excluding island councils who average 79%). Nevertheless, there would be merit in raising this figure given the recognised benefits associated with community care. There is a clustering of rural and island councils at the bottom of the range, possibly indicating the greater difficulty of organising community provision for high need cases in those contexts. Clearly the role of the Children's Hearing is again important in understanding this pattern as they decide the provision necessary for particular children.



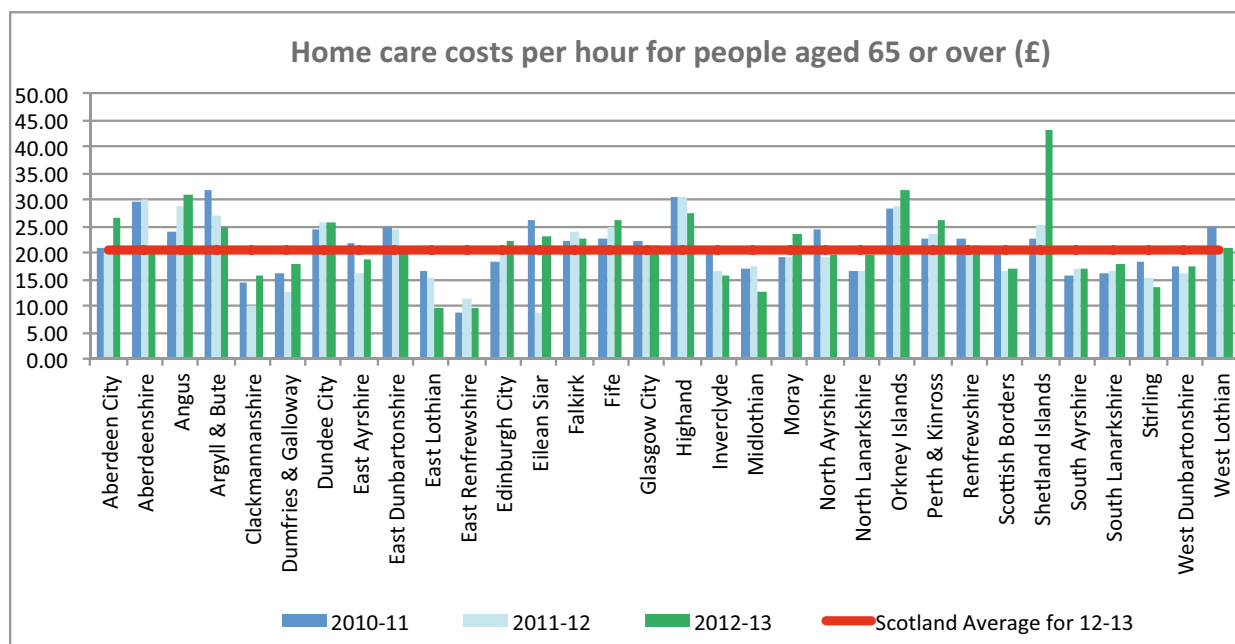


# Adult Social Care

The provision of services to support vulnerable adults and older people is a major priority for councils. This is an area where councils face growing demands and where services are experiencing a major change as council services integrate with services from the National Health Service to create new Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs). The purpose of these major changes is to help improve outcomes for vulnerable adults and older people by strengthening the partnership working across public services. We will work with colleagues from across the sector including the new HSCP's, the Association of the Directors of Social Work (ADSW) and the Joint Improvement Team (JIT) to better capture how the outcomes for these two groups of adults are improving over time and how emerging good practices in the design of these new partnerships and the delivery of their integrated services is supporting improvements in outcomes.

## Home Care Services

Council spend on home care services has been standardised around home care costs per hour for each council. The average spend per hour in 2012/ 13 was £20.48 per hour with the range in spending per hour going from £9.70 per hour to £43.11



From 2010/11 there has been, in real terms, a -0.6% reduction in spending per hour on home care for people over 65. The rate of change has gone from a reduction of -5.1% between 2010/11 and 2011/12 to a real growth of 4.7% from 2011/12/ to 2012/13.

### Home Care Costs Per Hour for People Aged 65 or Over

% Change	Cash	Real
2010/11 - 2012/13	3.5	-0.6
2010/11 - 2011/12	-2.9	-5.1
2011/12 - 2012/13	6.5	4.7

When the data is examined, there is no strong connection between costs per hour and sparsity, deprivation levels or size of the council. It is important to note that the age structure of the local population does not drive cost in this area. It is often assumed that the older a population

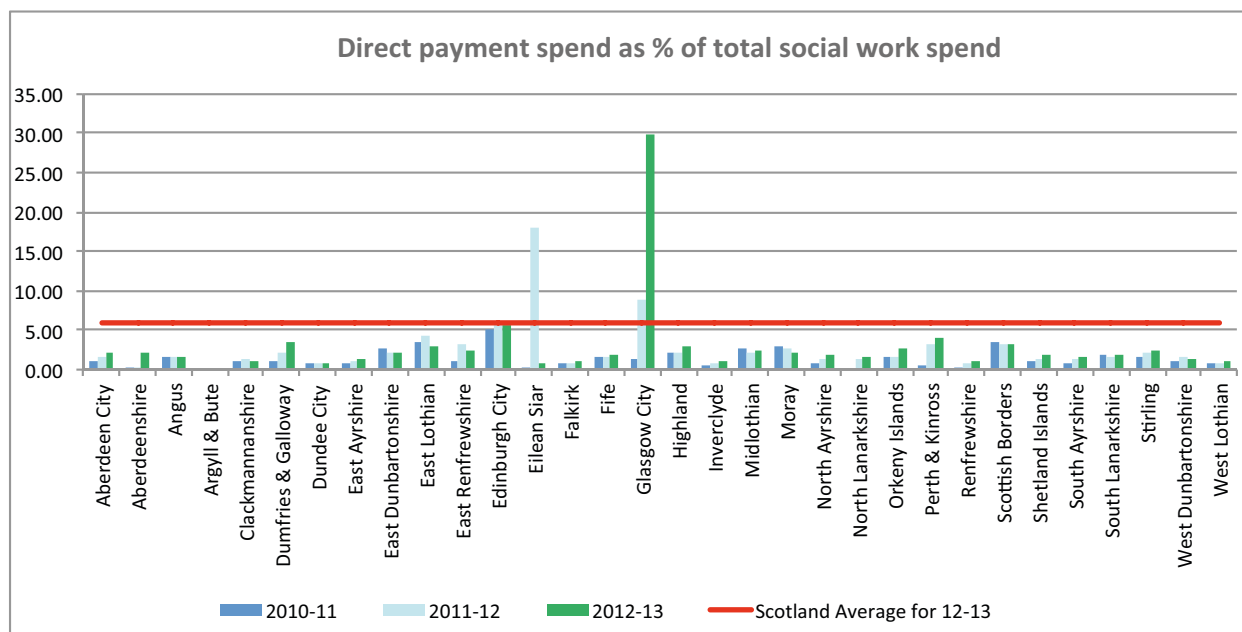
group is, the higher the costs for service providers. This is not borne out by the data, where the relationship between the cost per hour of home care services and the demographic structure of the local population is weak. Of more significance is the needs profile of the local population which is not simply determined by its age structure. The level of vulnerability across the population is a key factor in driving demand pressures and we will explore with councils how those demands are being met in innovative ways by different councils and share that innovation across all authorities and their respective local partnerships.

The cost data presented above needs more detailed examination as costs can be influenced by a wide range of factors such the number of clients care workers support, the travel time between clients for workers and the numbers of clients requiring multiple assistance from two or more workers at a time, for example for lifting purposes. Improving this data will be an area for development of the project going forward.

## Direct Payments

Social work services continue to drive forward the use of direct payments by clients to allow them to purchase their own care directly. The rationale of this is to engender greater client choice to reshape the provision of care by giving clients more control over the budget spent in supporting them.

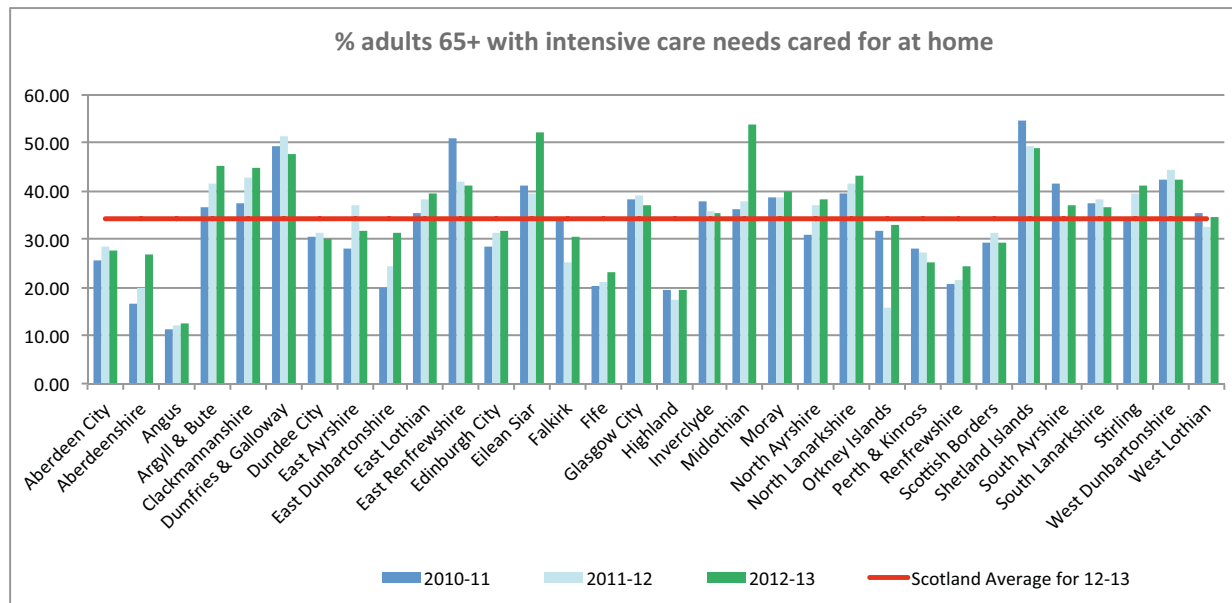
In 2012/13 the range in the percentage of social work spend on adults (18+ ) via direct payments as a percentage of total social work spend on adults 18+ was 0.8% to 29.8%. The Scottish average in 2012/13 was 5.9%. Between 2010/11 and 2012/13 there was an increase in the number of clients making use of self-directed spend opportunities, the rate of improvement was 4.3%. The majority of this growth occurred in Glasgow where there has been a growth of 28.5%. Glasgow City Council was part of a national project to drive increases in direct payments and we will work with the council to better understand how they have achieved growth in this area and share that practice with other councils. The range between the highest and lowest performance on this measure is such that we will work with all 32 councils and ADSW to better understand its robustness and to identify service practices that are driving some councils forward at a faster rate than others.



In examining the data there seems to be little connection between the data and sparsity, deprivation levels or size of the council. This suggests that local practices and the choices of individual councils are important in driving forward this agenda of client empowerment and we will explore these matters further to share emerging good practices across all councils.

## Adult 65+ Intensive Home Care

The third area of social work services covered in the framework is the percentage of adults over 65 with intensive care needs who are cared for at home. As part of the effort to care for more people in their own home rather than in institutional settings such as hospitals, this is an area of growing importance. In 2012/13 the range was 12.3% to 53.6%, with the Scottish average being 34%. In comparison the equivalent Scottish average in 2010/11 was 33%.



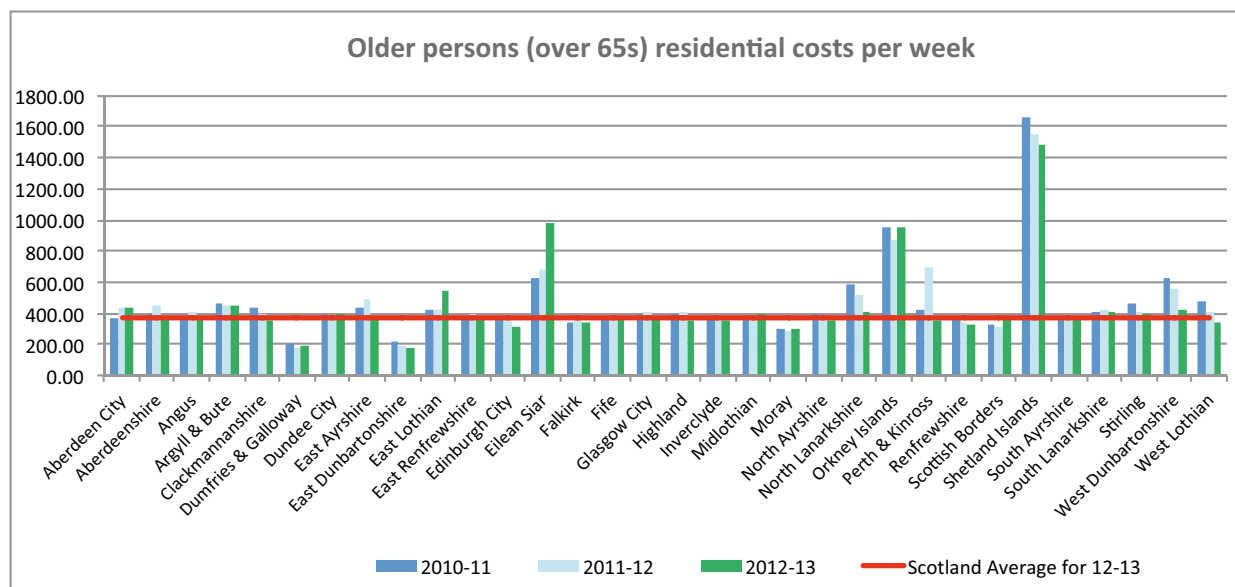
The range of figures appears to be related to council size with smaller councils on average achieving higher levels of intensive home care provision. However, there are no systematic connections between balance of care levels and population sparsity or deprivation.

In the period ahead we will work with colleagues from HSCPs, ADSW, JIT and other relevant bodies to capture the impacts that home care services can have upon life outcomes for older people. In particular we know that older people from more deprived communities are much more likely to be admitted to hospital over the course of a year on an unplanned basis than older people from more affluent communities. We will work with colleagues across this sector to better understand how the design and delivery of home care services can help prevent those most at risk of unplanned hospital admissions from entering the hospital sector unnecessarily. The effective practices we identify in this area will be fully shared with all councils and their local partners in support of their efforts to improve outcomes for older people.

## Residential Care

The fourth social work area covered by the framework is the net cost of residential services. The measure has been standardised by looking at residential costs per week for people over the age of 65. In 2012/13, the average cost across Scotland was £373 per week per resident. Analysis of the data reveals considerable levels of variation across councils with island councils in particular reporting significantly higher costs. When island councils are excluded, costs ranged from £182 to £546, with island councils each reporting costs above £900 per resident. There are no systematic patterns in costs in relation to population sparsity, size of council or level of deprivation when island councils are excluded from the analysis.

In real terms the weekly cost has reduced since 2010/11. In 2010/11 the weekly cost in real terms was £404 and in 2012/13 it was £373. In percentage terms this represents a -7.9% change. The rate of change has moved from a 0.2% growth from 2010/11 to 2011/12 to a reduction of -8.1% in 2011/12 to 2012/13. However it is important to note that the figures for 2012/13 have, in agreement



with the local government Directors of Finance, excluded a support cost component which was included in previous years, and therefore the costs across the years are not directly comparable.

#### Residential Care Costs Per Week for People over 65

% Change	Cash	Real
2010/11 - 2012/13	-4.1	-7.9
2010/11 - 2011/12	2.5	0.2
2011/12 - 2012/13	-6.4	-8.1

Local authorities purchase most care home places for older people from private and voluntary care home providers. Local authorities which have retained their own council-owned, “in-house” care home capacity, may have higher net costs, as staff salaries and pension costs are generally lower in the private and voluntary sectors. In the absence of reliable indicators regarding the outcomes for this service, it is not possible to comment on the relative merits of the two service delivery models.

Net expenditure on residential care is defined as gross expenditure minus income. Up to and including 2014/15, the National Care Home Contract for residential care for older people will, to a large extent, have standardised the gross cost per resident per week, apart from enhancements that some councils may pay for specialist dementia care or respite as required by local market conditions. Net expenditure is affected by income, and therefore by the ability of residents to contribute to the costs of their care, and the extent to which other sources of income, such as NHS Resource Transfers, are counted as a contribution to the local authority’s costs for providing or funding care home placements. Variations in net expenditure between local authorities will also be affected by variations in the numbers of eligible wealthier older people in care homes for whom the council is paying free personal and nursing care.

The use of care homes for older people is changing and in future more emphasis will be given to use for rehabilitation and short-stays. Once again we will work with social work colleagues and other relevant bodies to better understand the reasons behind the variations across council areas; how different local partnerships including social work services are responding to the challenges around residential care services and to support the services in sharing effective good practices across Scotland.

## Percentage of Adults Satisfied with Social Care or Social Work Services

In terms of adults satisfied with social care or social work services, the range across Scotland is from 40% to 82%, with the highest levels of satisfaction in island councils, each above 75%. Analysis of the data reveals there is no systematic pattern in relation to size of council, sparsity or deprivation in relation to satisfaction figures. The overall Scottish average satisfaction rate in 2010/11 was 62%; in 2012/13 this had reduced to 57%. This reduction in satisfaction differs from other service areas covered by the LGBF where customer satisfaction has either improved over time or remained steady. We will work with social work colleagues in the year ahead to understand why this difference has occurred in order to see if there is an anomaly in the data we are drawing upon or if other factors are driving the effect observable in the data.

### Percentage of Adults Satisfied with Social Care or Social Work Services

Year	% Satisfied
2010/11	62
2012/13	57

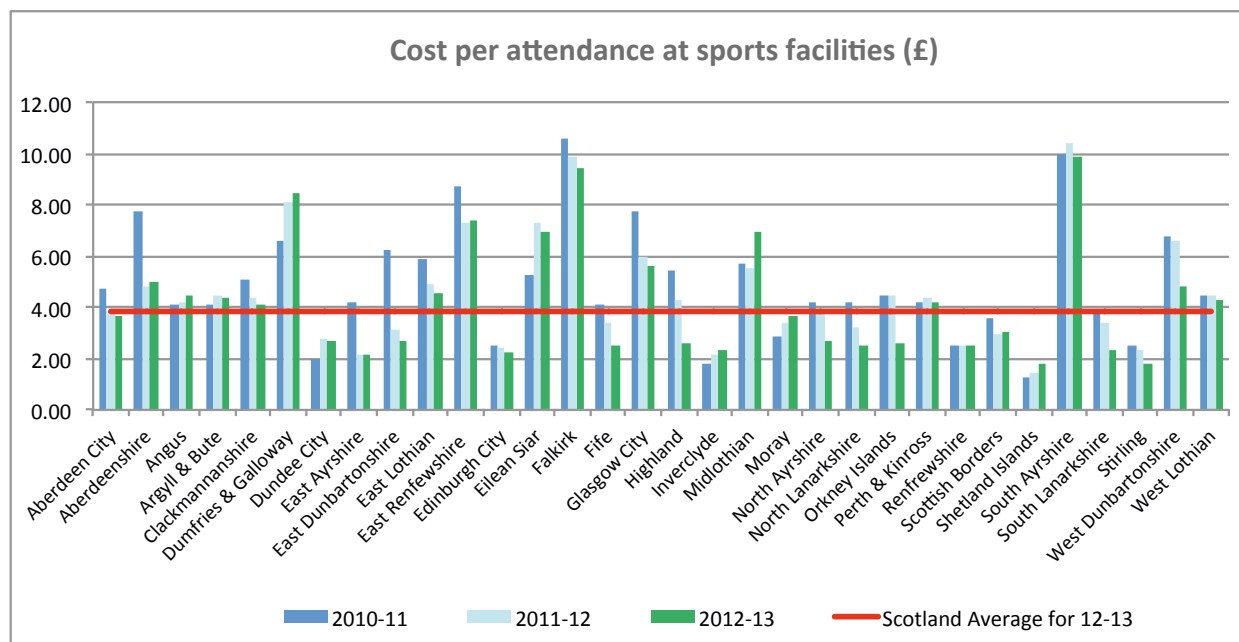
Developing the section of the benchmarking framework relating to adult social care measures has been agreed as a key priority for development in the coming year. In conjunction with the Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW), we will link into current work being undertaken to agree outcome measures for health and social care integration. We will report on these developments in future years.

# Culture and Leisure

## Sports Facilities

Culture and leisure services make an important contribution to the quality of life in local communities and they also play an ever more vital role in terms of supporting better health across the whole population. There are a range of service delivery models operating within local government with respect to sports services with some councils choosing to establish arms length trusts to manage these services while some retain the whole service in house.

The data presented below illustrates the costs of indoor and outdoor sports and recreation facilities. The figures cover costs for swimming pools, sports halls and leisure centres, running tracks, skating rinks, tennis courts, football pitches and golf courses.



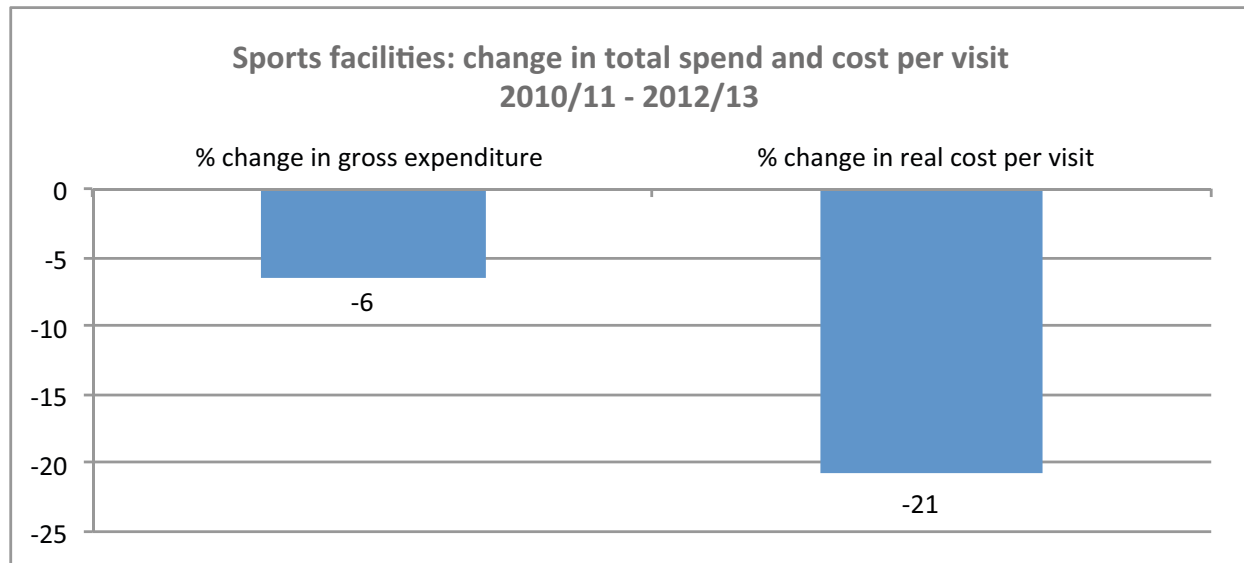
With respect to the cost to each council of an attendance at a sports facility, in 2012/13 the range in cost per visit was £1.82 to £9.92. The average cost per visit across Scotland was £3.82. Over the three year period from 2010/11 to 2012/13 the average cost fell from £4.82 to £3.82 in real terms. In percentage terms this represents a -20.8% reduction in real terms. The rate of reduction slowed from -12.3% in real terms in 2010/11 to 2011/12 to -9.8% between 2011/12 to 2012/13.

### Cost Per Attendance at Sports Facilities

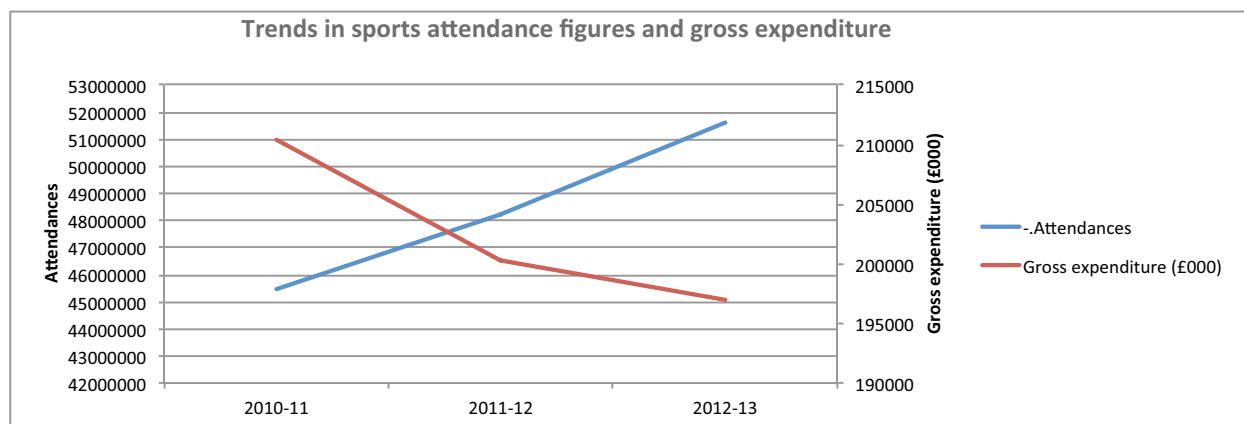
% Change	Cash	Real
2010/11 - 2012/13	-17.6	-20.8
2010/11 - 2011/12	-10.3	-12.3
2011/12 - 2012/13	-8.2	-9.8

The cost per attendance figures on their own do not give a complete picture of what has been happening in sports services over the last three years. While the cost to the council per attendance has been declining **the number of people using council provided sports services has risen significantly**. The increased numbers of users means that the cost per attendance figure has declined by -20.8%. As can be seen below, the average total spend across Scotland over the three years by councils on sports services has not reduced as sharply;

this has fallen by -6.4% .



The chart below illustrates how visitor numbers have increased by 13.5% over the three years covered by the LGBF while the unit cost of sports attendances has fallen. This indicates that leisure and recreation services have managed to attract more people into using their facilities and to do so while managing significant financial pressures. It is also worth noting that this increase in the productive use of council provided community assets has been achieved against a backdrop of a major economic recession and significant pressure on household spending.



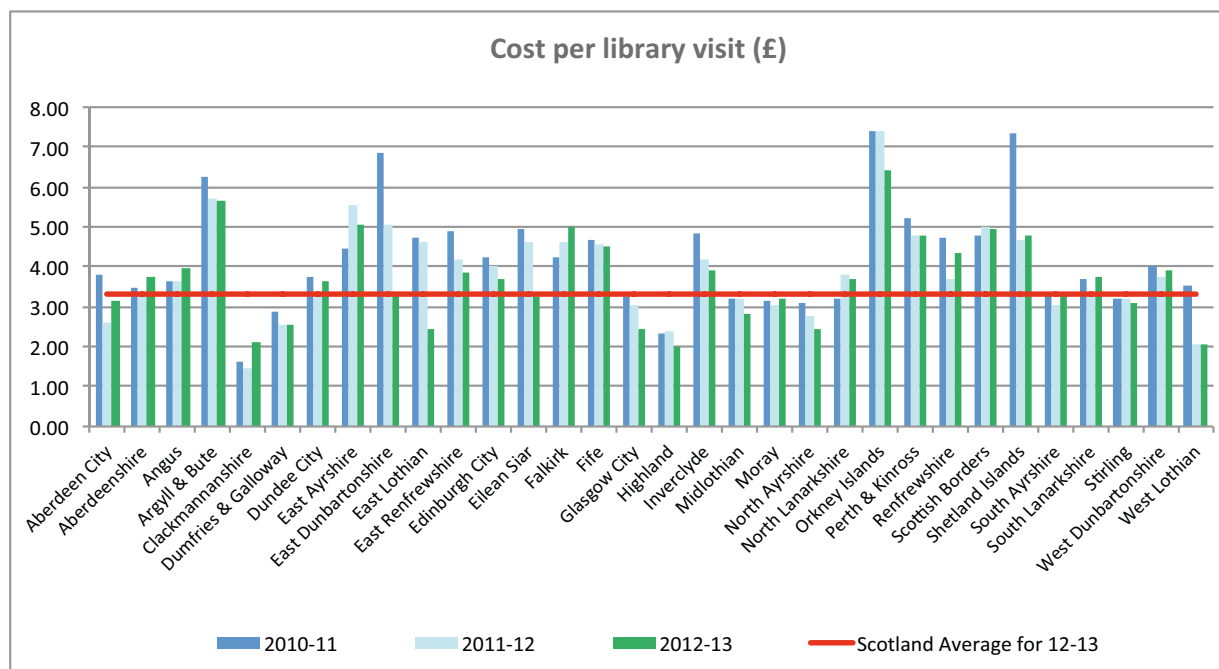
While variation between councils exists against this general trend we will capture the good practices of those councils performing well and share that with all councils.

## Library Services

With respect to library services there is a clear effect of population density, with urban councils typically having lower cost per visit than rural equivalents. In rural areas the costs involved in providing the service to smaller populations dispersed over larger areas pushes costs up in comparison to densely populated parts of the country.

The average cost per library visit in 2012/13 in Scotland was £3.31. The range in cost per visit in 2012/13 was from £2.00 to £6.42. In 2010/11 the Scottish average cost per visit was £3.75 in real terms. Over the three year period this represents a reduction of -11.7%. As in other service areas the rate of reduction has slowed over the three year period moving from a reduction between 2010/11 to 2011/12 of -6.9% to -5.1% from 2011/12 to 2012/13.



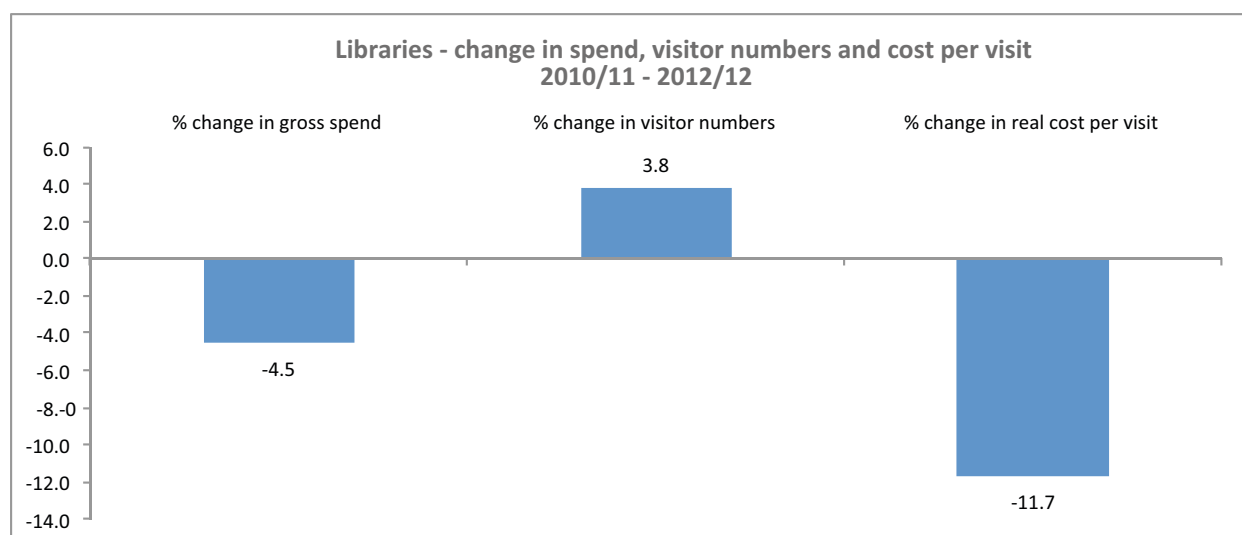


### Cost Per Library Visit

% Change	Cash	Real
2010/11 - 2012/13	-8.1	-11.7
2010/11 - 2011/12	-4.8	-6.9
2011/12 - 2012/13	-3.4	-5.1

As with sports services these figures on their own do not tell the full story of the last three years for library services. Over the three year period covered by the LGBF, gross spending on library services across Scotland fell by -4.5%, whereas the unit cost per visit fell by -11.7% (see graph below). At the same time visitor numbers increased across the country by 3.8%. Again this indicates that against a difficult financial backdrop council services have achieved a growth in people using the service and, as a consequence, reduced the unit cost per visit to the council by a substantial margin.

As with sports attendance the picture across councils with respect to the general trend is not universal. We will capture and share the good practices of those councils who have increased visitor numbers by significant amounts while reducing their costs.



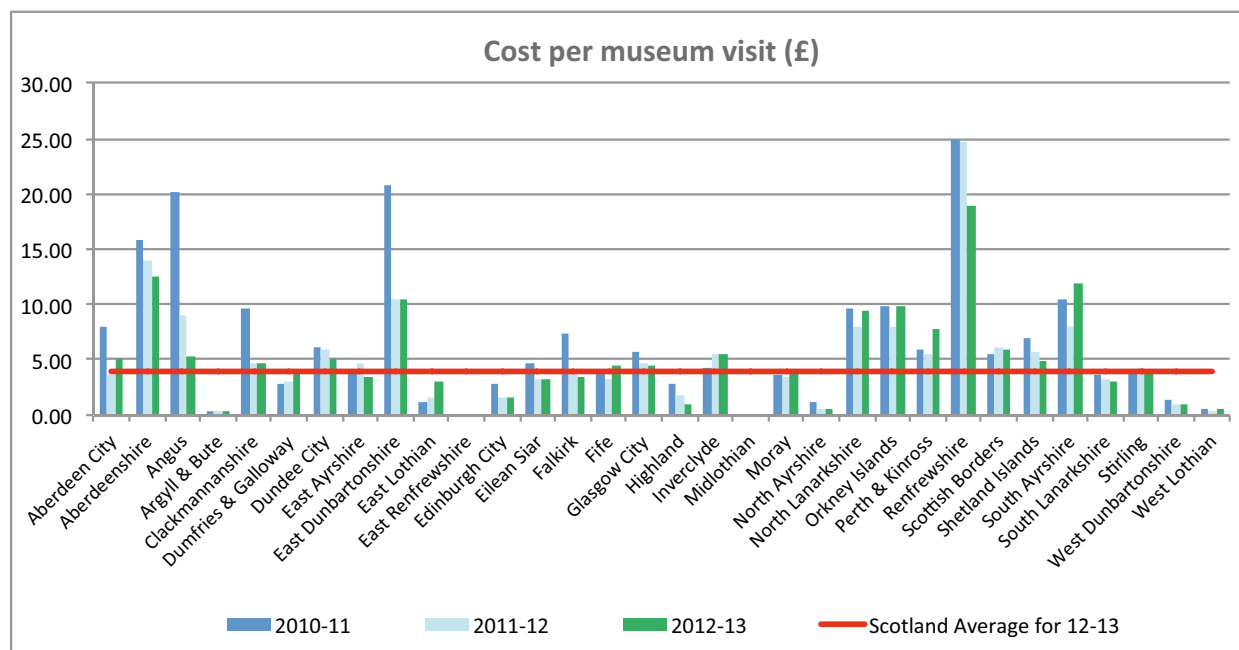
## Museum Services

With respect to museum services similar patterns occur as with library services. In 2012/13 the range in cost per visit was from £0.34 to £18.92 and the Scottish average cost per visit in 2012/13 was £3.94. Over the three year period this represents a reduction of -21.9% in real terms. As with libraries and sports services the trend has been for a lower reduction in 2012/13 than in previous years. The reduction between 2010/11 and 2011/12 was -23.2% in real terms whereas between 2011/12 and 2012/13 it was a growth of 1.8% in real terms.

### Cost Per Museum Visit

% Change	Cash	Real
2010/11 - 2012/13	-18.7	-21.9
2010/11 - 2011/12	-21.5	-23.2
2011/12 - 2012/13	3.6	1.8

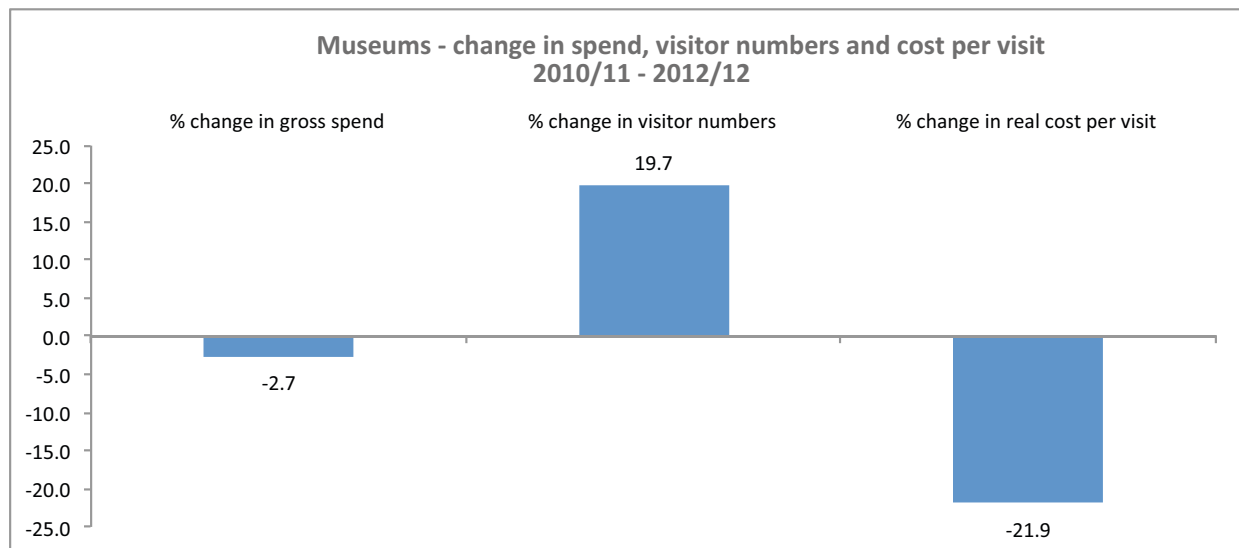
The data reveals no systematic cost per visit patterns in relation to sparsity, size of council or deprivation.



As with other leisure and recreation services the high level data only tells part of the story of what has been changing in museum services over the three period covered by this report. The average spending on museum services across Scotland has fallen by around -2.6% since 2010/11 but in the same period visitor numbers have increased by 19.6% (see graph overleaf). The combined effect of this increase in the productive use of the service has been to reduce significantly the unit cost as measured by the cost per visit indicator. As with sports and libraries attendance the picture across councils with respect to the general trend is not universal. We will capture and share the good practices of those councils who have increased visitor numbers by significant amounts while reducing their costs.

## Parks and Open Spaces

In terms of parks and open spaces the information suggests that the geographical nature of the area a council covers is the most important point in shaping the cost of providing the service. In 2012/13 the Scottish average of the service measured on a per 1000 population basis was

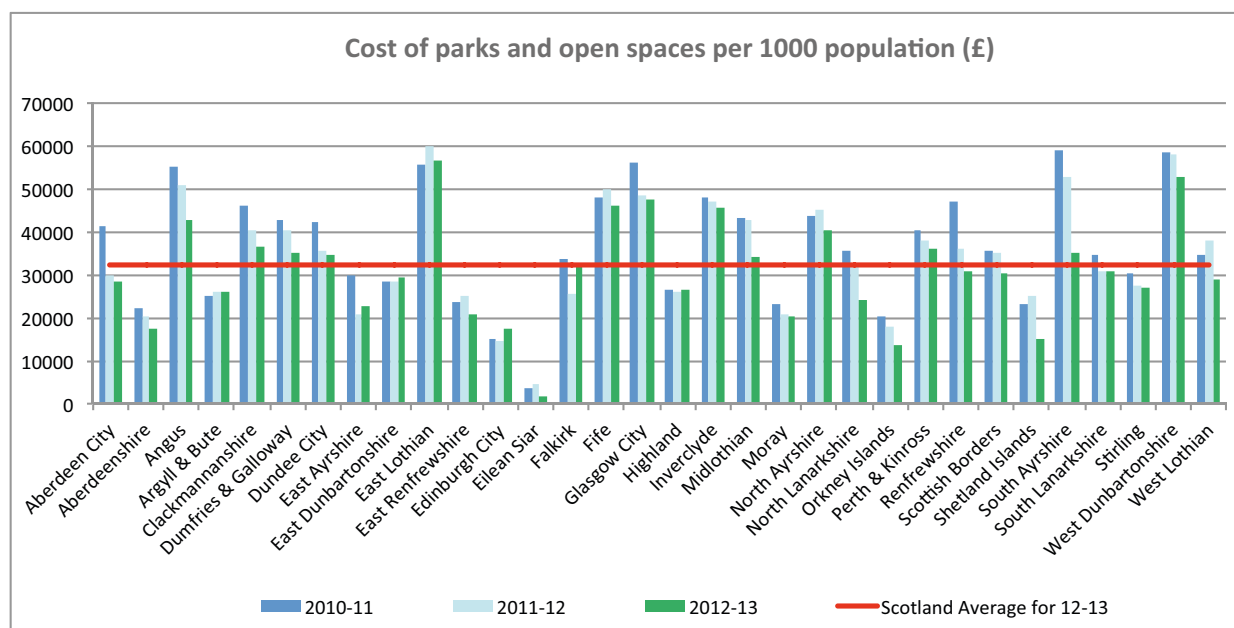


£32,256, the range in cost was from £1851 to £56,440. Over the three year period from 2010/11 to 2012/13 the change in real terms was -15%. The rate of change has remained consistent across the 3 year period, with a -8.2% real terms reduction in 2010/11 to 2011/12 and a 7.4% reduction between 2011/12 and 2012/13.

#### Cost of Parks and Open Spaces Per 1000 Population

% Change	Cash	Real
2010/11 - 2012/13	-11.5	-15.0
2010/11 - 2011/12	-6.1	-8.2
2011/12 - 2012/13	-5.8	-7.4

In examining the data, rural councils typically have lower costs but councils covering a semi-rural area have typically the highest costs. This is largely down to the concentration of open space in more urban areas meaning that the cost to maintain those spaces is reduced as a result and in rural areas there is less publically maintained open space. In semi-rural areas though there are urban communities requiring access to open space but these facilities will be dispersed across a much wider geography than in a purely urban council area and so higher costs to semi-rural councils are evident.



**Percentage of Adults Satisfied with Culture & Leisure Services**

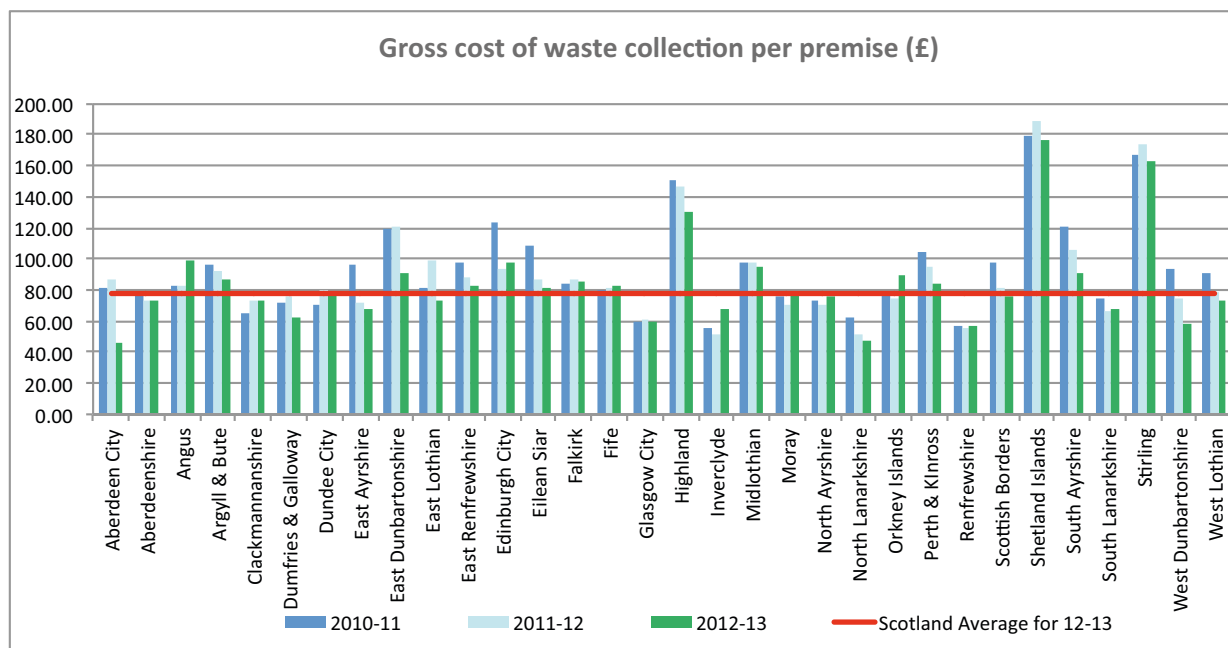
<b>Year</b>	<b>Leisure % Satisfied</b>	<b>Libraries % Satisfied</b>	<b>Museums % Satisfied</b>	<b>Parks % Satisfied</b>
2010/11	74.6	83.5	75.5	83.1
2012/13	80.0	83.0	78.0	86.0

Satisfaction levels for all areas of culture and leisure remain high at above 75%. For leisure facilities, museums and parks, satisfaction levels increased across the period, while satisfaction with libraries which remained constant at 83%.

# Environmental Services

## Waste Collection

In examining the cost of waste collection services across councils we had previously gathered information on the basis of the gross cost of collection on a per premise basis. For the first time this year we have agreed with all 32 councils a methodology for agreeing how to calculate, on a common basis, the net cost of waste collection per premise. This development was in recognition of the increased efforts of councils to recycle waste which generates additional costs to the service but also an additional revenue stream as recycled waste is sold by councils into recycling markets. Below we report the gross costs of waste collection over the three year period and for 2012/13 only we also report the net cost of the service for the first time. In future years we will replace the gross cost per premise data with the net cost data.



In 2012/13 the Scottish average cost (**gross**) of waste collection per premise was £77.78 but in **net** terms the average cost per premise was £59.12. The range in 2012/13 across Scotland on a gross basis was from £45.45 to £176.72. This range is however distorted by the impact of factors such as rural sparsity and the tenemental structure of local housing on the service. Across rural councils the average gross cost per premise was £84.18, in urban councils it was £59.95 and in semi-rural councils it was £76.83.

When the figures are examined on a net basis the same broad trend occurs with urban councils delivering the service at a lower cost. The average among urban councils was £46.20, among rural councils £65.24 and in semi-rural council areas £63.54. Within each grouping of councils there remains variation in both the gross and net costs being achieved. The reasons behind this variation and the identification and sharing of good practice will be focused on in the next stage of development in the LGBF.

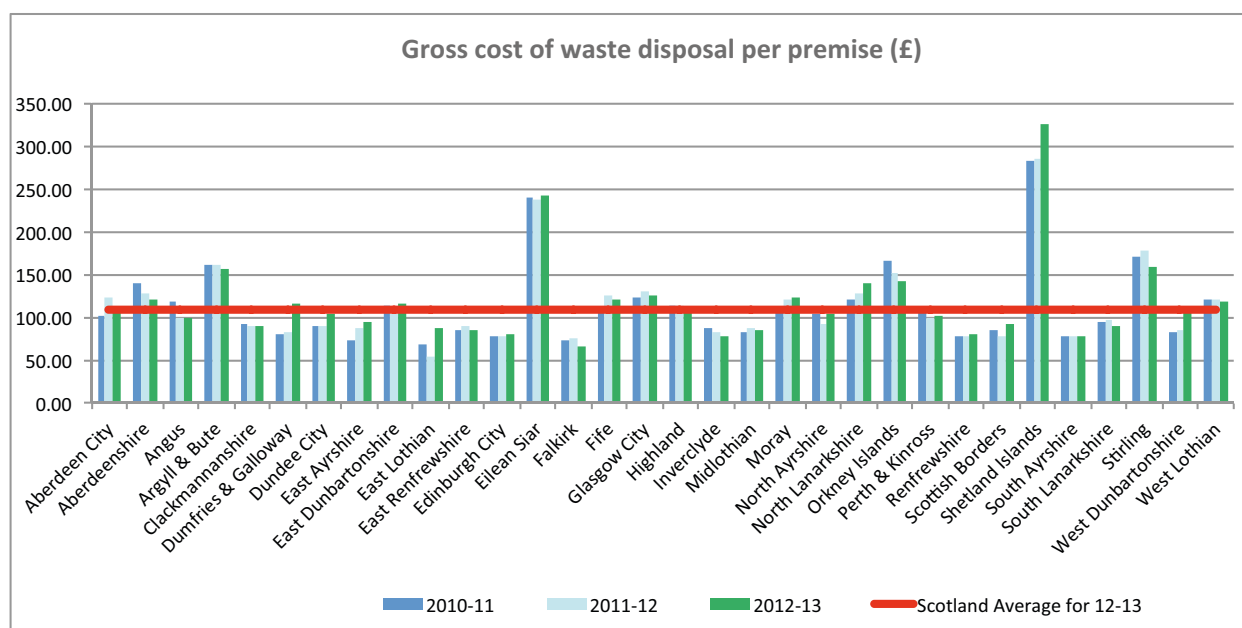
Over the three year period from 2010/11 to 2012/13, the Scottish average cost per premise for waste collection (on a gross basis only) reduced by -11.4% in real terms. The rate of annual improvement in cost has been relatively steady over the three period at around -6% per annum in real terms.

## Gross Cost of Waste Collection Per Premise

% Change	Cash	Real
2010/11 - 2012/13	-7.8	-11.4
2010/11 - 2011/12	-3.9	- 6.1
2011/12 - 2012/13	-4.0	-5.7

## Waste Disposal

As with waste disposal, for the first time this year we are able to report both the gross and the net cost of disposal per premise. In future years, as the net cost data builds up, we will move towards reporting this figure alone. The graph below reports the gross cost per premise since 2010/11 to 2012/13.



In 2012/13 the Scottish average gross cost of waste disposal per premise was £108.65; in net terms the cost was £92.28. The range across councils was from £66.29 to £325.69. The average gross cost for urban councils was £110.56, for rural councils it was £120.90 but in semi-rural council areas it was £91.57. On a net basis, the figures for 2012/13 were an average of £105.45 for urban councils, £97.87 for rural councils and £77.25 for semi-rural council areas. In both cases the island councils typically face higher costs due to the nature of the island communities and the associated costs of supporting the local populations within the islands. Given the wide range of costs across councils, even councils of the same type, there would appear to be scope for sharing best practice and making significant efficiencies in this service. Generating understanding of the reasons behind the variations in both the gross and net costs of waste disposal and the exchange of good practice across all councils will be a priority in the year ahead for the project.

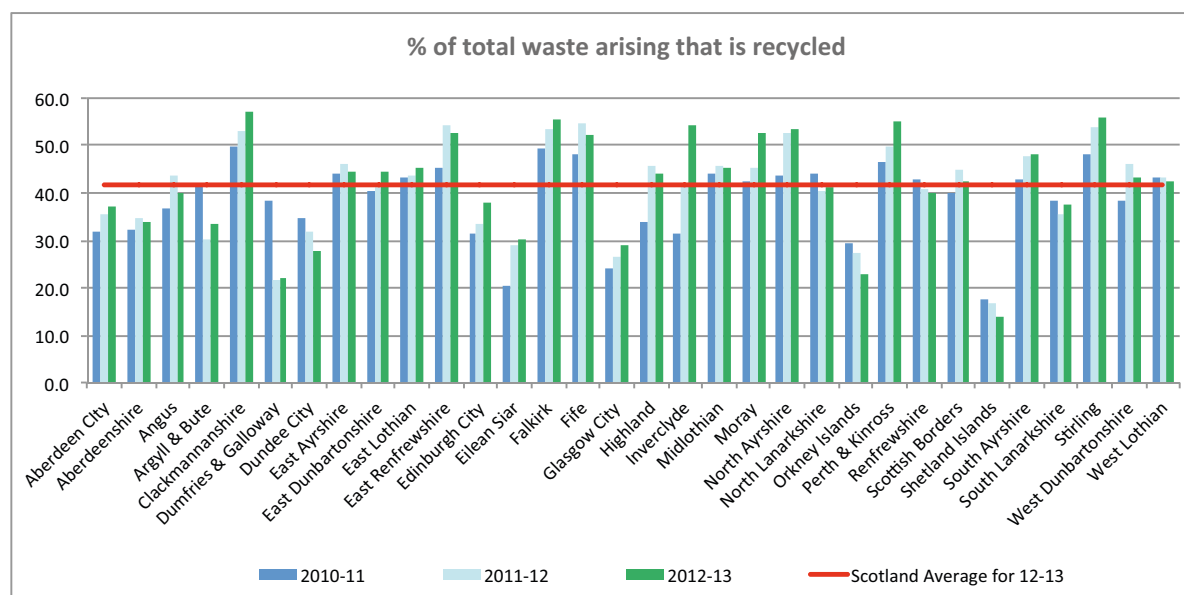
Over the three year period from 2010/11 to 2012/13, the Scottish average gross cost of waste disposal has increased in real terms by 3.7%, from £104.80 in 2010/11 to £108.65 in 2012/13. The rate of increase has slowed in recent years from a 2.3% increase in real terms from 2010/11 to 2011/12 and an increase of 1.3% from 2011/12 to 2012/13.

## Gross Cost of Waste Disposal Per Premise

% Change	Cash	Real
2010/11 - 2012/13	8	3.7
2010/11 - 2011/12	4.7	2.3
2011/12 - 2012/13	3.1	1.3

## Waste Recycling

Over recent years councils have put greater emphasis on the recycling of waste in compliance with the National Zero Waste Plan<sup>2</sup>. For the two years for which we have consistent data, councils have achieved a Scottish average recycling rate of 41% in 2011/12 and 41.7% in 2012/13. The range in recycling rates achieved is significant, ranging from 14.1% to 57% in 2012/13. Rural councils achieved on average a rate of 33.5%, with urban councils achieving an average of 40.1% rate and semi-rural area councils achieving an average of 50.1%. Within these groups it would seem that, in general, medium-sized, mixed area councils achieve the highest rates of recycling. The reasons behind this will be further explored and the good practices being employed in some councils will be fully shared across all authorities.



## Street Cleaning

The cleanliness of Scotland's streets remains a priority for councils both in terms of improving the appearance of our streetscapes but also in terms of environmental improvements in the quality of people's lives.

Street cleanliness was previously presented using the overall Street Cleanliness Index. This has been changed this year to a Street Cleanliness Score, which is produced by Keep Scotland Beautiful.<sup>3</sup> The score presents the % of areas assessed as 'clean' – three years of data are presented for this measure. Unlike the previous 'index' measure, this new measure moves away from a focus on attaining completely litter free sites (considered impractical in areas of high footfall) and allows authorities to tackle litter problem areas to achieve better results.

The Scottish average for both the Cleanliness Score and satisfaction with street cleaning has

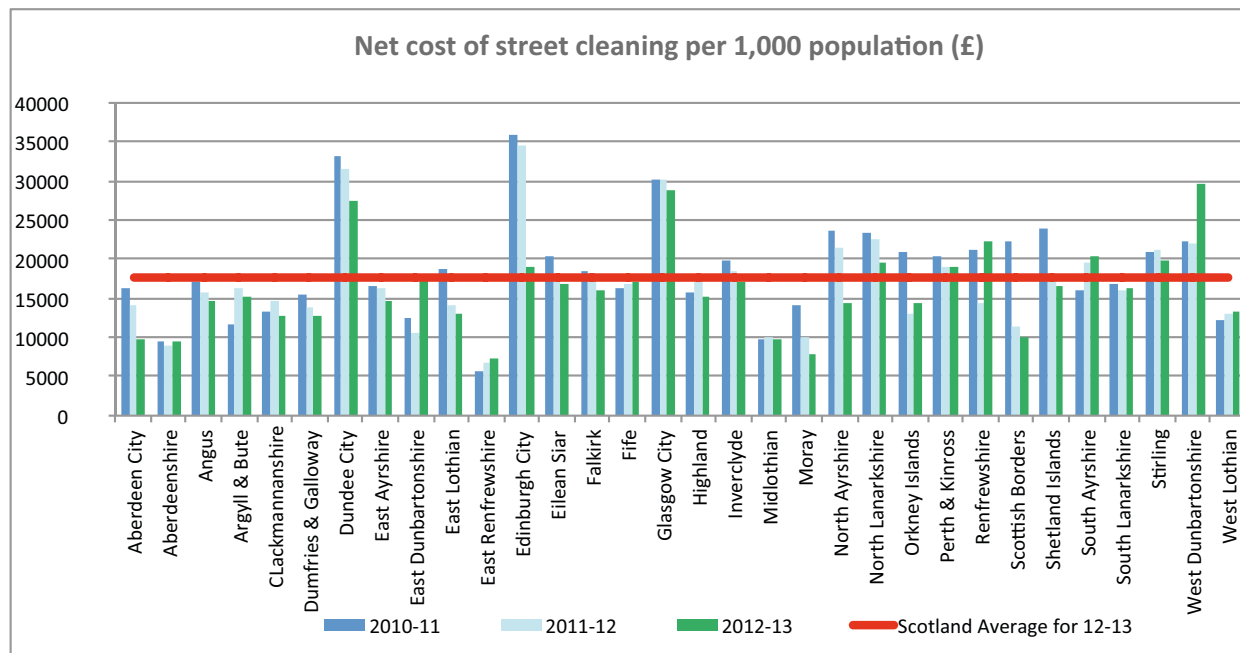
<sup>2</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/06/08092645/0>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/>



increased over the three year period from 2010/11 to 2012/13 (from 95.4% to 95.8% and from 73% to 75% respectively). Both the cleanliness score and satisfaction with cleanliness were lower in urban areas.

Over the same three year period, the Scottish average for net cost of street cleaning has reduced in real terms by -15.2%. This rate of reduction has increased in recent years from -4.6% in real terms from 2010/11 to 2011/12 to -11.1% from 2011/12 to 2012/13. The range across councils varies significantly (from £7327 to £29,621, with the Scottish average at £17,534) with significantly higher costs in urban areas.



#### Net Cost of Street Cleaning Per 1000 Population

% Change	Cash	Real
2010/11 - 2012/13	-11.7	-15.2
2010/11 - 2011/12	-2.4	-4.6
2011/12 - 2012/13	-9.5	-11.1

#### Percentage of Adults Satisfied with Waste Collection & Street Cleaning

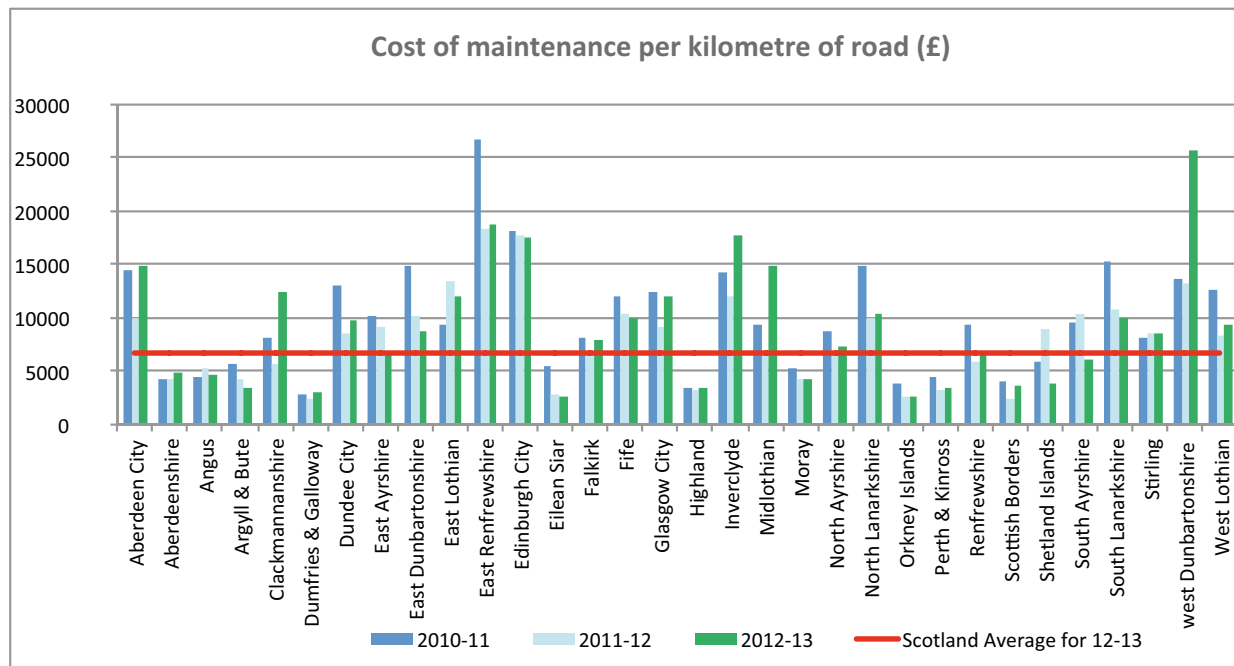
Year	Waste Collection % Satisfied	Street Cleaning % Satisfied
2010/11	80.9	73.3
2012/13	83.0	75.0

Satisfaction levels for waste collection and street cleaning remain high at above 70%, with levels increasing for both since the base year.

## Roads Maintenance

In terms of the cost of road maintenance per kilometre of road, the Scottish average was £6655. The range of cost per kilometre in 2012/13 was from £2619 to £25,598. There is a significant difference in costs between urban, rural and semi-rural councils. The average in 2012/13 for urban

councils was £10,278 per kilometre, for rural councils it was £3414 and for semi-rural area councils it was £9641. The higher traffic volumes experienced in urban and semi-rural areas, where some large towns are located, is a key factor behind the variations in spending.



For the three years for which we have data, the Scottish average cost per kilometre fell in real terms by -12.3%. The rate of reduction has altered significantly over the three years as in 2010/11 to 2011/12 there was a real terms reduction of -16.7% whereas in 2011/12 to 2012/13 there was a growth in real terms of 5.3%.

#### Cost of Maintenance Per Kilometre of Road

% Change	Cash	Real
2010/11 - 2012/13	-8.7	-12.3
2010/11 - 2011/12	-14.8	-16.7
2011/12 - 2012/13	7.1	5.3

When road condition data is examined there is very little overall difference in the percentage of roads needing repairs in these areas. For class A roads in urban areas, the percentage needing repair in 2012/13 was 25%, in semi-rural area councils it was 26.1% and in rural areas it was 28.9%. Similar patterns prevailed across B and C class roads too. Over the three year period covered by this report the overall percentage of A,B and C class roads in need of repair has remained at similar levels. For A class roads it has remained around 30% on average across Scotland, 36% for B class roads and 35% for C class roads. So despite the overall reductions in spending, the condition of the roads network has remained at broadly the same level over the three year period; a trend highlighted by the Accounts Commission in its 2013 review of roads maintenance.<sup>4</sup>

Four family groups of councils have been formed within the LGBF and they are currently exploring the variations in cost per kilometre of road maintained. The four groups will report fully in the summer of 2014. The report will contain a more detailed analysis of the data and more detailed underpinning information to better explain why the variation we observe in this high level indicator occurs. It will also detail the good practices of the higher achieving councils that the family groups have identified.

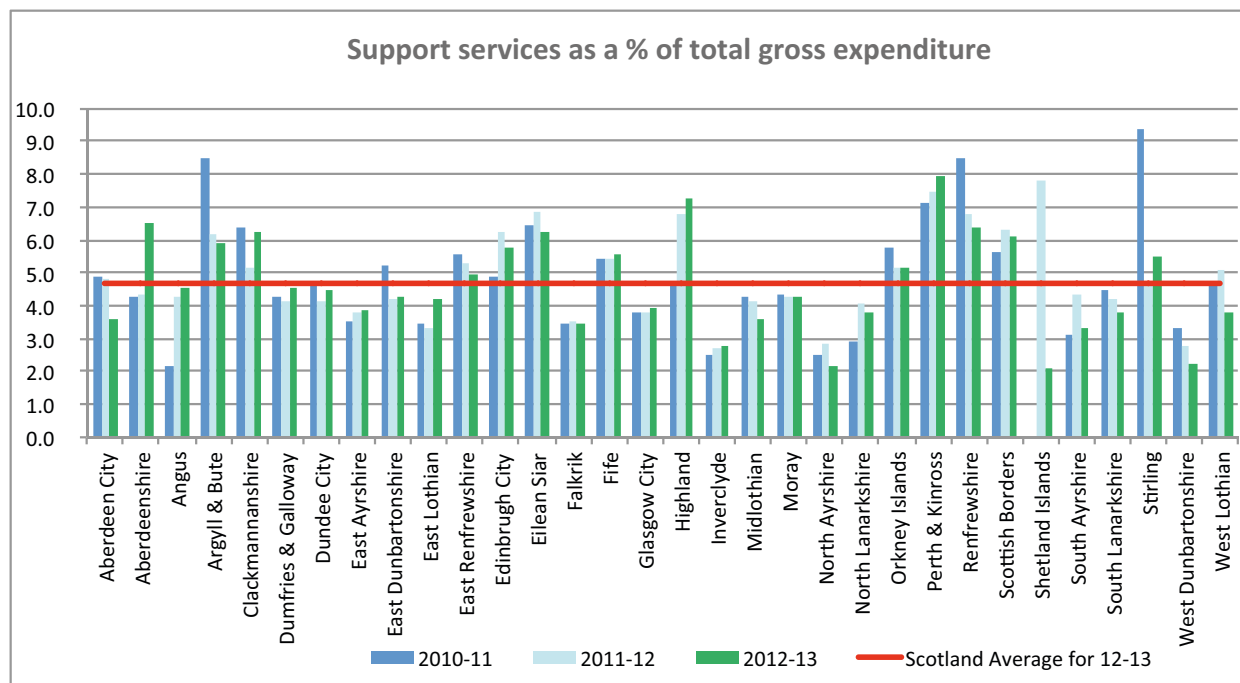
4 [http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/local/2013/nr\\_130517\\_roads\\_maintenance.pdf](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/local/2013/nr_130517_roads_maintenance.pdf)

# Corporate Services

## Support Services

Corporate support services within councils cover a wide range of functions including finance, human resources, corporate management, payroll, legal services and a number of other corporate functions.

In 2012/13 the Scottish average among councils for the cost of support services as a percentage of the total revenue budget of a council was 4.7%. This was a slight increase from 2010/11 when the figure was 4.6%. In 2012/13 the range across councils is from 2.2% to 7.9% with a significant difference between urban, rural and semi-rural councils. In general terms, rural authorities displayed a higher percentage than urban and semi-rural area councils; the rates were 6.1% on average for rural councils, 3.9% for urban councils and 4.0% for semi-rural councils.



## Democratic Core

The democratic core service of local authorities covers all the services, including committees, that are necessary to support the council in discharging its democratic functions on behalf of the community.

In 2012/13 the Scottish average for the cost of the democratic core per 1000 of population was £31,778. The range across councils was from £15,610 to £241,447, with rural councils having significantly higher costs than urban/semi-rural equivalents. If the island councils are removed from this range it reduces from £13,610 to £48,448. These figures indicate the higher costs rural and island councils face associated with the distances elected members have to travel to attend meetings plus accommodation and other expenses incurred as a consequence of this. Over the three year period 2010/11 to 2012/13 the cost reduced by -8.8% in real terms. The rate of reduction has slowed in recent years from -8.1% in real terms from 2010/11 to 2011/12 to -0.8% in real terms from 2011/12 to 2012/13.

## Percentage of Women in Top Salaries

The percentage of women in the top 5% of earners in councils is a significant measure of the attempts by councils to ensure equal opportunity between genders. From 2010/11 to 2012/13 this has increased from 46% to 49%. The level is broadly similar across all types and ranges of councils.

## Cost of Council Tax Collection

The cost of collecting the council tax is measured on a per property basis to standardise the measure across councils. Over the three year period from 2010/11 to 2012/13 this has remained broadly steady in cash terms at £13.81 falling to £13.29. The figures are broadly similar once adjusted for inflation and in real terms. The range however varies significantly from £4.10 to £29.23. In particular the costs are higher in the island councils which has a significant impact on the overall average.

## Percentage of Council Tax Received by the End of the Financial Year

The Scottish average overall rate of in-year collection for council tax was 95.2% in 2012/13; a figure that has remained steady since 2010/11. To achieve this level of collection during a period of significant economic pressure is testimony to the hard work of councils and their finance staff.

## Sickness Absence Rates

The management of sickness absence is a major priority for councils in their efforts to manage their costs. The rate has remained flat at 10 days average from 2010/11 to 2012/13. There is little variation based on the urban rural nature of a council or size.

## Invoices Paid

Councils are major purchasers of goods and services both within their local economies and across the Scottish economy as a whole. The percentage of invoices paid within 30 days has remained steady at 90% over the three year period 2010/11 to 2012/13.

# Housing Services

## Tenants' Arrears and Voids

A likely effect of welfare reform can be seen in the increase in tenants' arrears as a percentage of net rent due since 2010/11, with the rate of this increase accelerating in the past year. The range across authorities in 2012/13 was 3.34% to 11%, with urban authorities reporting the highest arrears.

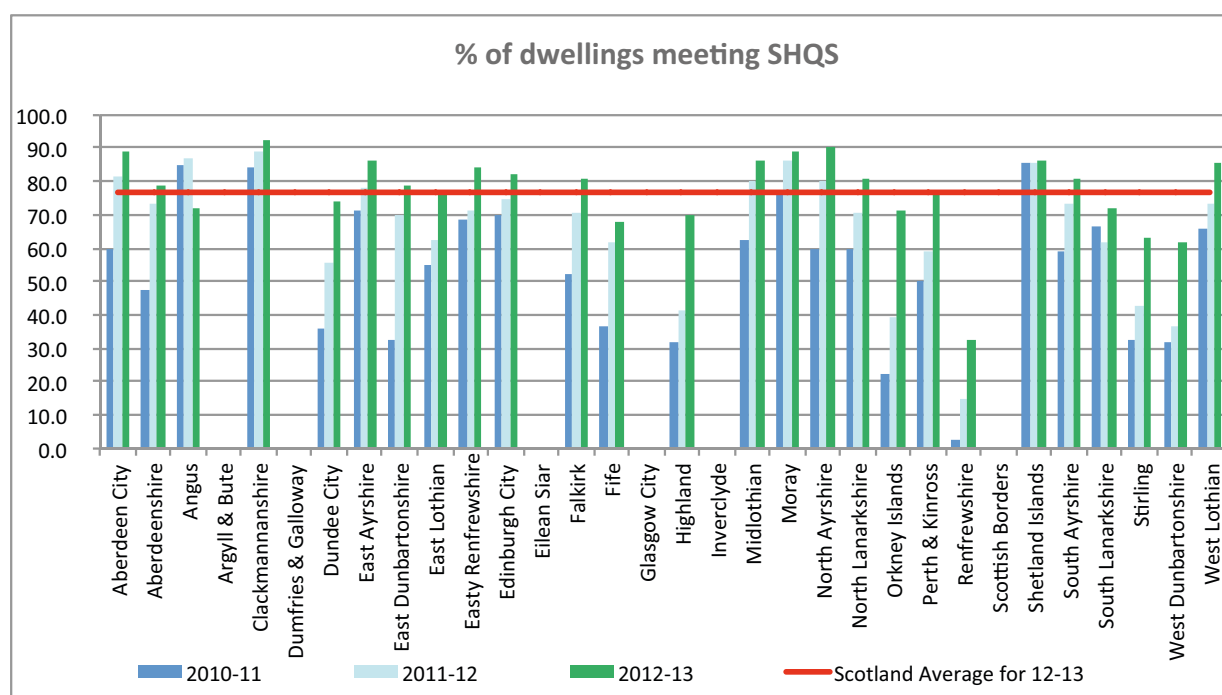
Meanwhile, the rent due lost to voids has decreased since 2010/11, with all of the decrease occurring between 2011/12 and 2012/13. Again, figures vary across authorities, from 0.3% to 4.1%, with rural and smaller authorities reporting higher losses. Overall, these figures suggest the councils continue to manage their stock well in the face of mounting pressures as a consequence of the impacts of welfare reform.

### Tenants' Arrears and Percentage of Rent Due Lost to Voids

Year	Current tenants' arrears as a % of net rent due	% of rent due in the year that was lost due to voids
2010/11	5.9	1.3
2011/12	6.1	1.3
2012/13	6.8	1.2

## Housing Quality

In terms of Housing Quality, there have been consistent improvements over the past three years in relation to dwellings meeting Scottish Housing Quality Standards and energy efficiency standards. In 2012/13, 76.6% of council dwellings met SHQS, an increase of 23% from 2010/11. The range across councils varies significantly from 32.3% to 92.3%, although this range has been narrowing since 2010/11.



In 2012/13, 88.8% of council dwellings were energy efficient, an increase from 74.9% in 2010/11. The range across councils ranges from 72.8% to 99.9%, with those areas with highest levels of deprivation achieving the highest levels.

The percentage of repairs completed within target times has been consistently averaging 93% for the past three years, and is highest in areas of low deprivation.

**Percentage of Housing Meeting Quality and Energy Efficiency Standards, and Repairs Completed Within Target Times**

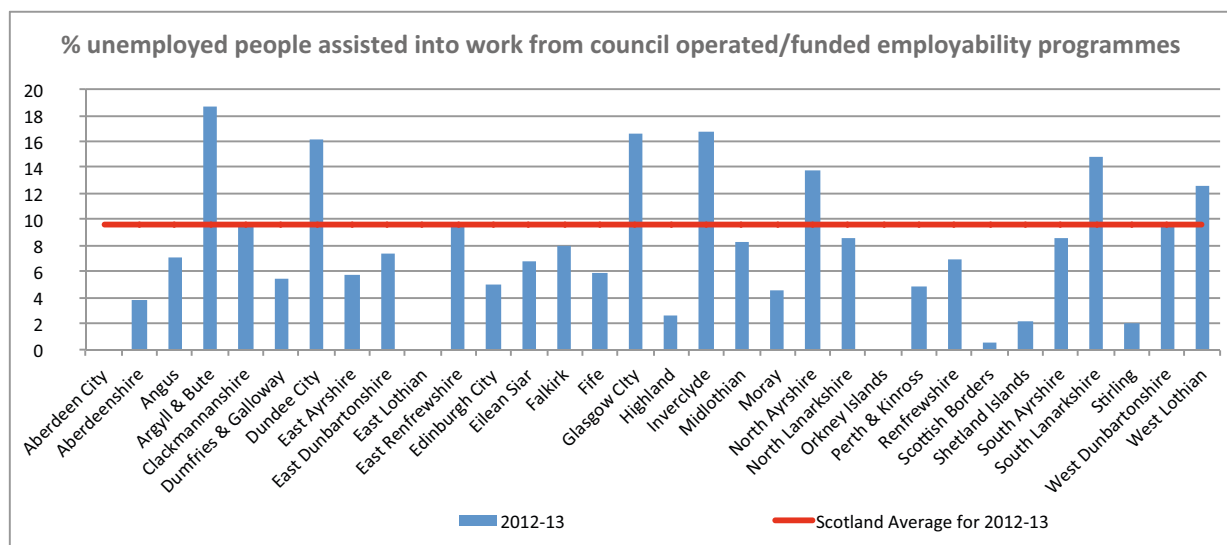
Year	% of council dwellings meeting Scottish Housing Standards	% of repairs completed within target times	% of council dwellings that are energy efficient
2010/11	53.6	93.3	74.9
2011/12	66.1	93.6	81.2
2012/13	76.6	93.1	88.8

# Economic Development

This year, for the first time, the framework includes an economic development measure focusing on the 'percentage of total unemployed people in an area assisted into work from council funded/operated employability programmes'. Employment is a key priority for most councils/SOAs and accessing employment results not just in a positive economic outcome, but can typically also lead to improvements across a wider range of outcomes and reductions in demand for public services.

Most councils participate in employment-related support – either via direct provision and/or via funding delivery by third parties. Employability support is often delivered in partnership and this measure seeks to capture data on employability services where the council has either directly delivered and/or funded the intervention. The measure is an indication of the proportion of unemployed people in a council area that are participating in employability responses led or supported by the council, and in this sense assesses the reach and penetration of the intervention. Currently this measure utilises part of the data submitted by councils as part of their annual Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development group (SLAED) return. Work is prioritised in the year ahead to improve the robustness of this measure and providing reliable data on the progression of these people into employment.

In 2012/13, the Scotland average for 'percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from council funded/operated employability programmes' was 9.6% of total unemployed. There is a considerable range across councils, from 0.6% to 18%, with a tendency for higher rates being achieved in areas with higher levels of deprivation. Most rural councils tend to have lower rates. Some of the variation is likely to be due to differing priorities and approaches to employability across councils.



As the 'employability' measure, on its own, does not fully monitor the performance by councils in delivering economic development, the SLAED indicators work for 2013/14 will seek to develop a robust benchmark to reflect the significant investment in business development and support (e.g. Business Gateway) that may be used in the future LGBF. We will continue to work with SLAED to improve both the quality of the data underpinning this specific indicator and in driving forward with their own benchmarking work which is complementary to this programme.



# Conclusions and Next Steps

The core purpose of this exercise is support local government through benchmarking to improve the services they deliver to their local communities. The collective efforts of all 32 councils in Scotland has been important in taking this project to its current stage of development and their on-going support will be critical to its further success. This last year has seen councils continue to improve the quality and performance of the services covered by the LGBF while continuing to manage pressures to reduce costs in all service areas.

In the summer of 2014 we will report on the family group pilots on road maintenance services and the positive destinations of young people upon leaving secondary school. As well as reporting on those two activities we will learn from the pilot exercise, improve the process where necessary and embed that refined process to further support councils in achieving improvements in local services.

For the year ahead we will continue to work with all councils and relevant partners to make further improvements in the benchmarking project, including how best to develop benchmarking across Community Planning Partnerships. In addition we will prioritise the following actions to strengthen the LGBF further by working with all councils and relevant partners to:

1. Develop a standardised and comparable approach to better understand the development of children as they progress through primary school.
2. Develop stronger measures to support improvements in outcomes for older people.
3. Roll out where relevant the use of net cost indicators rather than gross cost indicators.
4. Work to better understand the linkages between waste collection, disposal and recycling.
5. Take forward our on-going commitment to improve the measurement of customer satisfaction across local services.
6. Strengthen our processes for capturing and sharing good practices emerging from the benchmarking work across all councils.

# Appendix 1 Full List of Indicators and Service Categories

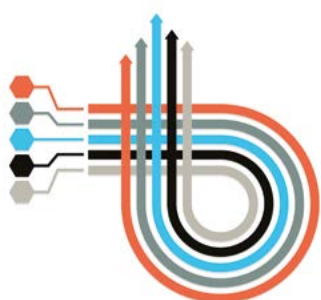
	Data	Indicator Description
Children's Services	CHN1	Cost per primary school pupil
	CHN2	Cost per secondary school pupil
	CHN3	Cost per pre-school education registration
	CHN4	Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 5
	CHN5	Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 6
	CHN6	Percentage of pupils from deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at level 5 (SIMD)
	CHN7	Percentage of 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	Percentage of adults satisfied with local schools
	CHN11	Proportion of pupils entering positive destinations
Corporate Services	CORP1	Support services as a percentage of total gross expenditure
	CORP2	Cost of democratic core per 1,000 population
	CORP3b	The percentage of the highest paid 5% of employees who are women
	CORP4	The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax
	CORP5b2	Average time (hours) between time of noise 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
Adult Social Care	SW1	Older persons (over 65) home care costs per hour
	SW2	SDS spend on adults 18+ as a % of total social work spend on adults 18+
	SW3	Percentage of people 65+ with intensive needs receiving care at home
	SW4	Percentage of adults satisfied with social care or social work services
	SW5	Net residential costs per week for older persons (over 65)
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	Percentage of adults satisfied with libraries
	C&L5b	Percentage of adults satisfied with parks and open spaces
	C&L5c	Percentage of adults satisfied with museums and galleries
	C&L5d	Percentage of adults satisfied with leisure facilities

	Data	Indicator Description
Environmental Services	ENV1 & 1a	Gross and net cost of waste collection per premises
	ENV2 & 2a	Gross and net cost per waste disposal per premises
	ENV3a	Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population
	ENV3c	Street Cleanliness Score
	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
	ENV4e	Percentage of U class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment
	ENV5	Cost of trading standards and environmental health per 1,000 population
	ENV6	The percentage of total waste arising that is recycled
	ENV7a	Percentage of adults satisfied with refuse collection
	ENV7b	Percentage 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
Corp. Asset	C-AST 1	Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use
	C-AST 2	Proportion of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition
Econ Dev	ECON1	Percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from council operated/funded employability programmes



Improvement Service  
Westerton House  
East Mains Industrial Estate  
Broxburn  
EH52 5AU

T. 01506 775558  
E. [info@improvementservice.org.uk](mailto:info@improvementservice.org.uk)  
[www.improvementservice.org.uk](http://www.improvementservice.org.uk)



**Local**  
Government  
**Benchmarking**  
**Framework**

[www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking](http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking)

# Financial Scrutiny Unit Briefing

## “Opening the can”: The Local Government Benchmarking Framework

20 May 2013

13/28

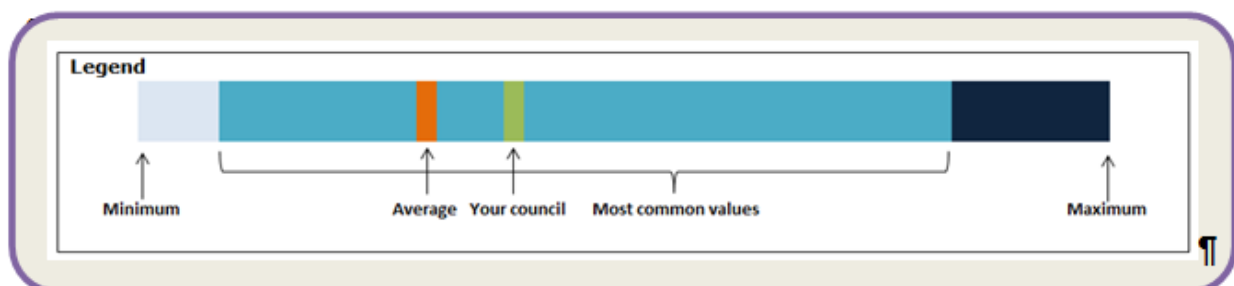
**Allan Campbell and Andrew Aiton**

Members of the Local Government and Regeneration Committee have been closely involved throughout the development of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework, but other Members will likely be less familiar with the framework, why it was established, and how the data could be used by councils, stakeholders, MSPs and the general public.

The purpose of this briefing is therefore to introduce the Benchmarking Framework to all MSPs, and outline how it can be used, but also the limitations and caveats that need to be applied to the data.

The Benchmarking Framework can be accessed via the Improvement Service website:  
<http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/>

This Briefing should be printed in colour where possible to aid comprehension of the graphs and charts within.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Government Benchmarking Framework was launched at the COSLA/Improvement Service conference in early March 2013. The Benchmarking Framework can be accessed through its dedicated website, hosted by the Improvement Service, at:

<http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/>

The FAQ on the Benchmarking Framework website explains that “Benchmarking is an improvement approach to help organisations understand how they perform in comparison to other relevant organisations. It is a systematic process that needs to be planned, resourced and carried out with a degree of rigour and critically it is a learning process. The core purpose is to understand why a service is achieving its current performance levels, how well others perform and why differences in performance results occurs. Benchmarking supports change and improvement by helping to identify and share good practice.”

The framework is based on seven service groupings which cover the major services provided to the public, and the support services necessary to do that. The data covered represents about 60% of the total spending of local government. The core data source used is the Local Financial Return, with customer satisfaction data coming from the Scottish Household Survey.

The Overview Report sets out some of the key challenges in using the data:

“The core purpose of the exercise is benchmarking: making comparisons on spending and performance between similar councils so that councils can identify strengths and weaknesses, learn from councils who seem to be doing better and improve their local performance. That definition of purpose makes three core points:

- (i) It is important to compare like with like.
- (ii) The focus is on variations in spending and performance that Councils can directly control.
- (iii) The aim is improvement and more cost effective services across Scotland.”

However, this first iteration of the Benchmarking Framework does not include any benchmarking family groupings, which was originally intended to be the key way in which councils could be appropriately grouped.

In terms of the future of the Benchmarking Framework, the launch in March is seen by both SOLACE and the Improvement Service as the first stage of the Framework’s development, and it is acknowledged that work needs to be done to both embed the Framework in the work of local authorities, and to plug the gaps that remain in the suite of indicators



## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### WHAT IS BENCHMARKING?

The “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) on the [Local Government Benchmarking Framework](#) (Improvement Service 2013a) states that—

“Benchmarking is an improvement approach to help organisations understand how they perform in comparison to other relevant organisations. It is a systematic process that needs to be planned, resourced and carried out with a degree of rigour and critically it is a learning process. The core purpose is to understand why a service is achieving its current performance levels, how well others perform and why differences in performance results occurs. Benchmarking supports change and improvement by helping to identify and share good practice.”

Audit Scotland states that—

“There are probably as many definitions of benchmarking as there are organisations engaged in it. Benchmarking is best thought of as a structured and focused approach to comparing with others how you provide services and the performance levels you have achieved. The purpose of such comparison is to enable you to identify where and how you can do better. Benchmarking is concerned with finding and implementing better practice and performance wherever it is found.” (Scottish Parliament Local Government and Regeneration Committee 2012a)

Benchmarking takes place across the world, throughout the public and private sectors. In general, benchmarking is used—

- to provide accountability;
- to improve performance; and
- to help determine expenditures (Improvement Service 2013c).

Benchmarking exercises often aim to answer the following questions—

- What goods and services do you the taxpayer get for your money?
- What is the quality of those goods and services?
- Do you get good value in return for your taxes?
- Do those goods and services help improve your life? (Improvement Service 2013c)

### HISTORY OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK

The Benchmarking Framework was launched at the COSLA/Improvement Service conference in early March 2013 – more than two years after the project was begun. As Strand 2 of its 3 strand inquiry into public service reform, the Local Government and Regeneration Committee focussed on benchmarking and performance measurement in local government. In its report, the Committee explained that—

“The purpose of strand 2 was to examine the work that has taken place over the last two years in relation to the development of benchmarking and comparative performance data and cost measurement, and to assess how it can contribute to the performance of local authorities in Scotland and in turn the services they deliver.” (Scottish Parliament Local Government and Regeneration Committee 2012a)

In evidence to the Committee, the Improvement Service explained that—

“Roughly two years ago, when SOLACE approached the Improvement Service to undertake the work on benchmarking, we agreed a clear statement of purpose for the exercise and what it was designed to achieve. From the outset, of critical importance to SOLACE was that the exercise should drive improvement in council service delivery.” (Scottish Parliament Local Government and Regeneration Committee 2012a)

In conclusion, the Committee gave a positive endorsement of the framework—

“The Committee endorses and welcomes the introduction of benchmarking. The Committee applauds local authorities along with SOLACE and the IS on recognising the need for councils to take forward this initiative and in developing an approach which the Committee considers has the potential to bring about a huge step forward in improving the quality of services and deliver cost savings in coming years.” (Scottish Parliament Local Government and Regeneration Committee 2012a)

## **THE BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK**

### **ACCESSING THE FRAMEWORK**

The Benchmarking Framework can be accessed through its dedicated website, hosted by the Improvement Service, at: <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/>

If the user wishes to look in detail at a number of indicators for a single council, the data can be found here: <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/databycouncil.html>

If the user wishes to compare a single indicator across several councils, the data can be found here: <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/indicators.html>

There is also a useful FAQ section, which can be found here:  
<http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/faq.html>

The Improvement Service also published an Overview Report alongside the Framework, which is referred to below, and can be found here:  
<http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/documents/overview.pdf> (Improvement Service 2013b)

### **INDICATORS**

The Indicators are set out in the Annexe to this briefing, and explained below. At a seminar with the Local Government and Regeneration Committee, the Improvement Service explained that the indicators selected were to be high level and were not intended to explain everything about councils and their performance but—

“would enable chief executives to open up the can of their services and see how their delivery of a service compares to that of other councils, and then drill down into that to explain any variation in the level of delivery.” (Scottish Parliament Local Government and Regeneration Committee 2012b)

The Improvement Service’s [Overview Report](#) (Improvement Service 2013b) explains in detail how the indicators were selected. The following paragraphs are taken from that report—

The framework is based on seven service groupings which cover the major services provided to the public, and the support services necessary to do that. The data covered by this report represents about 60% of the total spending of local government.

As can be seen, services to children (education, child protection and child care) and social work and social care to adults account for 44% of all local government spend. Despite some perceptions, the cost of corporate administration and the costs of democracy together account for around 5% of total spending.

To develop precise indicators of cost and performance for comparison between councils, these broad service categories are often divided into more specific sub-categories. For example, children’s services divide into: preschool education; primary education; secondary education and child care and protection.

For each category, standard indicators of spend and, where possible, performance have been developed. Spending has been standardised by expressing it as spending per standard unit (e.g. spending per pupil; spending per kilometre of road maintained; spending per residence for waste collection, etc.). These indicators have been standardised by application of rigorous protocols and provide a reliable basis for comparison between councils. Indicators of performance have proven to be more difficult.

For some services, well accepted measures of performance exist (e.g. pupil attainment at standard grade or higher level for secondary education). For others, no standard measures of performance are currently available (e.g. children’s educational attainment at the end of primary school). For others again, performance is defined against policy requirements (e.g. percentage of older people with intensive needs receiving care at home). Finally, in some cases, community satisfaction with the service is used as the performance measure in the absence of other measures.

This reinforces the point that the benchmarking framework is a “work in progress”. Developing standard measures of performance is expensive and time consuming, particularly if a new evidence base is necessary and, at this stage, the framework has sought to use what was available. In some cases, that is satisfactory: in others, further development is necessary. To minimise cost and duplication of effort, development work will be shared with inspectorates and regulatory bodies, who also require councils to collect prescribed information, to agree a core framework of performance measures that should be collected on an annual basis.

The Benchmarking Framework FAQ explains the key criteria that each indicator had to be—

1. Relevant to what council services delivered to customers and citizens;
2. Unambiguous and clearly understood;
3. Underpinned by timely data;

4. Accessible with clear guidelines on their application;
5. Statistically and methodologically robust;
6. Consistently applied across services and all councils;
7. Cost effective to collect.

## DATA SOURCES AND DEFINITIONS

At the [seminar with the Local Government and Regeneration Committee](#) (Scottish Parliament Local Government and Regeneration Committee 2012b), the Improvement Service set out the data sources used, and the work that local authorities have had to do to ensure the data is reliable and consistent. The first thing to note is that the baseline year for the framework is 2010-11. Some of the key points are set out below—

- **Issues with the baseline year and accounting for “support services”** – “One exercise with the data was to better account for support costs across council services and in the 2010-11 exercise we have worked with directors of finance to better understand where we can apportion service support costs in councils’ financial information. Some support costs go directly to services such as education and social work, while others are in a corporate pot. However, given that councils do not necessarily locate and account for the same services in the same parts of the accountancy system, we have had to clean up data, which has meant that our previous three years’ data is not 100 per cent comparable with the data from our base year. Nevertheless, it is still useful for interrogating the base year figures. Now that we and directors of finance have cleaned up the base year data, we have pulled all the information together in order to find out the position of different councils against it across the piece.”
- **Key data source: the Local Financial Return** – “Our core data source is the local financial return, which represents council costs that have gone through an audit process. Although such figures were not designed for benchmarking purposes, they are still very useful in that respect and, over the past six or seven months, we and directors of finance have been strengthening some of the classifications around the data underpinning the LFR to ensure that it is much more robust and comparable across all 32 councils. We have also drawn on data from statutory performance indicators, which are quality indicators in their own right and individually very useful.”
- **Customer satisfaction data: the Scottish Household Survey** – “we also have customer satisfaction data, which comes from the Scottish household survey. It is a flawed data source because as you get down to individual council level the sample sizes become pretty small. However, it is the best data that we have at the moment and we are using it as a form of holding position until we can evolve better satisfaction data gathering consistently across all 32 councils. To be fair, I think that overall the weakest area has been support costs for corporate services, hence the exercise that we have carried out with directors of finance over the past six or seven months to improve the availability and quality of such data.” (Scottish Parliament Local Government and Regeneration Committee 2012b)

In terms of the Scottish Household Survey, the Improvement Service admits that it is a “flawed data source” and that “sample sizes become pretty small”. The Scottish Government has confirmed that, for 2007-2011—

- the **number of households** surveyed per local authority each year ranged between approximately 200 for the smallest local authorities up to around 1500 for Glasgow (around 14,000 on average in total);
- the **number of “random adults”** surveyed per local authority each year ranged between 200 and 1300 (around 12,500 on average in total). (Scottish Government 2013)

The most recent [Scottish Household Survey Annual Report](#) (for 2011) contains more information on the composition and methodology of the survey.

## USING THE DATA – ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

In its Overview Report, the Improvement Service also sets out some specific issues around how the data can be used, and some of the issues and challenges involved. The report states that—

“The core purpose of the exercise is benchmarking: making comparisons on spending and performance between similar councils so that councils can identify strengths and weaknesses, learn from councils who seem to be doing better and improve their local performance. That definition of purpose makes three core points:

- (iv) It is important to compare like with like.
- (v) The focus is on variations in spending and performance that Councils can directly control.
- (vi) The aim is improvement and more cost effective services across Scotland.” (Improvement Service 2013b)

The Overview Report goes into some detail as to why these factors are of critical importance, for example, it states that—

“For example, if the focus is on spending per pupil in primary education, rural and island councils have to maintain a large number of very small schools because they provide for small but highly diffuse populations. This is expensive. Urban councils have fewer but larger schools because they serve large, highly concentrated populations. Comparing cost per pupil between Glasgow and Orkney is, therefore, not comparing like with like.

Equally, some councils have more pupils from a background of severe deprivation and disadvantage than others and Scottish and International analysis shows that these pupils tend to achieve less well at school. This relationship holds even where disadvantaged pupils attend the same school as more affluent pupils who are achieving highly. Comparing pupil achievement between councils with high levels of deprivation and councils with low levels of deprivation needs to take account of the difference between them.” (Improvement Service 2013b)

It also notes that—

“Variations between councils will quite properly reflect the different priorities different councils have arrived at with and for the communities they serve. Council are elected democratic authorities that may quite legitimately have different priorities. Using standard measures of cost and performance in no sense implies councils should be standard: they should reflect the different needs and interests of the different communities they serve.” (Improvement Service 2013b)

However, this first iteration of the Benchmarking Framework does not include any benchmarking family groupings, which was originally intended to be the key way in which councils could be appropriately grouped. This is discussed below.

## **BENCHMARKING FAMILIES**

The original intention of the project was to group local authorities into “families”. The Local Government and Regeneration Committee’s report explained the proposal—

“55. SOLACE and IS are proposing an approach to benchmarking where local authorities will be grouped together in “families” of authorities. Mark McAteer of IS explained this approach to the seminar—

“We have agreed with SOLACE the development of family groups among the 32 councils, by which I mean that we will group councils on a like-for-like basis to allow them to get into much more detailed, drill-down activity to explain, for example, variations and what is going behind the scenes and behind the numbers.”

56. Mark McAteer told the seminar that local authorities had been grouped together on the basis of socio-economic characteristics. He was keen to stress, however, that local authorities will be able to work with local authorities outwith their family group.” (Scottish Parliament Local Government and Regeneration Committee 2012a)

However, concerns were expressed to the Committee about the operation and composition of the family groups (Scottish Parliament Local Government and Regeneration Committee 2012a). In the first iteration of the Benchmarking Framework, there is no information on family groups, apart from the FAQ, which states that: “Family groups will be finalised in the next stage of the project.” (Improvement Service 2013a)

At an evidence session with the Committee following the launch of the framework, SOLACE stated that—

“To answer your question about the families, I will take that issue to SOLACE’s meeting this week. As Colin Mair said, we have been discussing the benchmarking initiative every month that we have met, for as long as I care to remember, and we will carry on doing so. I will take the question about the composition of the families to my SOLACE counterparts later this week. I hope to get a definitive answer on exactly what families we will work within and on what basis.” (Scottish Parliament Local Government and Regeneration Committee 2013)

The Improvement Service added that—

“From the data in the benchmarking framework, it is clear that a family would logically form, for example, among those councils that have quite high levels of deprivation. However, that may not be true for every service of those councils. For example, I would not seek to explain variations in road maintenance expenditure in terms of the levels of deprivation of the population in those areas. Therefore, each council may belong not just to one family but to this family for the purposes of a particular service and to that family for the purposes of other services. In other words, I think that we will need to be fluid on that.

Secondly, when we have explored the issue previously, we have found that we can end up putting Glasgow and Clackmannanshire in the same family due to their deprivation

profile. On the other hand, given the scales involved, people in Clackmannanshire will say, "Why the hell would we want to be benchmarked against Glasgow," and vice versa. In a way, we need to balance a range of factors and have some flexibility around families rather than regard them as a straitjacket.

The final point to make is that sometimes we can learn from someone who is totally outwith our family. If a council is clearly doing something really interesting, all of us should learn from that. We should not hide behind families. Families can sometimes become an excusatory framework as well as a facilitative one. I agree that families are important, but I think that we need to be flexible and constructive, rather than rigid and inflexible, in our use of families." (Scottish Parliament Local Government and Regeneration Committee 2013)

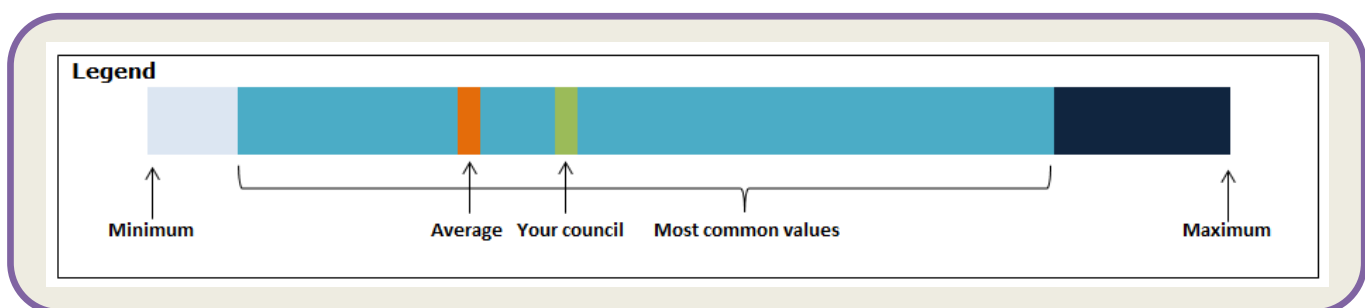


## USING THE DATA

Acknowledging all of the points from the IS paper above, this section of the paper shows what can be done with the data. The interactive tools referred to below can be downloaded from the IS website, at: <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/interactive.html>

### THE SPINE GRAPH GENERATOR

The Improvement Service provides an interactive tool called the “Spine Graph Generator”. This tool allows users to select a council and view how it performs across a full set of indicators, where there is available data. The indicators have different units, for example some are cost and some are percentages so they are all scaled and for each indicator a spine graph is provided, like the one below, in order to present the information in a similar fashion



- The orange bar represents the average for Scotland;
- The palest blue bar represents the first quarter of council values;
- The mid blue bar represents the majority of all council values; the middle 50%; and
- The dark blue bar represents the other councils.

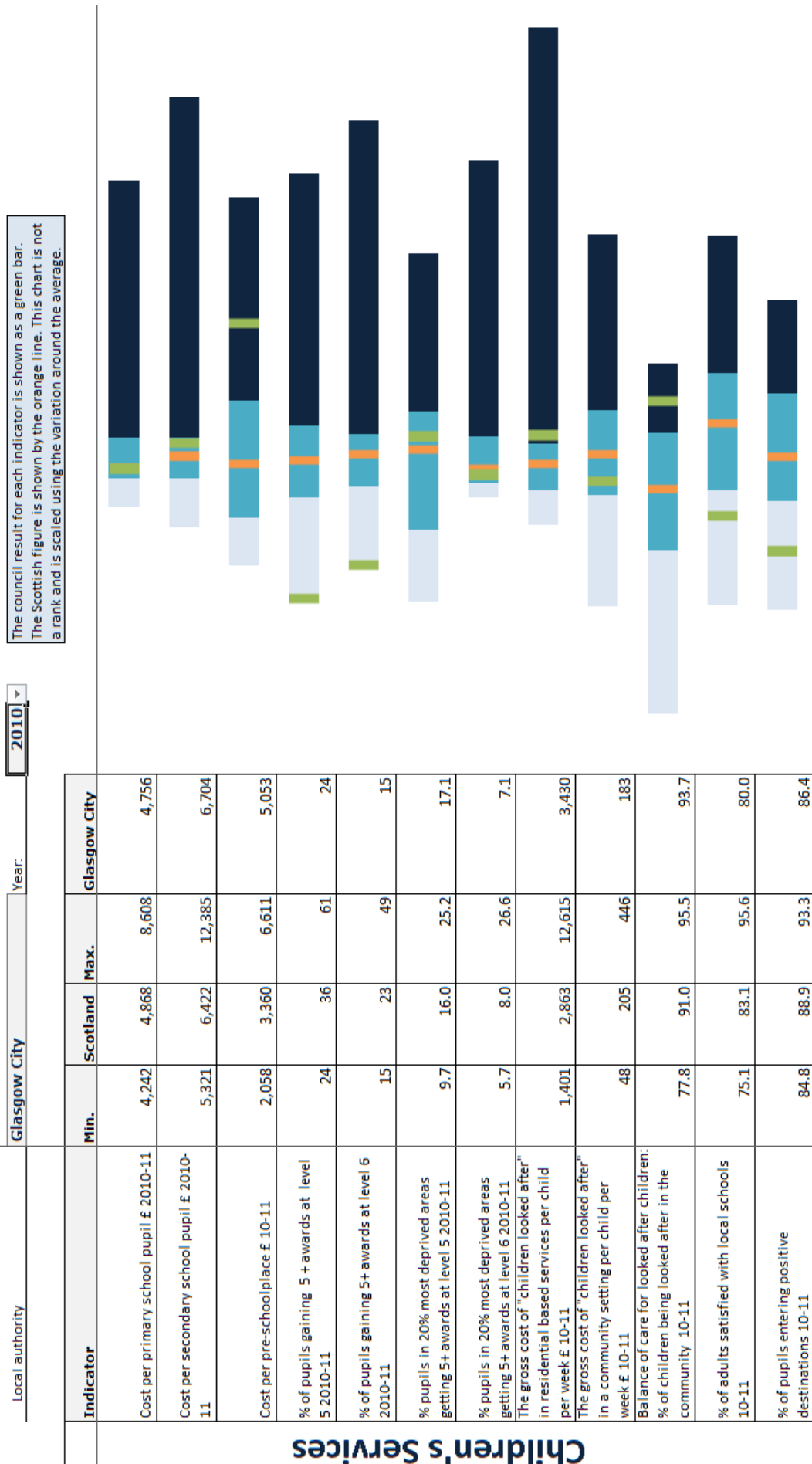
It should be noted that:

1. When viewing each indicator the range on the chart reflects the spread of values for that indicator, from the lowest value to the highest.
2. These graphs **do not** rank the performance of councils. They are simply designed to show where a council sits within the distribution of the range of values for all councils for each separate indicator.

Below is an example of the Children's Services indicators for 2010 for Glasgow City Council.

## Glasgow City (2010): benchmarking charts

Local authority spine charts for selected number of indicators



## THE BAR GRAPH GENERATOR

In addition to the spine graph generator, the framework also includes a “bar graph generator”. This tool allows users to generate simple bar charts for each council and for each indicator within the benchmarking framework. This will allow users to see the range and average for each indicator and how the council you have selected performed for the indicator.

Below is an example of the output generated, using Glasgow City Council’s figures for the “Cost per attendance at sports facilities” indicator.

### Bar chart generator

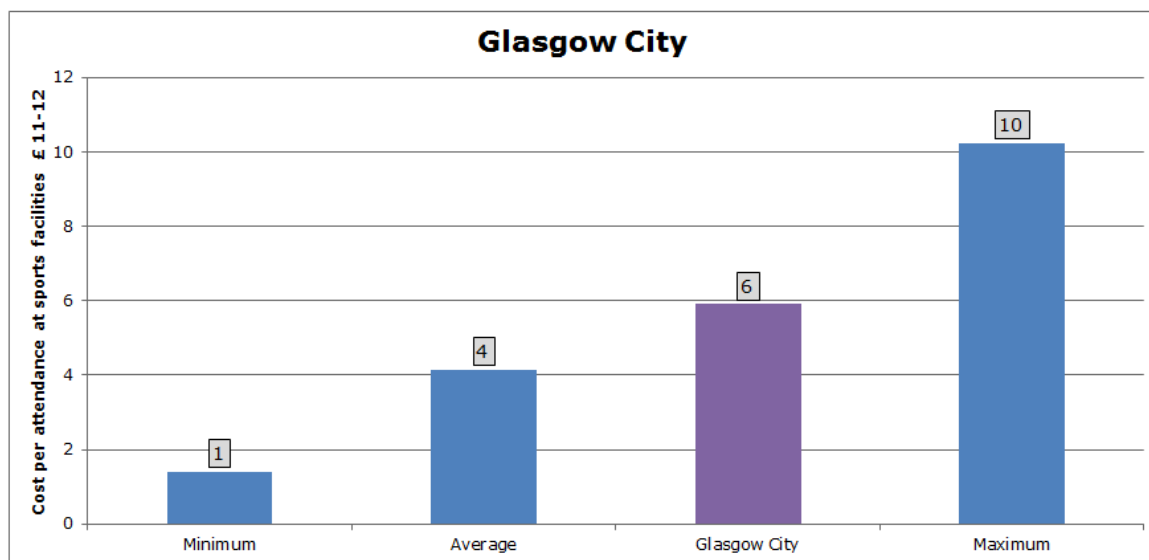
*Indicators details*

This tool allows you to generate simple bar charts for each local authority and for each indicator within the benchmarking framework. This will allow you to see the range against each indicator, the average for the indicator and how the council you have selected performed against the indicator. In order to generate a bar chart simply select the council you wish to view, the year and the indicator you wish to generate a chart for. Please note the years covered by the data are 2010/ 11 and 2011/12 but that the tool simply lists these as 2010 and 2011 respectively.

Select: 1 2 3

Local authority: **Glasgow City** Year: **2011** Indicator: **Cost per attendance at sports facilities £ 11-12**

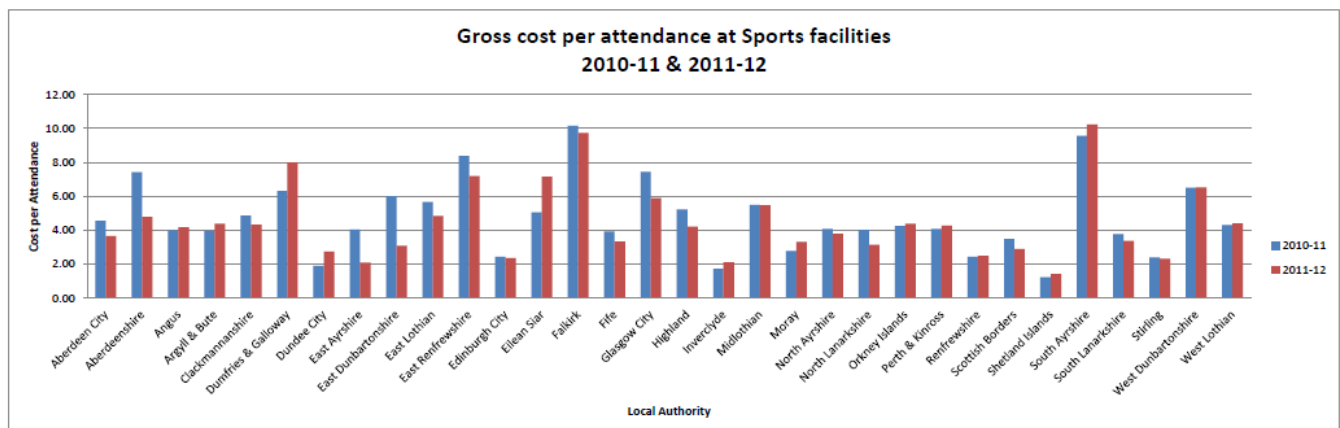
	Minimum	Average	Glasgow City	Maximum
Cost per attendance at sports facilities £ 11-12	1.41	4.15	5.90	10



## BENCHMARKING ALL COUNCILS ON PARTICULAR INDICATORS

The Framework also provides bar graphs and associated information for all councils on a particular indicator, accessible via each indicator's page on the website.

Using the same Indicator as above (Cost per attendance at sports facilities) produces this graph for all local authorities for 2011.



While the data allows comparison of indicators it should be noted that each local authority sets its own priorities. Outcomes do not differ solely on performance but as a result of how each local authority organise their services to meet the needs of their communities. This means that what is suitable for one area may not be suitable somewhere else.

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRAMEWORK

At the evidence with the Local Government and Regeneration Committee in March 2013, SOLACE and the Improvement Service briefly discussed the future development of the framework.

SOLACE stated that—

“We have always said that although this [the launch] marks a significant stage in the process, it is really only the first stage in our benchmarking journey. For me, there are a number of key things that we want to take forward from now on, the first of which is to embed the practice. To that end, we will be working with the Improvement Service on establishing systems, by which I mean having families of councils that will collaborate and drive improvement through use of the data.

Secondly—if you have looked at the data, you will see where I am coming from—there are still some gaps. We have always said that our 55 or so indicators do not, even at the high level, cover everything for which councils are responsible. There are certain conspicuous areas—for example, economic development—in which there is relative silence. The second strand of development, therefore, is to flesh out the indicators and ensure that we cover all council responsibilities.

Finally, we see the project as quite a significant stepping stone towards embedding deeper in the public sector benchmarking and comparative use of data on good practice. We still have a long way to go in using the work in local government, but our aspiration is

to take it beyond that level—to combine it with similar exercises that we know happen in, for example, the health service and to take it into community planning, broadly speaking.” (Scottish Parliament Local Government and Regeneration Committee 2013)

And the Improvement Service added that—

“Finally, on Ronnie Hinds’s last point about how this will connect with other improvement processes, I simply note that if the project produces only interesting data that do nothing to help drive improvement, it will have failed. As a result, an on-going stream of work will focus on how all of this will feature in councils’ improvement planning and how the data will feed into the process of creating service plans to ensure that the services themselves pick up and deal with these issues, look at the good practice case studies and embed them in their own authority.” (Scottish Parliament Local Government and Regeneration Committee 2013)

Taking into account user feedback, the IS is also working on improved more user friendly data visualisation mechanisms. (Improvement Service 2013c)

The Committee has committed to keep the system, and local government’s use of it, under review, and is expected to hold the first of its update sessions with key stakeholders in September 2013.

## ANNEXE – THE INDICATOR SET

	<b>Children's Services</b>
CHN1	Cost per Primary School Pupil
CHN2	Cost per Secondary School Pupil
CHN3	Cost per Pre-School Education Registration (Includes Under 3s, Ante-Pre-School, Pre-School and Deferred Entry)
CHN4	Attainment of Children at Standard Grade Level by all Children
CHN5	Attainment of Children at Higher Grade Level by all Children
CHN6	Attainment of Children at Standard Grade Level by Children from Deprived Backgrounds (SIMD)
CHN7	Attainment of Children at Higher Grade Level by Children from Deprived Backgrounds (SIMD)
CHN8 (a)	The Gross Cost of "Children Looked After" in a residential based services per Child per Week
CHN8 (b)	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
	<b>Corporate Services</b>
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
CORP3b	The percentage of the highest paid 5% of employees who are women
CORP4	The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax
CORP5a	The number of complaints of domestic noise received during the year settled without the need for attendance on site
CORP5b1	The number of complaints of domestic noise received during the year requiring attendance on site and not dealt with under Part V of the Antisocial Behaviour (Scotland)
CORP5b2	(Domestic Noise) Average time (hours) between time of complaint and attendance on site, for those requiring attendance on site
CORP5b3	(Domestic Noise) Average time (hours) between time of complaint and attendance on site, for those dealt with under the ASB Act 2004
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
	<b>Social Work</b>
SW1	Adult Home Care Costs per Hour (aged 65 and over)
SW2	Self Directed Support (SDS) spend on adults 18+ as a % of total social work spend on adults 18+
SW3	Percentage of People Aged 65+ with Intensive Needs (Plus 10 Hours) Receiving Care at Home
SW4	% of Adults satisfied with social care or social work services
	<b>Culture and Leisure Services</b>
CUL&LEIS1	Cost per Attendance of Sport and Leisure Facilities (Including Swimming Pools)
CUL&LEIS2	Cost per Visit to Libraries
CUL&LEIS3	Cost per Visit to Museums and Galleries

CUL&LEIS4	Cost of Parks and Open Spaces per 1,000 of the Population
CUL&LEIS5	% of Adults Satisfied with Culture and Leisure Services
	a: % of adults satisfied with libraries b: % of adults satisfied with parks and open spaces c: % of adults satisfied with museums and galleries d: % of adults satisfied with leisure facilities.
<b>Environmental Services</b>	
ENV1	Gross Cost of Waste Collection per Premise
ENV2	Gross Cost per Waste Disposal per Premise
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 road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment - A road category
ENV4c	Percentage of road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment - B road category
ENV4d	Percentage of road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment - C road category
ENV5	Cost of Trading Standards and Environmental Health per 1,000 Population
ENV6	% of Total Waste arising that is recycled
ENV7	% of Adults Satisfied with Environmental Services
	a: % of adults satisfied with refuse collection b: % of adults satisfied with street cleaning
<b>Housing Services</b>	
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
<b>Corporate Services: Asset Management and Property</b>	
CORPAM1	Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use
CORPAM2	Proportion of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition
CORPAM3	Gross Property Costs of the Operational Estate as a % of the Gross Revenue Budget
CORPAM4	% Gross Internal Floor-Space in Condition Categories A-B (Good or Satisfactory)
CORPAM5	Energy Costs/Consumption Spend per m2 (Gas, Electricity, Oil, Solid Fuel)
CORPAM6	% of Public Service Buildings that are Suitable and Accessible to Disabled People
CORPAM7	Operational Property as a % of the Total Portfolio



Proposed indicators that require development.



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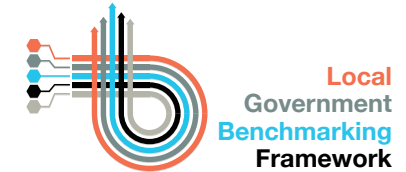
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# Local Government Benchmarking Framework



## About the project

Benchmarking is an improvement process that helps organisations understand how they perform in comparison to other relevant organisations. To work well it needs to be a systematic and rigorous process designed to help organisations learn together.

Benchmarking uses specific 'indicators' to measure how organisations are performing, for example, how much a service costs per user. These provide a simple metric which can then be compared across organisations and year-on-year. More about the indicators used in this project can be found on the LGBF website.

The main purposes of this project are:

- To help councils and their services better understand why they achieve their current performance levels.
- Building our understanding of where councils performance varies.
- Building our understanding why performance variation occurs.
- Helping to identify and share good practice across councils.

The chart overleaf shows how the benchmarking profile in this area compares with the rest of Scotland

Rank 1  Rank 32

## How to read the chart

These charts provide a performance summary for each council for each service area – this enables cost indicators, performance or achievement information and customer satisfaction information to be taken together 'in the round' to more accurately understand how a service or a council is performing overall.

The council's value and ranked position is presented for each indicator within that service area, along with the minimum and maximum values across the 32 councils. The red bar indicates the councils' relative ranked position for that indicator. Rank 1 is always on the left hand side of the diagram. The closer the red bar is to the left, the higher the rank.

A simple note of caution is important to bear in mind when interpreting this information; the lowest cost does not necessarily mean the best performance or highest levels of customer satisfaction, nor does the opposite when it comes to the highest spend.


















## Council Benchmarking Profile

2010 - 2013





















**Glasgow City: Children's Services**

Indicators, Time
















<i>Time</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Ranked Position</i>	<i>Rank</i>
<b>% of Adults Satisfied with Local Schools</b>						
2010-11	80.0	75.1	95.6	85.1		28
2012-13	81.0	72.0	94.0	85.0		23
<b>% of Pupils Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5</b>						
2010-11	24.0	24.0	61.0	36.0		32
2011-12	27.0	26.0	67.0	38.0		31
2012-13	28.6	27.9	70.7	39.3		30
<b>% of Pupils Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 6</b>						
2010-11	15.0	15.0	49.0	23.0		32
2011-12	16.0	16.0	53.0	25.0		32
2012-13	17.5	17.5	46.1	25.1		32
<b>% of Pupils from Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5 (SIMD)</b>						
2010-11	17.1	9.7	25.2	16.4		12
2011-12	18.5	9.5	33.6	18.1		12
2012-13	20.8	8.0	41.1	18.9		10
<b>% of Pupils from Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 6 (SIMD)</b>						
2010-11	7.1	5.7	26.6	8.0		20
2011-12	9.1	5.1	31.6	9.1		14
2012-13	10.5	5.6	17.8	9.6		9
<b>Balance of Care for looked after children: % of children being looked after in the Community</b>						
2010-11	93.7	77.8	95.5	90.2		4
2011-12	92.9	76.9	94.8	90.3		7
2012-13	93.0	70.0	95.0	90.0		5

**Glasgow City: Children's Services**

Indicators: Time

<i>Time</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Ranked Position</i>	<i>Rank</i>
<b>Cost Per Primary School Pupil</b>						
2010-11	4755.6	4242.4	8608.2	4785.6		16
2011-12	4658.9	4120.9	8765.0	4773.6		13
2012-13	4632.3	4084.2	8527.2	4705.9		13
<b>Cost Per Primary School Pupil adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	4952.2	4417.8	8964.1	4983.5		16
2011-12	4741.2	4193.6	8919.7	4857.9		13
2012-13	4632.3	4084.2	8527.2	4705.9		13
<b>Cost per Pre-School Education Registration</b>						
2010-11	5052.6	2058.2	6610.9	3360.0		31
2011-12	4768.8	2105.5	4768.8	2958.0		32
2012-13	4818.7	1966.7	5062.0	3053.8		30
<b>Cost per Pre-School Education Registration adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	5261.5	2143.2	6884.2	3498.9		31
2010-12	4853.0	2142.7	4853.0	3010.3		32
2010-13	4818.7	1966.7	5062.0	3053.8		30
<b>Cost per Secondary School Pupil</b>						
2010-11	6703.8	5320.7	12384.5	6445.3		23
2011-12	6414.1	5346.1	12825.9	6361.8		18
2012-13	6468.5	5425.5	13657.3	6463.6		17
<b>Cost per Secondary School Pupil adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	6980.9	5540.6	12896.5	6711.8		23
2011-12	6527.3	5440.5	13052.4	6474.1		18
2012-13	6468.5	5425.5	13657.3	6463.6		17



















**Glasgow City: Children's Services**

<i>Time</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Ranked Position</i>	<i>Rank</i>
<b>Proportion of Pupils Entering Positive Destinations</b>						
2010-11	86.4	84.8	93.3	89.0		28
2011-12	87.6	85.4	95.5	89.9		29
2012-13	89.2	88.3	96.1	91.4		29
<b>The Gross Cost of Children Looked After in Residential Based Services per Child per Week</b>						
2010-11	3430.2	1400.6	12615.4	2793.3		25
2011-12	3355.2	1696.6	10519.2	2895.0		24
2012-13	3368.6	1846.2	6455.1	3008.0		20
<b>The Gross Cost of Children Looked After in Residential Based Services per Child per Week adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	3572.0	1458.6	13136.9	2908.8		25
2011-12	3414.4	1726.5	10705.0	2946.1		24
2012-13	3368.6	1846.2	6455.1	3008.0		20
<b>The Gross Cost of Children Looked After in a Community Setting per Child per Week</b>						
2010-11	182.6	48.0	446.4	209.9		11
2011-12	208.1	52.2	404.6	221.2		15
2012-13	241.5	99.4	529.7	241.5		17
<b>The Gross Cost of Children Looked After in a Community Setting per Child per Week adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	190.1	50.0	464.9	218.5		11
2011-12	211.7	53.1	411.7	225.1		15
2012-13	241.5	99.4	529.7	241.5		17



















Indicators, Time










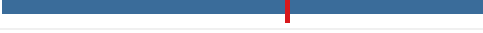


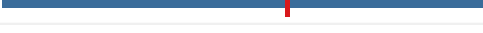







**Glasgow City: Corporate Services**

<i>Time</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Ranked Position</i>	<i>Rank</i>
<b>Support services as a % of Total Gross expenditure</b>						
2010-11	3.8	2.2	9.3	4.6		10
2011-12	3.8	2.7	7.8	4.3		7
2012-13	3.9	2.1	7.9	4.5		13
<b>Cost of Democratic Core per 1,000 population</b>						
2010-11	22762.4	5033.6	346294.6	34151.6		5
2011-12	23794.7	11448.5	383911.1	32782.9		4
2012-13	27777.8	15609.6	241447.7	31907.8		10
<b>The percentage of the highest paid 5% of employees who are women</b>						
2010-11	49.5	23.8	57.7	46.1		6
2011-12	52.1	21.3	60.1	47.2		6
2012-13	55.5	23.8	55.5	47.8		1
<b>The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax</b>						
2010-11	17.2	4.2	26.6	13.8		27
2011-12	17.5	3.0	24.2	12.8		27
2012-13	16.3	4.1	29.2	12.8		26
<b>Percentage of income due from Council Tax received by the end of the year</b>						
2010-11	92.3	92.3	97.6	95.1		32
2011-12	92.6	92.6	97.9	95.5		32
2012-13	93.1	93.1	98.1	95.6		31
<b>Percentage of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days</b>						
2010-11	90.0	74.0	95.6	89.5		14
2011-12	88.0	79.7	97.0	89.1		18
2012-13	88.4	78.5	98.8	90.4		20
<b>Sickness Absence Days per Employee</b>						

**Glasgow City: Corporate Services**

<i>Time</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Ranked Position</i>	<i>Rank</i>
2010-11	8.6	7.4	13.9	9.7		4
2011-12	8.3	7.6	13.5	9.4		4
2012-13	8.8	8.7	19.8	9.8		4
<b>Average time (hours) between time of Domestic Noise complaint and attendance on site</b>						
2010-11	(Empty)	0.4	475.1	23.0		(Empty)
2011-12	(Empty)	0.1	255.0	18.8		(Empty)
2012-13	(Empty)	0.4	599.0	11.0		(Empty)
<b>Cost of Democratic Core per 1,000 population adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	23703.4	5241.7	360610.9	35563.5		5
2011-12	24214.9	11650.7	390689.6	33361.7		4
2012-13	27777.8	15609.6	241447.7	31907.8		10
<b>Proportion of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition</b>						
2010-11	84.5	46.7	98.0	82.1		15
2011-12	87.9	39.3	98.0	84.4		14
2012-13	76.4	50.5	97.9	84.4		25
<b>Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use</b>						
2010-11	79.6	46.8	90.1	79.9		18
2011-12	92.3	46.2	92.3	81.6		1
2012-13	91.8	46.0	94.2	82.5		2
<b>The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	17.9	4.3	27.7	14.4		27
2011-12	17.8	3.0	24.6	13.0		27
2012-13	16.3	4.1	29.2	12.8		26

**Glasgow City: Adult Social Care**



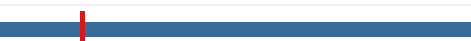
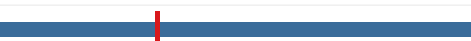





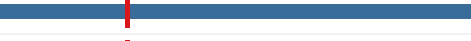
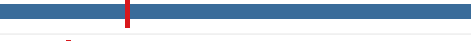






<i>Time</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Ranked Position</i>	<i>Rank</i>
<b>% of Adults satisfied with social care or social work services</b>						
2010-11	64.0	46.9	84.4	63.4		15
2012-13	59.0	40.0	82.0	59.0		17
<b>% of people 65+ with intensive needs receiving care at home</b>						
2010-11	38.1	11.1	54.5	34.5		9
2011-12	39.1	12.2	51.3	35.6		10
2012-13	37.2	12.3	53.6	35.5		14
<b>Older Persons (Over65) Home Care Costs per Hour</b>						
2010-11	21.4	8.5	30.6	21.1		18
2011-12	19.8	8.8	30.0	19.2		20
2012-13	21.4	9.7	43.1	21.1		19
<b>Older Persons (Over65) Home Care Costs per Hour adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	22.3	8.9	31.9	22.0		18
2011-12	20.2	8.9	30.5	19.6		20
2012-13	21.4	9.7	43.1	21.1		19
<b>Older persons (over 65's) Residential Care Costs per week per resident</b>						
2010-11	387.2	203.2	1592.0	384.9		19
2011-12	405.0	170.6	1522.5	397.3		20
2012-13	375.4	182.4	1484.4	375.4		16
<b>Older persons (over 65's) Residential Care Costs per week per resident adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	403.2	211.6	1657.8	400.8		19
2011-12	412.1	173.6	1549.4	404.3		20
2012-13	375.4	182.4	1484.4	375.4		16
<b>SDS spend on adults 18+ as a % of total social work spend on adults 18+</b>						
2010-11	1.3	0.3	5.2	1.1		13

Indicators, Time
















Glasgow City: Adult Social Care

<i>Time</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Ranked Position</i>	<i>Rank</i>
2011-12	8.9	0.4	18.0	1.7		2
2012-13	29.8	0.8	29.8	2.0		1

## Indicators, Time


















Time	Value	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Ranked Position	Rank
% of adults satisfied with libraries						
2010-11	85.1	75.3	93.3	85.1		17
2012-13	85.0	61.0	95.0	84.0		13
% of adults satisfied with leisure facilities						
2010-11	81.3	56.2	96.8	76.7		6
2012-13	85.0	52.0	98.0	80.0		11
% of adults satisfied with museums and galleries						
2010-11	92.7	46.9	96.6	71.4		2
2012-13	92.0	39.0	96.0	78.0		4
% of adults satisfied with parks and open spaces						
2010-11	85.6	70.3	91.2	84.2		14
2012-13	87.0	65.0	96.0	86.0		14
Cost Per Library Visit						
2010-11	3.1	1.6	7.1	3.7		9
2011-12	3.0	1.4	7.3	3.6		9
2012-13	2.5	2.0	6.4	3.7		5
Cost Per Library Visit adjusted for inflation						
2010-11	3.2	1.6	7.4	3.8		9
2011-12	3.1	1.4	7.4	3.7		9
2012-13	2.5	2.0	6.4	3.7		5
Cost of Museums per Visit						
2010-11	5.4	0.3	23.9	4.9		17
2011-12	4.6	0.2	24.4	4.1		17
2012-13	4.6	0.3	18.9	4.5		16
Cost of Museums per Visit adjusted for inflation						

**Glasgow City: Culture & Leisure**

<i>Time</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Ranked Position</i>	<i>Rank</i>
2010-11	5.6	0.3	24.8	5.1		17
2011-12	4.7	0.3	24.8	4.2		17
2012-13	4.6	0.3	18.9	4.5		16
<b>Cost of Parks&amp; Open Spaces per 1,000 Population</b>						
2010-11	53760.0	3436.4	56416.0	34207.6		30
2011-12	47694.7	4639.6	58724.7	34237.1		27
2012-13	47430.6	1850.5	56440.3	30633.7		30
<b>Cost of Parks&amp; Open Spaces per 1,000 Population adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	55982.5	3578.5	58748.3	35621.8		30
2011-12	48536.8	4721.5	59761.5	34841.6		27
2012-13	47430.6	1850.5	56440.3	30633.7		30
<b>Cost per attendance at Sports facilities</b>						
2010-11	7.5	1.2	10.2	4.3		29
2011-12	5.9	1.4	10.2	4.2		26
2012-13	5.7	1.8	9.9	3.7		26
<b>Cost per attendance at Sports facilities adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	7.8	1.3	10.6	4.4		29
2011-12	6.0	1.4	10.4	4.2		26
2012-13	5.7	1.8	9.9	3.7		26

Indicators, Time




















**Glasgow City: Environmental Services**

<i>Time</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Ranked Position</i>	<i>Rank</i>
<b>% of adults satisfied with refuse collection</b>						
2010-11	77.5	71.2	94.9	82.8		27
2012-13	75.0	73.0	95.0	86.0		30
<b>% of adults satisfied with street cleaning</b>						
2010-11	70.2	65.8	82.8	73.7		27
2012-13	70.0	65.0	89.0	76.0		26
<b>Cleanliness Score (%age Acceptable)</b>						
2010-11	95.1	90.4	99.2	95.6		18
2011-12	96.1	92.5	99.6	96.6		19
2012-13	93.2	90.4	99.0	96.0		28
<b>Cost of environmental health per 1,000 population</b>						
2012-13	14824.9	7898.5	74709.2	16678.2		12
<b>Cost of maintenance per kilometre of roads</b>						
2010-11	11830.8	2809.1	25562.6	9013.7		22
2011-12	8983.9	2350.8	18018.2	8212.4		20
2012-13	12065.5	2619.6	25598.4	7966.7		25
<b>Cost of maintenance per kilometre of roads adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	12319.9	2925.3	26619.4	9386.3		22
2011-12	9142.5	2392.3	18336.4	8357.4		20
2012-13	12065.5	2619.6	25598.4	7966.7		25
<b>Cost of trading standards and environmental health per 1,000 population</b>						
2010-11	19392.1	10596.2	72812.5	24335.4		7
2011-12	20630.2	10751.3	81777.8	22804.3		10
2012-13	21417.3	13129.2	88711.8	21417.3		17
<b>Cost of trading standards and environmental health per 1,000 population adjusted for inflation</b>						

Indicators, Time



**Glasgow City: Environmental Services**

<i>Time</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Ranked Position</i>	<i>Rank</i>
<b>2010-11</b>	20193.8	11034.2	75822.7	25341.5		7
<b>2011-12</b>	20994.5	10941.1	83221.7	23207.0		10
<b>2012-13</b>	21417.3	13129.2	88711.8	21417.3		17
<b>Cost of trading standards per 1,000 population</b>						
<b>2012-13</b>	6592.4	1566.2	14002.6	5310.0		22
<b>Gross cost of Waste collection per premises</b>						
<b>2010-11</b>	57.4	52.8	171.8	80.8		3
<b>2011-12</b>	60.3	50.2	184.9	80.4		4
<b>2012-13</b>	60.0	45.5	176.7	77.8		5
<b>Gross cost of Waste collection per premises adjusted for inflation</b>						
<b>2010-11</b>	59.7	55.0	178.9	84.1		3
<b>2011-12</b>	61.3	51.1	188.2	81.8		4
<b>2012-13</b>	60.0	45.5	176.7	77.8		5
<b>Gross cost per Waste disposal per premises</b>						
<b>2010-11</b>	118.0	64.9	271.4	98.9		26
<b>2011-12</b>	127.8	51.7	279.1	97.2		27
<b>2012-13</b>	126.0	66.3	325.7	107.5		26
<b>Gross cost per Waste disposal per premises adjusted for inflation</b>						
<b>2010-11</b>	122.9	67.6	282.6	103.0		26
<b>2011-12</b>	130.0	52.6	284.0	98.9		27
<b>2012-13</b>	126.0	66.3	325.7	107.5		26
<b>Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population</b>						
<b>2010-11</b>	29010.5	5505.9	34499.7	17660.5		30
<b>2011-12</b>	29656.2	6688.9	33957.1	16028.6		30
<b>2012-13</b>	28903.7	7327.3	29621.4	16014.0		31


Indicators, Time

Time	Value	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Ranked Position	Rank
Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population adjusted for inflation						
2010-11	30209.8	5733.5	35926.0	18390.6	<div><div></div></div>	30
2011-12	30179.8	6807.0	34556.7	16311.6	<div><div></div></div>	30
2012-13	28903.7	7327.3	29621.4	16014.0	<div><div></div></div>	31
Net cost per Waste collection per premises						
2012-13	47.7	21.2	144.2	63.2	<div><div></div></div>	10
Net cost per Waste disposal per premises						
2012-13	110.3	57.6	155.4	85.6	<div><div></div></div>	28
Percentage of A class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment						
2009-11	31.1	17.1	50.6	26.9	<div><div></div></div>	22
2010-12	32.3	17.9	51.8	27.4	<div><div></div></div>	23
2011-13	28.1	17.9	46.8	26.0	<div><div></div></div>	19
Percentage of B class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment						
2009-11	31.1	18.9	62.4	31.7	<div><div></div></div>	15
2010-12	29.5	18.7	67.4	32.5	<div><div></div></div>	14
2011-13	25.8	18.9	65.1	31.3	<div><div></div></div>	9
Percentage of C class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment						
2009-11	23.3	16.3	59.9	34.8	<div><div></div></div>	5
2010-12	23.3	14.2	64.8	36.0	<div><div></div></div>	4
2011-13	23.5	12.2	62.3	34.6	<div><div></div></div>	5
Percentage of unclassified roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment						
2007-11	30.6	23.9	57.9	38.8	<div><div></div></div>	7
2008-12	32.2	24.5	56.5	38.6	<div><div></div></div>	7
2009-13	35.1	23.4	58.0	36.5	<div><div></div></div>	10
Street Cleanliness Index						

**Glasgow City: Environmental Services**

<i>Time</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Ranked Position</i>	<i>Rank</i>
<b>2010-11</b>	70.0	69.0	84.0	73.0		31
<b>2011-12</b>	72.0	72.0	82.0	75.0		27
<b>2012-13</b>	71.0	69.0	84.0	74.0		29
<b>The % of total waste arising that is recycled</b>						
<b>2010-11</b>	24.0	17.8	49.8	40.4		30
<b>2011-12</b>	26.5	17.0	54.5	43.4		30
<b>2012-13</b>	28.9	14.1	57.0	42.5		28

Glasgow City: Economic Development

Time	Value	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Ranked Position	Rank
Percentage of Unemployed People Assisted into work from Council Funded/Operated Employability Programmes						
2012-13	16.6	0.6	18.7	7.7		3

# **Local Government and Regeneration Committee**

**20 August 2014**

**Submission from:** **Maureen McKenna,  
Director,  
Education Services,  
Glasgow City Council**

**Subject:** **Benchmarking and Continuous Improvement**

## **Introduction**

1. This submission from Glasgow City Council Education Services, sets out what work we have undertaken under the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) through SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives), and how it has assisted us to improve service delivery in Education Services.
2. We also detail our routine processes of scrutiny and action required to support improvement in areas of benchmarked activity, demonstrate how we continue to look for opportunities to benchmark our work against others, and are continuing to embed benchmarking in our day to day performance and quality processes.
3. It should be noted that there are a number of areas of potential benchmarking and performance improvement that are still being developed in response to LGBF which will be more fully reflected in our planning processes in 2014/15 and in action planning throughout the current year.

## **Background**

4. The Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) forms part of the suite of Statutory Performance Indicators used by Audit Scotland to assess how the Council is performing in its duty to deliver Best Value. Developed by the Improvement Service (IS) on behalf of SOLACE, the framework provides benchmarking comparisons across all 32 Scottish authorities and for particular family groupings of 8 authorities where comparisons are deemed more directly appropriate.

## **Education Services**

5. In general Education Services occupies a mid-range position in the national figures across a wide range of benchmarked indicators. This written submission highlights where performance for Education offers potential improvement areas on the benchmarking indicators.

6. Some of the key Education indicators that are benchmarked currently as part of the LGBF process are highlighted below;

- Cost per Primary School Pupil
- Cost per pre-school registration
- % Pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 5
- % of Pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 6
- Gross Cost of Children Looked After In Residential Based Services & In Community Settings
- Balance Of Care For Looked After Children % Being Looked After in the Community
- % of Adults Satisfied with Local Schools
- Proportion of Pupils Entering Positive Destinations

The overall LGBF report is hosted by the Improvement Service, and is available to view on their website

[http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/documents/report\\_2014.pdf](http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/documents/report_2014.pdf)

### **Benchmarking: Reporting and Monitoring of LGBF and other Improvement Performance**

7. The LGBF Indicators for all services, including Education Services are reported directly to the Chief Executive and also to the Executive Committee of the Council. Detail is provided on areas of good performance and areas for improvement.

8. The Council's Extended Management Team (ECMT) also considers a report on the Council's performance in April each year. This is based on the Improvement Service's (IS) own report across a range of key SOLACE indicators. This is then reported at the Council's Operational Development and Scrutiny Committee (ODSC), where elected members have an opportunity to scrutinise the information. The most recent report to ODSC was in May 2014.

9. It should also be noted that the Depute Chief Executive will also lead a further programme of work in the coming year using the LGBF as the basis for a programme of benchmarking activity, across all Council Services.

10. Outwith the regular report on benchmarking, Education Services also reports separately to ODSC on a six monthly basis on its continuous improvement and performance activity. Education Services also reports on Benchmarking through the Council's Budget and Service Planning Process, producing an Annual Service Plan and Improvement Report (ASPIR). In addition, Education Services presents regular performance reports to the Children and Families Policy Development Committee. Schools also receive performance and benchmarking information to support continuous improvement.

11. Performance statistics, in the form of spreadsheets, are shared openly with all heads in all sectors. They contribute to discussions about performance among teachers in the school and with Education Services staff, that is, principal teachers with their departments, senior managers with principal teachers and Education Services officers with senior managers in schools.

### **Benchmarking: LGBF key findings from 2012-13 data**

12. Included below for information are some of the highlights from the LGBF Report submitted to ECMT in May 2014. Areas for improvement will form the basis of action planning and performance monitoring in this current year. It should be noted that the information summarised below relates to how Glasgow compares to its “Family Group” of other local authorities, determined by the Improvement Services (IS).

➤ Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5 and Level 6 for Higher Grade by SIMD

For both of these indicators Glasgow is placed within the top 10 authorities (10th and 9th) respectively, and fourth only to Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire, and West Dunbartonshire in the group of comparator authorities for Level 5, and ranked third to North Lanarkshire and Inverclyde in the comparator group for Level 6.

➤ Balance of Care for Looked After Children: % of children being looked after in the Community

Glasgow is ranked eighth of all authorities nationally, and fourth among the comparator authorities. Although North Lanarkshire, Dundee and East Ayrshire are placed ahead of Glasgow it should be noted that all these indicators are very closely matched by other authorities with very little variation.

➤ Cost Per Pre-School Education Registration

This indicator shows a high degree of variance across the selected group, Glasgow has the third highest cost of any local authority for pre-school education registration, whilst Dundee has among the lowest of the comparator group. Of the comparator authorities only Inverclyde has a higher cost, although West Dunbartonshire having fourth highest cost, is closely comparable to Glasgow.

➤ Proportion of pupils entering positive destinations

In 2012/13, the percentage of school leavers entering a positive destination was 89.2%, an increase of 1.6% from last year. This is the highest ever positive destination rate recorded for Glasgow schools. Nationally, the percentage of leavers entering a positive destination in 2012/13 increased by 1.5% to 91.4%. So for the third successive year, Glasgow closed the gap with the national figure.

### Family Group



13. Glasgow are grouped with Dundee City Council, East Ayrshire Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council), Inverclyde Council, North Ayrshire Council, North Lanarkshire Council, and West Dunbartonshire Council. This grouping was established based on research which shows a strong relationship between educational outcomes and social context. The eight councils in the group are considered to have the highest levels of deprivation out of all 32 councils in Scotland, as measured by the average.

14. However, as with all benchmarking there are complexities to be considered, for example, there is a question over how closely one could compare Glasgow's performance to small rural local authorities and island councils. It is therefore important that we continue to actively benchmarking ourselves against other suitable authorities, both within the IS determined framework and in the wider national and UK context.

### **Benchmarking: Continuous Improvement**

15. Education Services, through Standards and Quality Reporting, direct working with the Improvement Service, and our Annual Service Plan and Improvement Plan (ASPIR) process are looking constantly for ways to improve service delivery, reflect on learning from other authorities, and disseminate valuable learning.

Some key areas of work include:

#### Proportion of Pupils Entering Positive Destinations

16. As noted above Positive Destinations is a key indicator for Education Services and it was selected for an Improvement Service (IS) led pilot across Scotland. It is an area where there has been improvement in spite of the recession. The pilot provides an opportunity to look in detail at the level below and to learn and share collaboratively.

17. Work is ongoing with the Improvement Service and other authorities, and Education Services will use the lessons learned from the pilot to further close the gap on the national figure (as noted above).

#### Standards and Quality Reporting

18. Our Standards and Quality reporting allows us to reflect on some of the other areas where we engage widely to reflect and benchmark practice. Some areas of note in our latest report include:

- Glasgow continues to be one of the UK's leading education authorities for international education. As part of our preparation for the Commonwealth Games we have been increasing our international partnerships. More than 100 schools have established links with international partners.
- Our Learning Communities were also involved in sharing practice, as teachers worked with colleagues from Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities

to mentor student teachers and share the assessment of their progress as part of a partnership approach to initial teacher education.

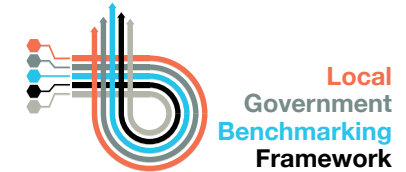
- In 2012, Scottish schools participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) international study organised by the OECD. One of the main findings was the extent to which the link between disadvantage/deprivation and performance in Scotland had improved since the last study in 2009. Given that 42% of the young people in our schools in Glasgow live in the 10% most deprived postcodes in Scotland, this is further evidence to affirm Glasgow's improving performance.

#### Development of INSIGHT Benchmarking Tool

19. The introduction of this new national benchmarking tool in mid August 2014 should allow us to look in a more refined way across other authorities at particular geographic communities, where similar demographic and socio-economic characteristics apply and how we are performing in comparison to our peers. The tool is being developed in conjunction with Education Scotland.

20. However, there is still work to be done on Insight to ensure that comparisons being made are valid and appropriately presented.

# Local Government Benchmarking Framework



## About the project

Benchmarking is an improvement process that helps organisations understand how they perform in comparison to other relevant organisations. To work well it needs to be a systematic and rigorous process designed to help organisations learn together.

Benchmarking uses specific 'indicators' to measure how organisations are performing, for example, how much a service costs per user. These provide a simple metric which can then be compared across organisations and year-on-year. More about the indicators used in this project can be found on the LGBF website.

The main purposes of this project are:

- To help councils and their services better understand why they achieve their current performance levels.
- Building our understanding of where councils performance varies.
- Building our understanding why performance variation occurs.
- Helping to identify and share good practice across councils.

The chart overleaf shows how the benchmarking profile in this area compares with the rest of Scotland

Rank 1  Rank 32

## How to read the chart

These charts provide a performance summary for each council for each service area – this enables cost indicators, performance or achievement information and customer satisfaction information to be taken together 'in the round' to more accurately understand how a service or a council is performing overall.

The council's value and ranked position is presented for each indicator within that service area, along with the minimum and maximum values across the 32 councils. The red bar indicates the councils' relative ranked position for that indicator. Rank 1 is always on the left hand side of the diagram. The closer the red bar is to the left, the higher the rank.





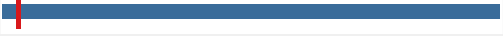
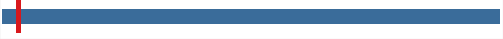
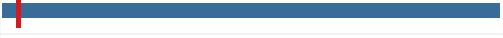

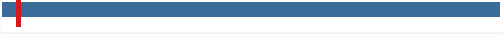


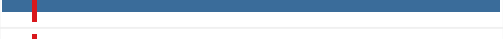

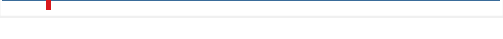
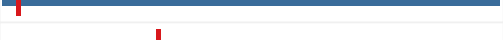

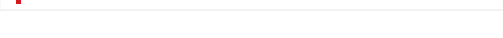
A simple note of caution is important to bear in mind when interpreting this information; the lowest cost does not necessarily mean the best performance or highest levels of customer satisfaction, nor does the opposite when it comes to the highest spend.

## Council Benchmarking Profile


















2010 - 2013



**East Renfrewshire: Children's Services**



Indicators, Time	Time	Value	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Ranked Position	Rank
	<b>% of Adults Satisfied with Local Schools</b>						
	2010-11	87.9	75.1	95.6	85.1		9
	2012-13	87.0	72.0	94.0	85.0		11
	<b>% of Pupils Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5</b>						
	2010-11	61.0	24.0	61.0	36.0		1
	2011-12	67.0	26.0	67.0	38.0		1
	2012-13	70.7	27.9	70.7	39.3		1
	<b>% of Pupils Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 6</b>						
	2010-11	49.0	15.0	49.0	23.0		1
	2011-12	53.0	16.0	53.0	25.0		1
	2012-13	46.1	17.5	46.1	25.1		1
	<b>% of Pupils from Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5 (SIMD)</b>						
	2010-11	25.2	9.7	25.2	16.4		1
	2011-12	33.1	9.5	33.6	18.1		2
	2012-13	32.1	8.0	41.1	18.9		2
	<b>% of Pupils from Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 6 (SIMD)</b>						
	2010-11	19.4	5.7	26.6	8.0		2
	2011-12	16.1	5.1	31.6	9.1		2
	2012-13	13.3	5.6	17.8	9.6		3
	<b>Balance of Care for looked after children: % of children being looked after in the Community</b>						
	2010-11	95.5	77.8	95.5	90.2		1
	2011-12	92.0	76.9	94.8	90.3		10
	2012-13	95.0	70.0	95.0	90.0		1

**East Renfrewshire: Children's Services**

<i>Time</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Ranked Position</i>	<i>Rank</i>
<b>Cost Per Primary School Pupil</b>						
2010-11	4424.1	4242.4	8608.2	4785.6		4
2011-12	4585.6	4120.9	8765.0	4773.6		11
2012-13	4646.8	4084.2	8527.2	4705.9		14
<b>Cost Per Primary School Pupil adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	4607.0	4417.8	8964.1	4983.5		4
2011-12	4666.5	4193.6	8919.7	4857.9		11
2012-13	4646.8	4084.2	8527.2	4705.9		14
<b>Cost per Pre-School Education Registration</b>						
2010-11	3931.4	2058.2	6610.9	3360.0		22
2011-12	3968.5	2105.5	4768.8	2958.0		27
2012-13	4248.6	1966.7	5062.0	3053.8		28
<b>Cost per Pre-School Education Registration adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	4093.9	2143.2	6884.2	3498.9		22
2010-12	4038.5	2142.7	4853.0	3010.3		27
2010-13	4248.6	1966.7	5062.0	3053.8		28
<b>Cost per Secondary School Pupil</b>						
2010-11	6148.0	5320.7	12384.5	6445.3		9
2011-12	6297.9	5346.1	12825.9	6361.8		14
2012-13	6435.0	5425.5	13657.3	6463.6		14
<b>Cost per Secondary School Pupil adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	6402.2	5540.6	12896.5	6711.8		9
2011-12	6409.1	5440.5	13052.4	6474.1		14



















Indicators, Time

**East Renfrewshire: Children's Services**

<i>Time</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Ranked Position</i>	<i>Rank</i>
2012-13	6435.0	5425.5	13657.3	6463.6		14
<b>Proportion of Pupils Entering Positive Destinations</b>						
2010-11	93.3	84.8	93.3	89.0		1
2011-12	95.3	85.4	95.5	89.9		2
2012-13	95.8	88.3	96.1	91.4		2
<b>The Gross Cost of Children Looked After in Residential Based Services per Child per Week</b>						
2010-11	4829.7	1400.6	12615.4	2793.3		31
2011-12	3009.6	1696.6	10519.2	2895.0		20
2012-13	6455.1	1846.2	6455.1	3008.0		30
<b>The Gross Cost of Children Looked After in Residential Based Services per Child per Week adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	5029.3	1458.6	13136.9	2908.8		31
2011-12	3062.8	1726.5	10705.0	2946.1		20
2012-13	6455.1	1846.2	6455.1	3008.0		30
<b>The Gross Cost of Children Looked After in a Community Setting per Child per Week</b>						
2010-11	146.5	48.0	446.4	209.9		6
2011-12	95.4	52.2	404.6	221.2		2
2012-13	108.0	99.4	529.7	241.5		2
<b>The Gross Cost of Children Looked After in a Community Setting per Child per Week adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	152.6	50.0	464.9	218.5		6
2011-12	97.1	53.1	411.7	225.1		2
2012-13	108.0	99.4	529.7	241.5		2

Indicators, Time

East Renfrewshire: Corporate Services



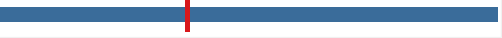









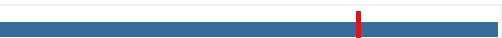
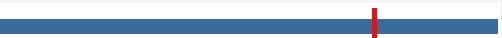




Time	Value	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Ranked Position	Rank
<b>Support services as a % of Total Gross expenditure</b>						
2010-11	5.6	2.2	9.3	4.6		23
2011-12	5.3	2.7	7.8	4.3		23
2012-13	5.0	2.1	7.9	4.5		20
<b>Cost of Democratic Core per 1,000 population</b>						
2010-11	36665.2	5033.6	346294.6	34151.6		20
2011-12	33823.0	11448.5	383911.1	32782.9		18
2012-13	29100.3	15609.6	241447.7	31907.8		12
<b>The percentage of the highest paid 5% of employees who are women</b>						
2010-11	51.9	23.8	57.7	46.1		3
2011-12	50.3	21.3	60.1	47.2		12
2012-13	51.2	23.8	55.5	47.8		11
<b>The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax</b>						
2010-11	9.6	4.2	26.6	13.8		5
2011-12	11.3	3.0	24.2	12.8		13
2012-13	7.0	4.1	29.2	12.8		2
<b>Percentage of income due from Council Tax received by the end of the year</b>						
2010-11	96.8	92.3	97.6	95.1		6
2011-12	97.2	92.6	97.9	95.5		6
2012-13	97.6	93.1	98.1	95.6		4
<b>Percentage of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days</b>						
2010-11	88.5	74.0	95.6	89.5		19
2011-12	83.1	79.7	97.0	89.1		27
2012-13	80.1	78.5	98.8	90.4		30

Indicators, Time












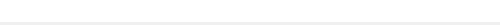

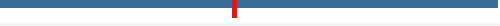





East Renfrewshire: Corporate Services

Indicators, Time

Time	Value	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Ranked Position	Rank
<b>Sickness Absence Days per Employee</b>						
2010-11	8.8	7.4	13.9	9.7		6
2011-12	9.0	7.6	13.5	9.4		12
2012-13	9.5	8.7	19.8	9.8		12
<b>Average time (hours) between time of Domestic Noise complaint and attendance on site</b>						
2010-11	0.4	0.4	475.1	23.0		1
2011-12	0.5	0.1	255.0	18.8		3
2012-13	0.7	0.4	599.0	11.0		6
<b>Cost of Democratic Core per 1,000 population adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	38181.0	5241.7	360610.9	35563.5		20
2011-12	34420.2	11650.7	390689.6	33361.7		18
2012-13	29100.3	15609.6	241447.7	31907.8		12
<b>Proportion of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition</b>						
2010-11	75.2	46.7	98.0	82.1		25
2011-12	75.6	39.3	98.0	84.4		25
2012-13	75.7	50.5	97.9	84.4		26
<b>Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use</b>						
2010-11	75.6	46.8	90.1	79.9		23
2011-12	76.9	46.2	92.3	81.6		24
2012-13	78.6	46.0	94.2	82.5		23
<b>The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	9.9	4.3	27.7	14.4		5
2011-12	11.5	3.0	24.6	13.0		13
2012-13	7.0	4.1	29.2	12.8		2


















## Indicators, Time

Time	Value	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Ranked Position	Rank
% of Adults satisfied with social care or social work services						
2010-11	49.9	46.9	84.4	63.4		30
2012-13	63.0	40.0	82.0	59.0		13
% of people 65+ with intensive needs receiving care at home						
2010-11	50.7	11.1	54.5	34.5		2
2011-12	42.0	12.2	51.3	35.6		5
2012-13	40.9	12.3	53.6	35.5		10
Older Persons (Over65) Home Care Costs per Hour						
2010-11	8.5	8.5	30.6	21.1		1
2011-12	11.3	8.8	30.0	19.2		3
2012-13	9.8	9.7	43.1	21.1		2
Older Persons (Over65) Home Care Costs per Hour adjusted for inflation						
2010-11	8.9	8.9	31.9	22.0		1
2011-12	11.5	8.9	30.5	19.6		3
2012-13	9.8	9.7	43.1	21.1		2
Older persons (over 65's) Residential Care Costs per week per resident						
2010-11	352.6	203.2	1592.0	384.9		9
2011-12	387.6	170.6	1522.5	397.3		15
2012-13	376.8	182.4	1484.4	375.4		18
Older persons (over 65's) Residential Care Costs per week per resident adjusted for inflation						
2010-11	367.1	211.6	1657.8	400.8		9
2011-12	394.5	173.6	1549.4	404.3		15
2012-13	376.8	182.4	1484.4	375.4		18
SDS spend on adults 18+ as a % of total social work spend on adults 18+						















East Renfrewshire: Adult Social Care

<i>Time</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Ranked Position</i>	<i>Rank</i>
2010-11	1.2	0.3	5.2	1.1		14
2011-12	3.3	0.4	18.0	1.7		5
2012-13	2.4	0.8	29.8	2.0		10

**East Renfrewshire: Culture & Leisure**









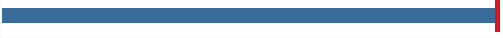








Indicators, Time	Time	Value	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Ranked Position	Rank
	<b>% of adults satisfied with libraries</b>						
	2010-11	86.3	75.3	93.3	85.1		15
	2012-13	87.0	61.0	95.0	84.0		10
	<b>% of adults satisfied with leisure facilities</b>						
	2010-11	77.2	56.2	96.8	76.7		14
	2012-13	87.0	52.0	98.0	80.0		8
	<b>% of adults satisfied with museums and galleries</b>						
	2010-11	68.6	46.9	96.6	71.4		19
	2012-13	80.0	39.0	96.0	78.0		11
	<b>% of adults satisfied with parks and open spaces</b>						
	2010-11	91.2	70.3	91.2	84.2		1
	2012-13	88.0	65.0	96.0	86.0		12
<b>Cost Per Library Visit</b>							
	2010-11	4.7	1.6	7.1	3.7		26
	2011-12	4.1	1.4	7.3	3.6		20
	2012-13	3.9	2.0	6.4	3.7		20
<b>Cost Per Library Visit adjusted for inflation</b>							
	2010-11	4.9	1.6	7.4	3.8		26
	2011-12	4.2	1.4	7.4	3.7		20
	2012-13	3.9	2.0	6.4	3.7		20
<b>Cost of Museums per Visit</b>							
	2010-11	(Empty)	0.3	23.9	4.9		(Empty)
	2011-12	(Empty)	0.2	24.4	4.1		(Empty)
	2012-13	(Empty)	0.3	18.9	4.5		(Empty)

**East Renfrewshire: Culture & Leisure**


















<i>Time</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Ranked Position</i>	<i>Rank</i>
<b>Cost of Museums per Visit adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	(Empty)	0.3	24.8	5.1		(Empty)
2011-12	(Empty)	0.3	24.8	4.2		(Empty)
2012-13	(Empty)	0.3	18.9	4.5		(Empty)
<b>Cost of Parks&amp; Open Spaces per 1,000 Population</b>						
2010-11	22481.6	3436.4	56416.0	34207.6		7
2011-12	24830.3	4639.6	58724.7	34237.1		8
2012-13	20960.1	1850.5	56440.3	30633.7		7
<b>Cost of Parks&amp; Open Spaces per 1,000 Population adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	23411.0	3578.5	58748.3	35621.8		7
2011-12	25268.7	4721.5	59761.5	34841.6		8
2012-13	20960.1	1850.5	56440.3	30633.7		7
<b>Cost per attendance at Sports facilities</b>						
2010-11	8.4	1.2	10.2	4.3		30
2011-12	7.2	1.4	10.2	4.2		29
2012-13	7.4	1.8	9.9	3.7		29
<b>Cost per attendance at Sports facilities adjusted for inflation</b>						
2010-11	8.7	1.3	10.6	4.4		30
2011-12	7.3	1.4	10.4	4.2		29
2012-13	7.4	1.8	9.9	3.7		29

Indicators, Time


















**East Renfrewshire: Environmental Services**

Indicators, Time	Time	Value	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Ranked Position	Rank
	<b>% of adults satisfied with refuse collection</b>						
	2010-11	88.2	71.2	94.9	82.8		8
	2012-13	77.0	73.0	95.0	86.0		29
	<b>% of adults satisfied with street cleaning</b>						
	2010-11	65.8	65.8	82.8	73.7		32
	2012-13	85.0	65.0	89.0	76.0		3
	<b>Cleanliness Score (%age Acceptable)</b>						
	2010-11	92.5	90.4	99.2	95.6		28
	2011-12	96.6	92.5	99.6	96.6		17
	2012-13	94.2	90.4	99.0	96.0		22
<b>Cost of environmental health per 1,000 population</b>							
	2012-13	7898.5	7898.5	74709.2	16678.2		1
<b>Cost of maintenance per kilometre of roads</b>							
	2010-11	25562.6	2809.1	25562.6	9013.7		32
	2011-12	18018.2	2350.8	18018.2	8212.4		32
	2012-13	18646.4	2619.6	25598.4	7966.7		31
<b>Cost of maintenance per kilometre of roads adjusted for inflation</b>							
	2010-11	26619.4	2925.3	26619.4	9386.3		32
	2011-12	18336.4	2392.3	18336.4	8357.4		32
	2012-13	18646.4	2619.6	25598.4	7966.7		31
<b>Cost of trading standards and environmental health per 1,000 population</b>							
	2010-11	12296.2	10596.2	72812.5	24335.4		2
	2011-12	10751.3	10751.3	81777.8	22804.3		1
	2012-13	14105.2	13129.2	88711.8	21417.3		2

**East Renfrewshire: Environmental Services**

Indicators, Time	Time	Value	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Ranked Position	Rank
	<b>Cost of trading standards and environmental health per 1,000 population adjusted for inflation</b>						
	2010-11	12804.5	11034.2	75822.7	25341.5		2
	2011-12	10941.1	10941.1	83221.7	23207.0		1
	2012-13	14105.2	13129.2	88711.8	21417.3		2
	<b>Cost of trading standards per 1,000 population</b>						
	2012-13	6206.8	1566.2	14002.6	5310.0		20
	<b>Gross cost of Waste collection per premises</b>						
	2010-11	93.3	52.8	171.8	80.8		22
	2011-12	86.1	50.2	184.9	80.4		22
	2012-13	82.4	45.5	176.7	77.8		19
	<b>Gross cost of Waste collection per premises adjusted for inflation</b>						
	2010-11	97.1	55.0	178.9	84.1		22
	2011-12	87.6	51.1	188.2	81.8		22
	2012-13	82.4	45.5	176.7	77.8		19
	<b>Gross cost per Waste disposal per premises</b>						
	2010-11	81.8	64.9	271.4	98.9		11
	2011-12	88.5	51.7	279.1	97.2		14
	2012-13	85.9	66.3	325.7	107.5		7
	<b>Gross cost per Waste disposal per premises adjusted for inflation</b>						
	2010-11	85.2	67.6	282.6	103.0		11
	2011-12	90.0	52.6	284.0	98.9		14
	2012-13	85.9	66.3	325.7	107.5		7
	<b>Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population</b>						
	2010-11	5505.9	5505.9	34499.7	17660.5		1

**East Renfrewshire: Environmental Services**
















Indicators, Time	Time	Value	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Ranked Position	Rank
	2011-12	6688.9	6688.9	33957.1	16028.6		1
	2012-13	7327.3	7327.3	29621.4	16014.0		1
	<b>Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population adjusted for inflation</b>						
	2010-11	5733.5	5733.5	35926.0	18390.6		1
	2011-12	6807.0	6807.0	34556.7	16311.6		1
	2012-13	7327.3	7327.3	29621.4	16014.0		1
	<b>Net cost per Waste collection per premises</b>						
	2012-13	65.6	21.2	144.2	63.2		21
	<b>Net cost per Waste disposal per premises</b>						
	2012-13	73.9	57.6	155.4	85.6		6
	<b>Percentage of A class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment</b>						
	2009-11	26.4	17.1	50.6	26.9		15
	2010-12	23.7	17.9	51.8	27.4		8
	2011-13	18.2	17.9	46.8	26.0		2
	<b>Percentage of B class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment</b>						
	2009-11	41.6	18.9	62.4	31.7		26
	2010-12	41.5	18.7	67.4	32.5		24
	2011-13	28.2	18.9	65.1	31.3		12
	<b>Percentage of C class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment</b>						
	2009-11	39.0	16.3	59.9	34.8		21
	2010-12	37.0	14.2	64.8	36.0		17
	2011-13	34.5	12.2	62.3	34.6		16
	<b>Percentage of unclassified roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment</b>						
	2007-11	51.9	23.9	57.9	38.8		29




**East Renfrewshire: Environmental Services**

<i>Time</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Ranked Position</i>	<i>Rank</i>
<b>2008-12</b>	50.1	24.5	56.5	38.6		28
<b>2009-13</b>	51.6	23.4	58.0	36.5		28
<b>Street Cleanliness Index</b>						
<b>2010-11</b>	72.0	69.0	84.0	73.0		23
<b>2011-12</b>	73.0	72.0	82.0	75.0		22
<b>2012-13</b>	75.0	69.0	84.0	74.0		11
<b>The % of total waste arising that is recycled</b>						
<b>2010-11</b>	45.4	17.8	49.8	40.4		6
<b>2011-12</b>	54.3	17.0	54.5	43.4		2
<b>2012-13</b>	52.8	14.1	57.0	42.5		7

## East Renfrewshire: Housing Services

Indicators, Time	Time	Value	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Ranked Position	Rank
	<b>Current tenants' arrears as a percentage of net rent due</b>						
	2010-11	6.6	2.6	11.6	5.9		17
	2011-12	7.1	2.8	11.2	5.8		17
	2012-13	9.5	3.3	11.0	6.8		22
	<b>Percentage of council dwellings that are energy efficient</b>						
	2010-11	80.2	30.5	95.7	75.3		12
	2011-12	91.2	42.9	100.0	85.8		10
	2012-13	95.1	72.9	100.0	89.9		6
	<b>Percentage of dwellings meeting SHQS</b>						
	2010-11	68.4	2.9	85.9	59.3		7
	2011-12	71.2	15.1	89.0	70.5		13
	2012-13	84.1	32.3	92.3	78.7		9
	<b>Percentage of rent due in the year that was lost due to voids</b>						
	2010-11	1.5	0.3	3.1	1.1		17
	2011-12	1.9	0.4	3.7	1.0		21
	2012-13	1.8	0.4	4.2	1.1		20
	<b>Percentage of repairs completed within target times</b>						
	2010-11	86.4	83.7	98.3	93.3		22
	2011-12	92.3	82.3	98.2	93.9		16
	2012-13	87.4	84.7	99.2	92.3		23

East Renfrewshire: Economic Development

Time	Value	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Ranked Position	Rank
Percentage of Unemployed People Assisted into work from Council Funded/Operated Employability Programmes						
2012-13	9.7	0.6	18.7	7.7		9

**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**  
**Written Submission to Local Government and Regeneration Committee**  
**Benchmarking and Continuous Improvement**

**1. Introduction**

East Renfrewshire Council (ERC) Education Department has always used benchmarking as part of its drive for continuous improvement. The introduction of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) along with statistics produced by the Scottish Government at local authority level allow full and open reporting of performance and enables the identification of best practice.

This submission sets out how ERC Education Department has used the LGBF along with other published datasets to improve its service delivery and outcomes for children and young people. It also sets out a number of opportunities for the future in terms of the LGBF.

**2. How is Benchmarking Understood in ERC Education Department?**

Benchmarking is a structured and focused approach to comparing with others the performance levels achieved (benchmarking of outcomes) and the approaches used (looking behind the outcomes and comparing practices/processes to identify how to improve).

Benchmarking is not a one-off or quick fix solution to current problems or concerns. It is a continuing search for, and taking action to secure continuing improvement.

Benchmarking is not an end in itself. It is one of a number of tools that can contribute to building an overall culture of improvement. It is a particularly important tool because it requires, for example, schools to recognise the link between practices/processes and outcomes.

It is recognised that benchmarking requires a culture that is comfortable with comparison. It should be noted that no school or education authority, for example, is the sole custodian of best practice, or so unique that it cannot be compared with others.

The benchmarking of results helps inform improvement, but looking at the statistics alone does not effect improvement. Ascertaining what is behind differences in performance is as critical as initially uncovering the differences themselves. Looking at the processes and resources used to deliver the results is key. It is important however to appreciate that good outcomes seldom arise from bad processes, and that good processes can significantly contribute to good outcomes.

**3. Available Authority Level Data – Existing Framework**

Recognising the importance in benchmarking, when the former regional councils were reorganised into 32 local authorities in 1996, East Renfrewshire led a group of 12 authorities in sharing and analysing performance in SQA results. This continued for a number of years until comparative data became available nationally through STACS (Standard Tables and Charts) as described below.

The Scottish Government has published information on various statistics at authority level at various periods such as number of teachers, pupil numbers, and pupils' attendance rates. For around 15 years, tables on pre-appeal SQA results used to be published annually in September, by the Scottish Government's statistics unit. Nationally the Scottish Government used to provide STACS to help analyse secondary SQA results. From August 2014, STACS will be replaced by the Senior Phase Benchmarking Tool (Insight). This

information has a strict data sharing protocol and its school data must only be used as an internal tool and not shared publicly.

For each education authority, Education Scotland (HMIE) defines a family benchmark group of around 5 authorities based on similar characteristics. For East Renfrewshire, the 5 authorities as defined by HMIE are Aberdeenshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, Midlothian and Stirling. East Dunbartonshire is the education authority defined by HMIE as East Renfrewshire's closest comparator.

In addition to undertaking benchmarking within the authority - of its schools, at various levels (e.g. subject departments, Higher Grade), and stages (e.g. P1, S4) of performance - East Renfrewshire has made use of all the above national data to benchmark information and performance. This has been widely shared with various parties such as parent council chairs, head teachers, quality improvement team, directorate and elected members.

#### **4. Local Government Benchmarking Framework**

The LGBF provides a framework of indicators around cost, productivity and outcomes. A range of satisfaction measures is also included from the Scottish Household Survey (SHS). Children's Services includes the following nine indicators.

- i. Cost per pre-school education registration.
- ii. Cost per primary school pupil.
- iii. Cost per secondary school pupil.
- iv. % of adults satisfied with local schools.
- v. % of pupils gaining 5+ awards at Level 5
- vi. % of pupils gaining 5+ awards at Level 6
- vii. % of pupils from deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at Level 5 (SIMD).
- viii. % of pupils from deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at Level 6 (SIMD).
- ix. Proportion of pupils entering positive destinations.

It is noted that indicators v. and vi. were part of the data set included in STACS. Data for indicator ix. is provided by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) as part of the National SLDR report and by the Scottish Government through the statistical publications.

As a result of the small SHS sample sizes for East Renfrewshire, the customer indicator has been supplemented with indicators based on Citizens' Panel data and school questionnaires. Together these indicators provide a more complete and accurate picture of customer satisfaction.

Performance against these indicators and the action being taken by the Department to address any issues is reported to East Renfrewshire Cabinet annually (see Appendix A). The indicators are also embedded in department plans and monitored and reported as part of the council's performance management arrangements.

## 5. Benchmarking Examples within East Renfrewshire Education Department

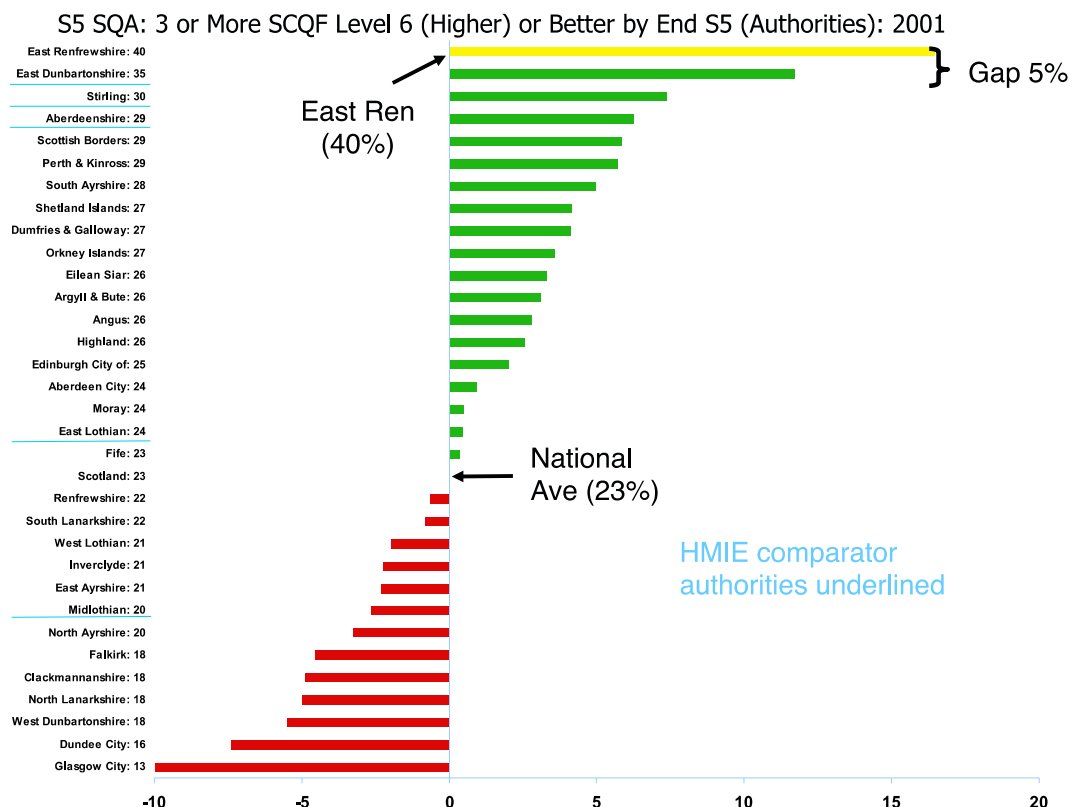
This section provides seven examples of how benchmarking (including the LGBF) has been used to support improvement.

### a. Increasing the Gap at S4 and S5

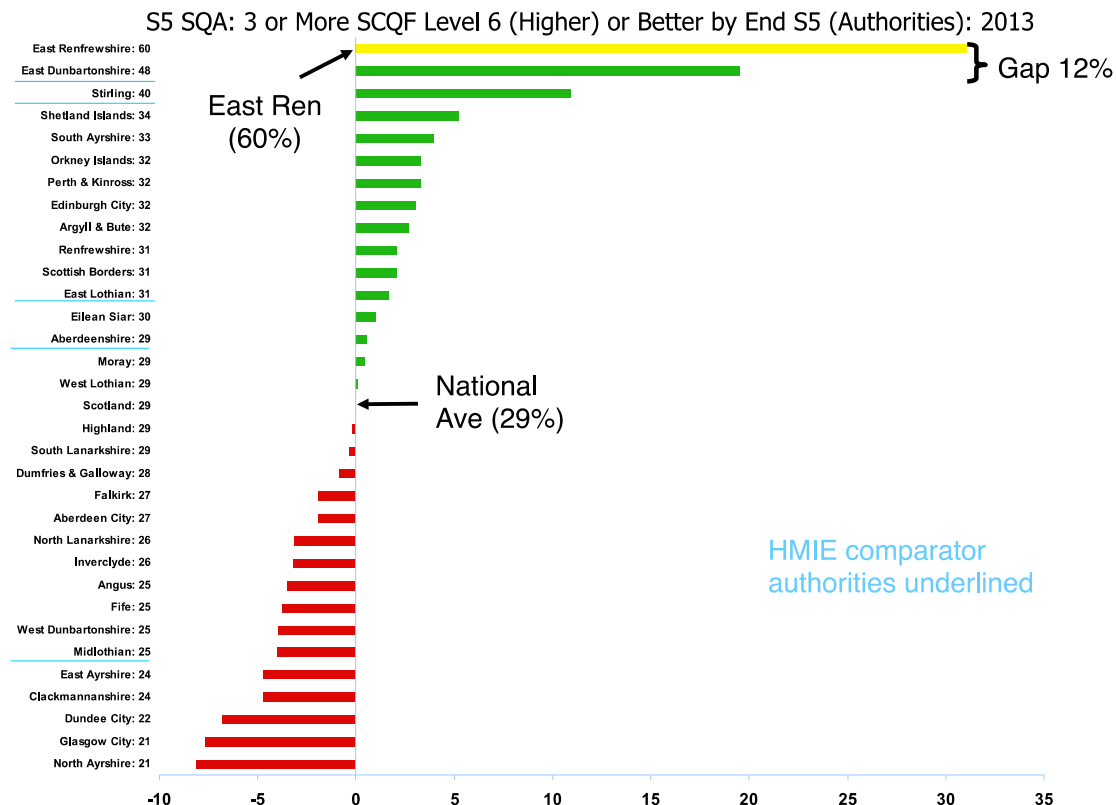
Elected members are always keen to ascertain how East Renfrewshire performs compared to all other education authorities in Scotland. Over the years, as it was demonstrated that East Renfrewshire was the top performing authority, elected members then gave the challenge to increase the gap between East Renfrewshire and the next highest authority to ensure continuous improvement.

The chart below shows the position in 2001 for 3 or more Higher awards by the end of S5. East Renfrewshire was the highest attaining at 40% of the relevant S4 cohort gaining this level at fifth year. The national average in 2001 was 23%. East Dunbartonshire (East Renfrewshire's nearest comparator authority as defined by HMIE) was the next highest authority at 35%, resulting in a 5-point gap with East Renfrewshire.

The 5 authorities defined as similar to East Renfrewshire by HMIE are underlined. It is interesting to note the performance of the comparator group, but of more interest to see how East Renfrewshire compares to all 32 council areas.



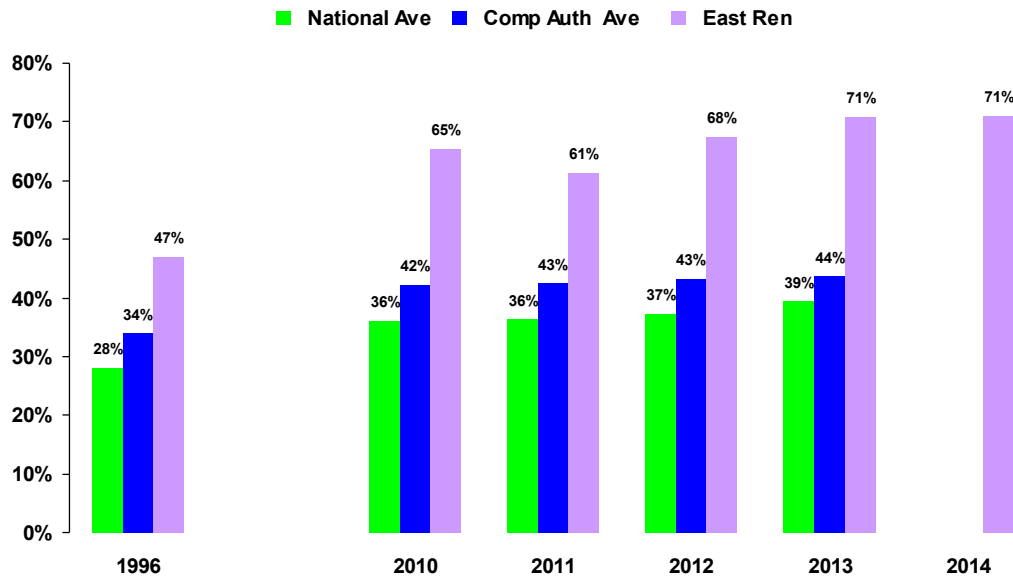
The chart below shows the position 12 years later in 2013, where East Renfrewshire remains top at 60%, but the gap has increased to 12 points with East Dunbartonshire at 48%.



The information to produce these charts used to be published around September each year of the pre-appeal results by the Scottish Government's statistics unit. However the pre-appeal data is no longer published and the post-appeal data is only made available by the Scottish Government much later around the following June, almost 1 year later, when such benchmarking is of less interest and relevance to stimulate improvement.

The following chart shows the percentage of S4 pupils achieving 5 or more awards at Level 5 (National 5, Intermediate 2 or Standard Grade Credit) from 1996 to 2014 for East Renfrewshire, our comparator authorities and the national average. This is one of the key outcome indicators included in the LGBF. The chart clearly shows how the gap has increased between ERC and both the national average (from 19% to 32%) and comparator authorities (13% to 27%). Comparator Authority and National data is not available for 2014. Appendix A also shows that ERC was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 in this indicator and 5 or more awards at Level 6 in S6.

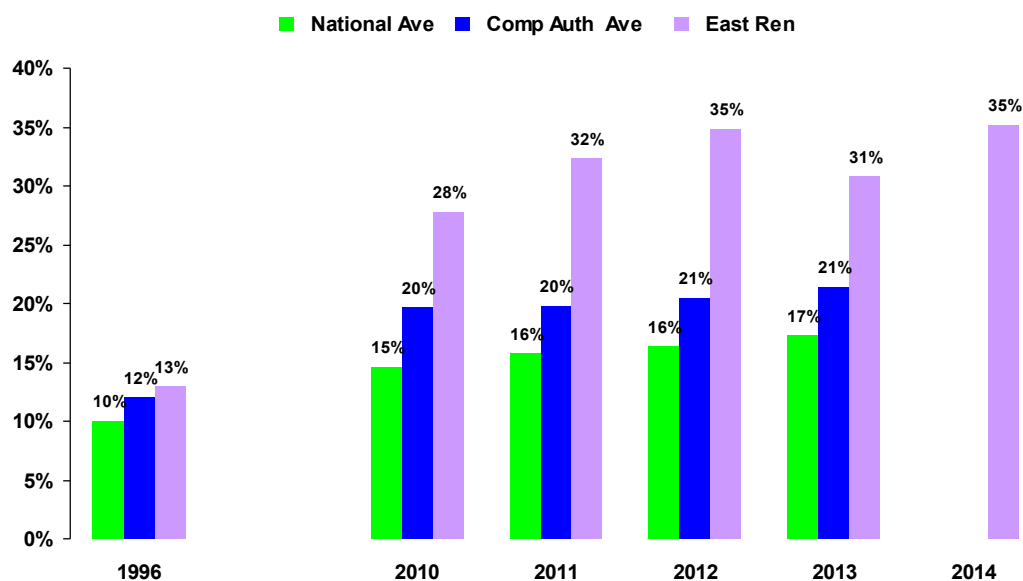
S4 SQA: 5 or More SCQF Level 5 (Intermediate 2) or Better by End S4  
HMIe Family Benchmark Authorities



*b. Performance in S6*

In comparing East Renfrewshire's performance to that across Scotland, there was clearly room for improvement in the performance at the top award in S6, Advanced Higher (previously Certificate of Sixth Year Studies). In presenting to elected members, they saw improvement in Higher awards in S5, but the same level of improvement was not evident at S6. Young people were not progressing from good Higher results in S5 to more advanced courses in S6 to deepen their learning and better prepare them for the next stage at university/college. Head teachers were given targets for improvements in this area and tasked to provide learners with quality experiences in sixth year, whilst not at the expense of pupils' wider achievements in citizenship etc. which the schools were providing. The chart below shows the progress made and East Renfrewshire is now building upon students' prior learning in fifth year better with a continued strong work ethic in S6.

S6 SQA: 1 or More SCQF Level 7 (Advanced Higher) or Better by End S6  
HMIe Family Benchmark Authorities



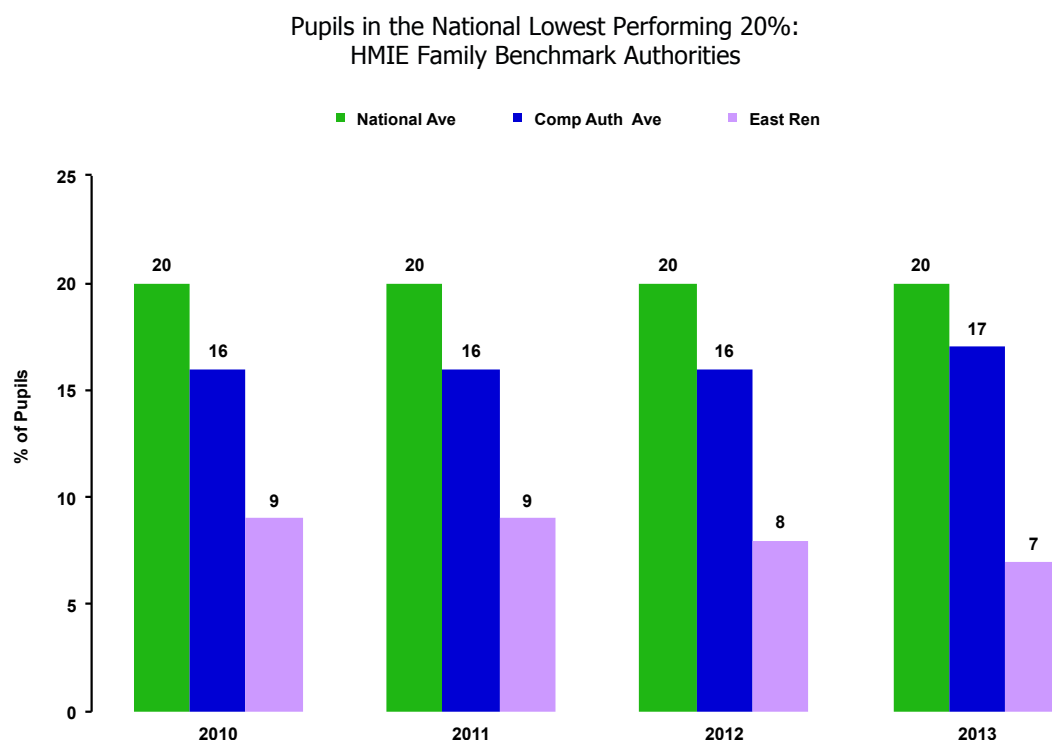


*c. Benchmarking – Taking Closer Look at Performance of Specific Groups*

Benchmarking is used in East Renfrewshire Education Department to help see if the ambition of raising attainment is being realised for all young people, by looking at particular key groups. For example, taking a closer look at performance in terms of gender, ethnicity, poverty, looked after status, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and lowest performing 20%. It is recognised that not all of these groups are mutually exclusive, but it has been shown that specific groups can be identified where there is particular scope for improvement.

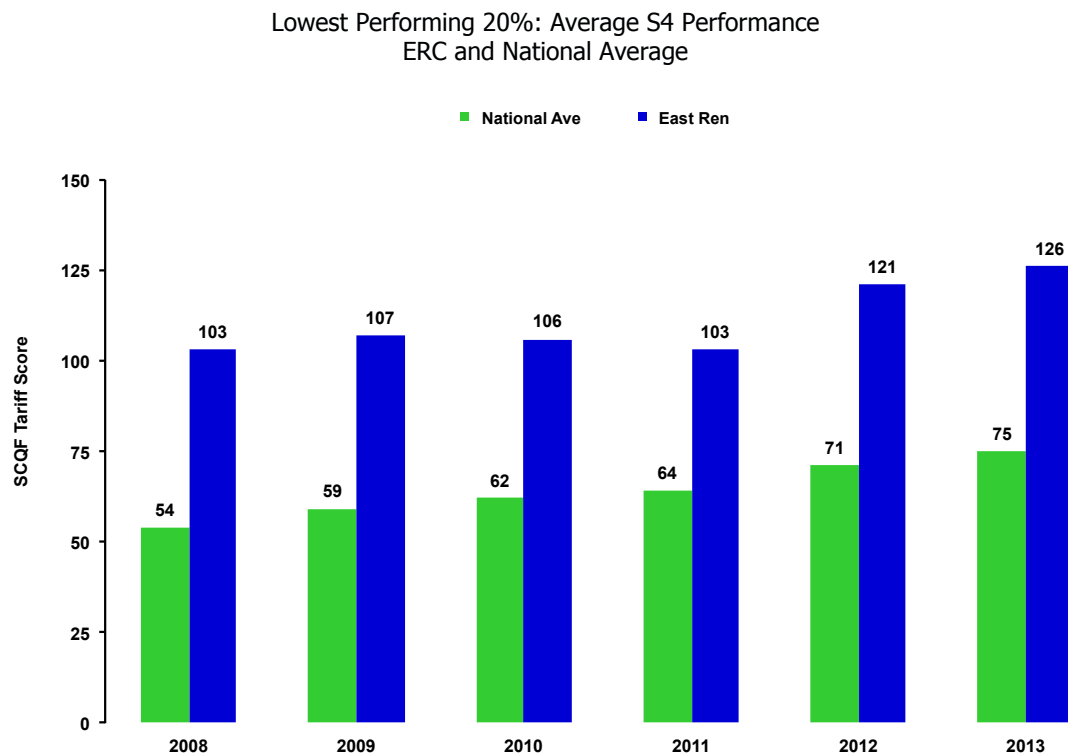
In approving the Education Local Improvement Plan and the Council's Outcome Delivery Plan, elected members have challenged the department and schools to support and monitor the progress of specific groups. Benchmarking is used to evidence and report on any improvement. The following 2 charts provide an example - the performance of the lowest performing 20% of pupils in S4, which is also a national focus.

The chart below shows that 7% of S4 pupils in East Renfrewshire in 2013 were in the lowest performing 20% as defined nationally. This is down from 9% in 2010, and 10% below the average of East Renfrewshire's comparator authorities.



Each award that a young person achieves is assigned a certain number of tariff points depending on the course and level attained. The more advanced the course and level of attainment, the greater the number of points.

As shown in the following chart, over the last 6 years the performance of the lowest performing 20% has improved from an average score of 103 tariff points to 126 - an increase of 22%. Nationally this group has increased from 54 to 75 in 2013.

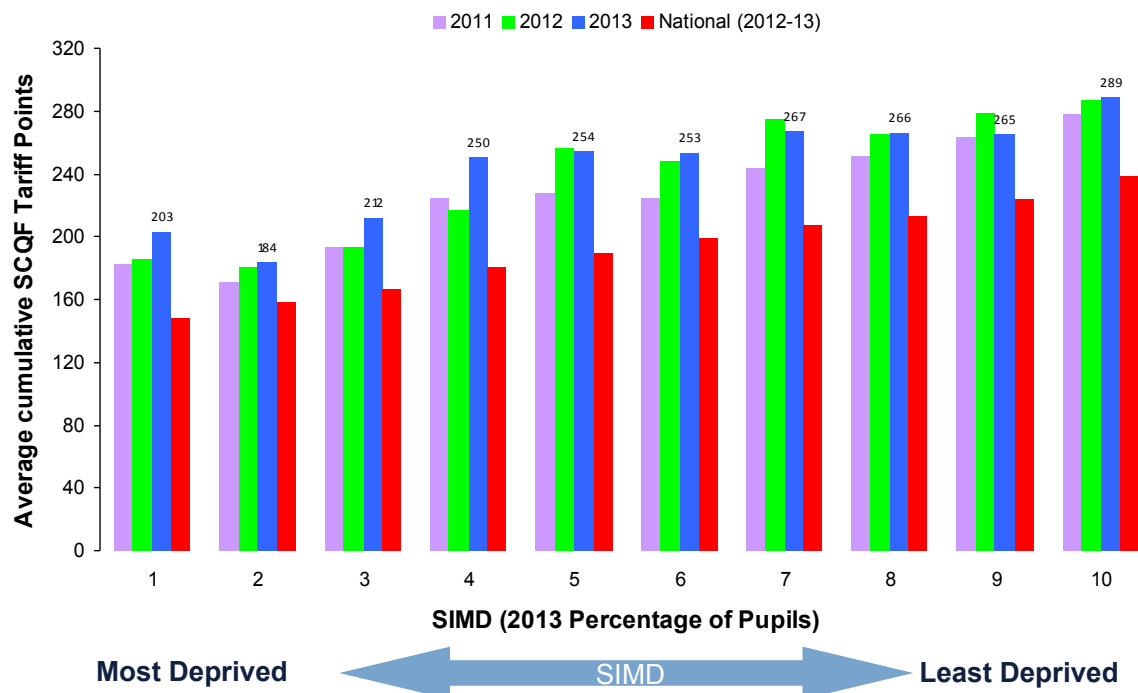


Elected members maintain a particular interest in improving this area; and all schools have been set targets to improve the attainment of the lowest performing pupils.

The LGBF includes two indicators that focus on the performance of young people from the 20% most deprived areas. There are issues with the way in which these indicators are calculated, in particular the data is based on the educational attainment of children living within East Renfrewshire and does not include children attending ERC schools from outwith the authority (and similarly for other Local Authorities). As a result of the methodology used, the data is difficult to validate and replicate at a school and authority level. This has limited the effectiveness of these indicators, particularly at a school level.

However, East Renfrewshire has carried out its own analysis of the performance by SIMD for a number of years. The following chart shows S4 attainment based on cumulative tariff points from 2011 to 2013 by decile. East Renfrewshire pupils in each decile outperform the equivalent national group. The introduction of the Senior Phase Benchmarking Tool (Insight) provides an opportunity for the Improvement Service to refresh the SIMD indicators and align them with the national dashboard measures already selected by the Scottish Government. This would eliminate the data and timing issues currently experienced and support improvement at an authority and school level.

S4 SQA 2011-2013: Cumulative SCQF Tariff Points: SIMD

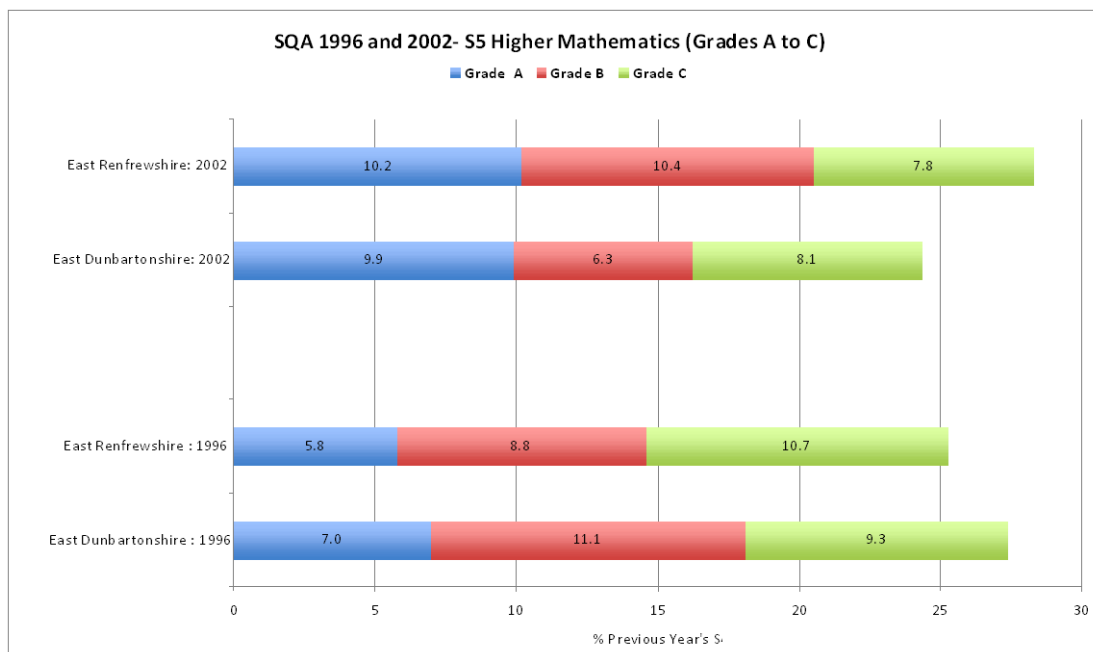


d. *Benchmarking – Taking a Closer Look at Performance of Specific Subjects: Mathematics*

As noted earlier, East Dunbartonshire is the education authority defined as the most similar in terms of social background by HMIE to East Renfrewshire. Despite the 2 authorities performing similarly overall in terms of attainment at Higher, a focused comparison of performance in subject areas highlighted that the schools in East Dunbartonshire performed much better than those in East Renfrewshire in mathematics.

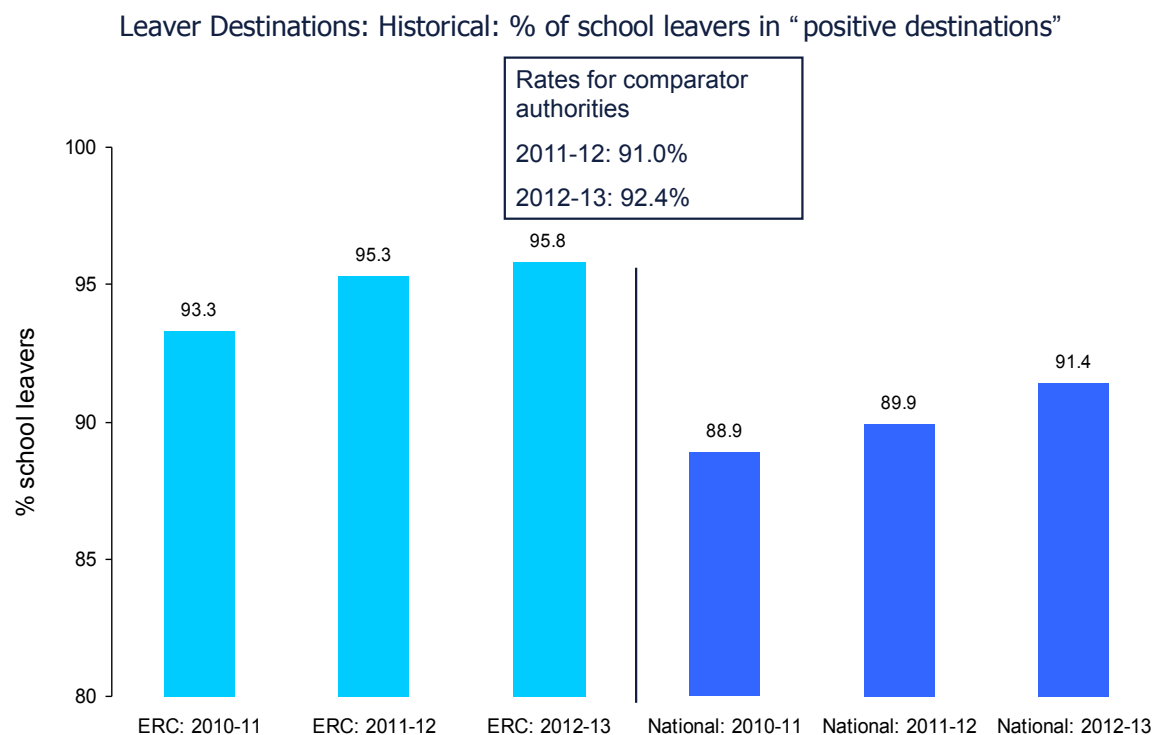
In 1996, 18.1% of the relevant S4 cohort in East Dunbartonshire attained an A or B in Higher mathematics, with the equivalent rate of 14.6% in East Renfrewshire. Officers were asked to look into the reasons behind this and take action to improve. East Renfrewshire staff visited East Dunbartonshire, detailed audits were made of each mathematics department in East Renfrewshire by a team of quality development staff supported by input from mathematics specialist from a local education college, and resources were replaced and approaches to learning and teaching amended accordingly.

Following this targeted approach, the attainment improved in East Renfrewshire. In 2002, A and B awards increased to 20.6% against 16.2% in East Dunbartonshire and up from 14.6% in 1996. The chart on the next page shows the improvement by grade. Performance has continued to improve, with 37% of the relevant S4 cohort attaining a grade A to B in Higher mathematics in 2014. In East Renfrewshire in 2014, 42% achieved a pass at Higher mathematics compared to 28% in 2002 and 25% in 1996.



**e. Sharing of Best Practice - School Leaver Destinations (SLDR)**

The annual SLDR exercise is a key indicator in East Renfrewshire's Single Outcome Agreement and included in the LGBF and is reported regularly to Education Committee. The Education Department uses the data with Head Teachers to support the sharing of best practice. In 2012-13 ERC had its highest performance to date with 95.8% of leavers in positive destinations, above the national average and the rate for comparator authorities. The chart below shows the trend over the last 3 years; Appendix A supplements this information.

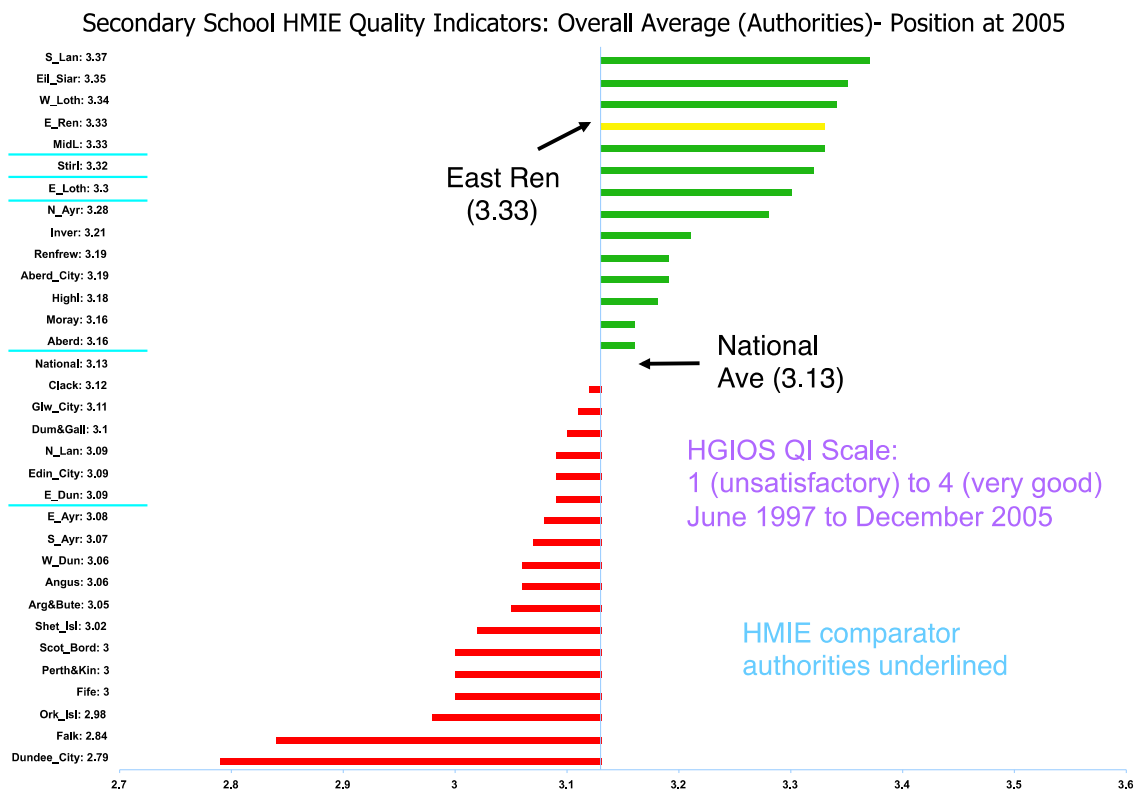


East Renfrewshire Education Department has been part of the LGBF positive destinations family pilot. East Renfrewshire is included in Family Group 1 for this indicator. The meetings have been helpful in exploring the reasons behind the variation in performance for this indicator and for enabling the sharing of good practice across local authorities. It is noted that the comparator authorities defined by Education Scotland are different to those defined by the Improvement Service. It would be helpful to agree a consistent approach nationally to defining similar groups of local authorities. In addition there was duplication in the data and analysis produced by the Improvement Service as part of the pilot and the analysis already available from SDS and produced internally by the Education Department. In the future, consideration should be given to developing a more joined up approach to the data and analysis provided, particularly given the inclusion of this as an indicator on Insight (the national Senior Phase Benchmarking Tool).

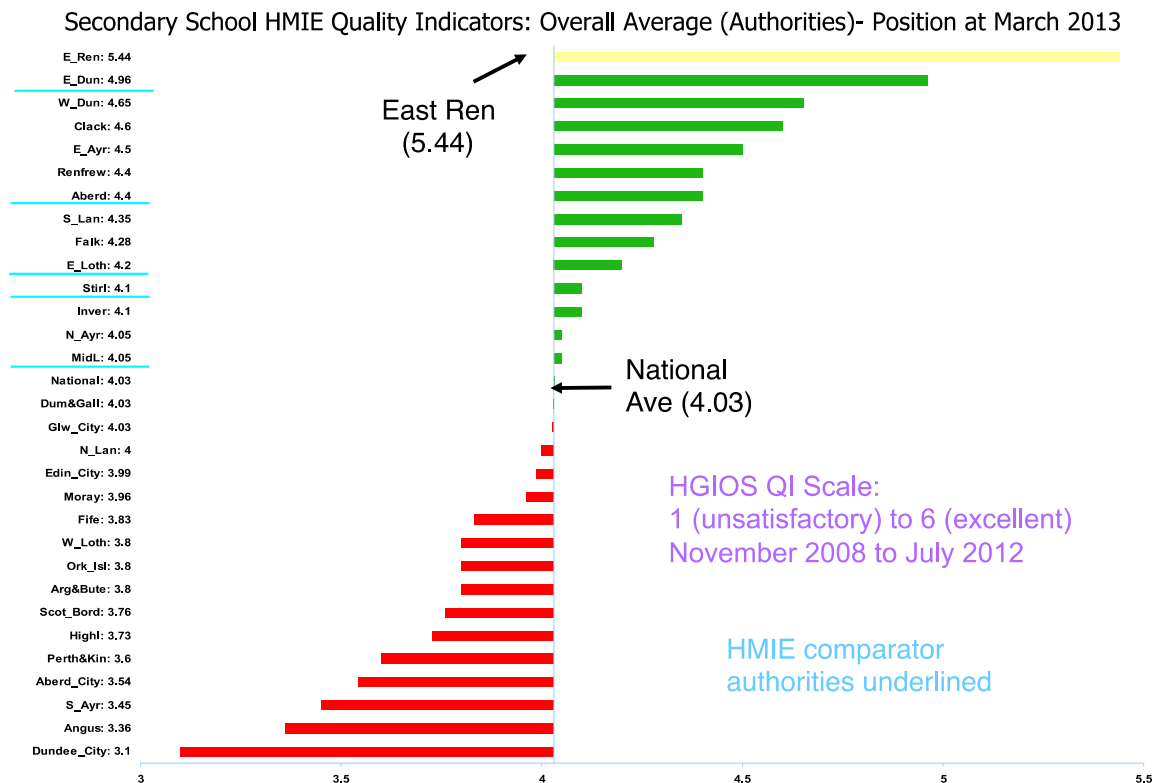
#### f. Benchmarking Other Areas of Performance

Elected members are keen that East Renfrewshire is the best performing authority in all areas of education. Education Scotland (HMIE) inspects schools across the country against a set of Quality Indicators from the *How Good is Our School (HGIOS)?* self-evaluation framework. The indicators evaluate performance across key areas of performance including curriculum, improvements in performance, learners' experiences, and meeting learners' needs. These external evaluations of schools' performance provide good evidence for schools and authorities to benchmark their own evaluations in the drive for continuous improvement.

Benchmarking of the evidence from secondary school inspections showed that in 2005 East Renfrewshire schools were the fourth highest performing as shown in the charts below. Their overall average evaluation across all indicators from inspections came out at 3.33 with the national average at 3.13. This was based on a scale of 1 (unsatisfactory) to 4 (very good). An evaluation of 3.33 is just above good (3).



Using a benchmarking approach and drilling behind the information enabled head teachers and officers to identify the areas for improvement as well as best practice and thus take requisite action. The following chart demonstrates the impact of this work with secondary schools being evaluated as the best in Scotland. The HGIOS scale now extends from 1 (unsatisfactory) to 6 (excellent). Drawing on the evidence from national inspections under the 1 to 6 scale to 2013 (this includes latest secondary school inspection in ERC), shows that East Renfrewshire's overall average evaluation of secondary schools was 5.44, with East Dunbartonshire at 4.96 and the national average at 4.03. A rating of 4 is equivalent to good and 5 very good.

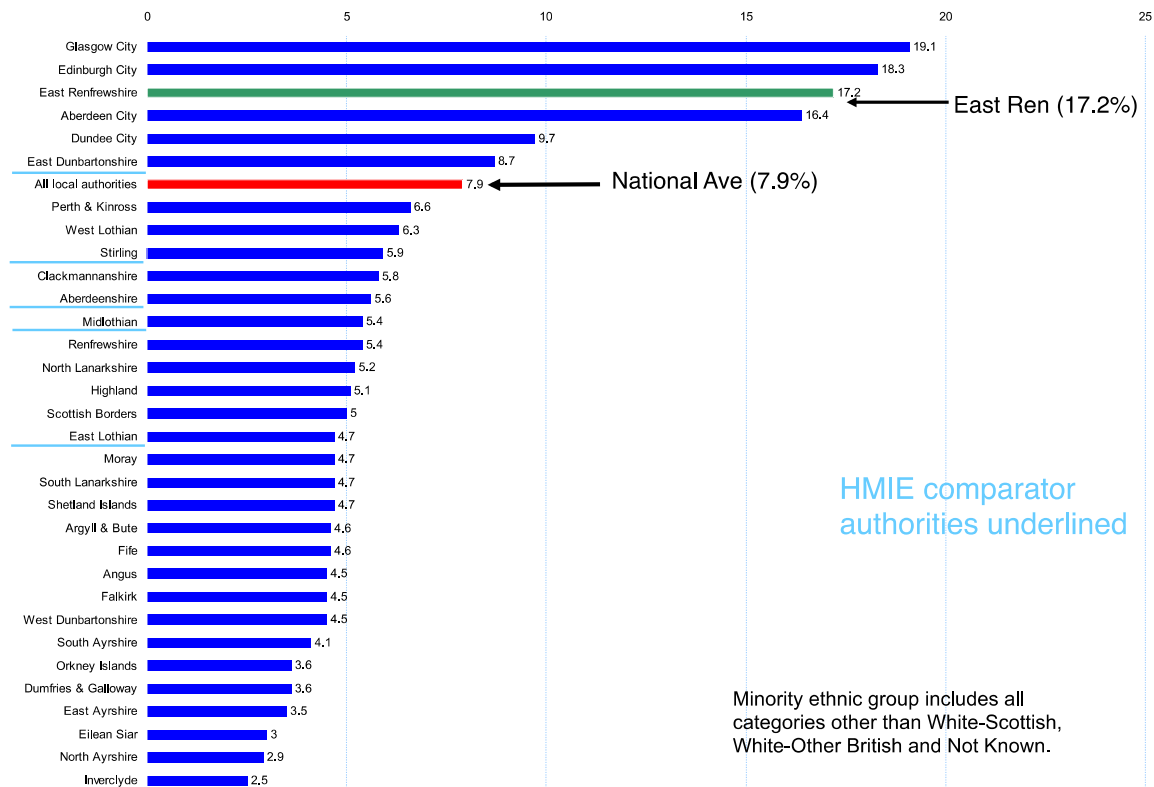


#### g. Benchmarking Other Areas- Understanding Wider Context

Elected members have also been interested in the context within which schools work, since social background and other factors are linked to performance. Appreciating the wider context within which pupils learn, can influence elected members in understanding the need for certain support to overcome barriers to learning.

The following chart provides an example of this type of information presented to elected members. It shows that East Renfrewshire has the third highest percentage of secondary pupils from an ethnic minority background.

### Secondary Pupils from Ethnic Minorities (% of 2013 Roll)



## 6. Conclusion

In East Renfrewshire's Education Department, benchmarking including the LGBF is used as a results-driven process to increase effectiveness and improve outcomes for learners. Elected members embrace this, and value the approach in seeking to maintain the Council's schools as the best they can be.

The proposed amendments to the attainment indicators included in LGBF provide an opportunity to address a number of issues with the current framework. These include:

- Timing – Data needs to be made available as soon as possible to support improvement.
- Accuracy and reliability – Currently authorities are required by the Improvement Service to check the attainment data to confirm its accuracy. This is not possible for two of the indicators. The process by which attainment data is gathered and included in the LGBF needs to be reviewed.
- Alignment of Attainment Indicators – The introduction of the four national dashboard measures on Insight should be aligned with the LGBF to ensure consistency in methodology and accuracy of data. This would also allow the department to set targets for these indicators at a school level.
- Definition of family groups – There should be a consistent approach nationally to how these are defined.

**Appendix A**

**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**10 April 2014**

**Report by Chief Executive**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK: 2012-13 PERFORMANCE**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) and present an overview of the Council's performance against the indicators from 2010/11 to 2012/13 (Performance report attached at Annex 1).

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. It is recommended that Cabinet:
- (a) Consider the Council's performance against the LGBF indicators and the action being taken by departments to address any performance issues; and
  - (b) Note that the national benchmarking indicator set will be recorded and publically reported by all Scottish councils as a statutory requirement from this year.

**BACKGROUND**

3. Since 2010, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), and COSLA, have been working with the Improvement Service (IS) to develop a set of benchmarking indicators on behalf of Scottish councils. The key criteria of the indicators were that they were comparable across all 32 councils.

4. The resulting national dataset comprises a total of 55 indicators (Note that two relate to museums and therefore, only 53 are relevant to the Council) under service groupings:

- (a) Children's Services
- (b) Corporate Services
- (c) Adult Social Care
- (d) Culture and Leisure Services
- (e) Environmental Services
- (f) Housing Services
- (g) Economic Development

5. In December 2012, Audit Scotland issued a revised Direction on the performance indicators councils must record and report as a statutory requirement. The LGBF indicator set replaced what were known as Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) from April 2013 onwards. The final SPI comparative report was considered by Cabinet in December 2013. It should be noted however that some of the former SPIs were still deemed to provide appropriate levels of comparison and have been included within the new LGBF.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The selection of SPI indicators which make up part of the new national benchmarking framework have been marked with an asterisk in Annex 1.



## **LGBF**

6. The LGBF provides a framework of indicators around cost, productivity, and outcomes. The indicators have been primarily developed using the best available cost information for councils from existing sources such as the Local Financial Returns (LFRs). A range of satisfaction measures have also been included from the Scottish Household Survey (SHS).

7. A report on East Renfrewshire's performance against the LGBF indicators for 2010/11 and 2011/12 was considered by Cabinet in March 2013. Since then, the national LGBF indicator set has been subject to review. The final set for 2012/13 data reporting was agreed in December 2013. New indicators in the framework are clearly identified in Annex 1.

8. The IS has coordinated the collection and analysis of the indicator data for all 32 councils. This year's national report on the indicators was launched on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2014 and is available on the IS website ([www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/](http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/)). Some information contained in this report has been included at Annex 1 to provide a national context for the local data. This national report includes a detailed explanation of data variances across Scotland and trends over time.

9. It has proven to be a complex and challenging task to gather and validate the data. The data was finalised by the IS on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2014 but a number of data issues remain (see paragraphs 17-19).

10. The reporting of these indicators will always be historical, looking back on the previous year's performance. This is largely because a number of the indicators are cost indicators which rely on LFR data which is not finalised until around October each year. Note, much of this data has been publically reported at the East Renfrewshire level already (e.g. school attainment data) as part of the council's performance management arrangements, but not all with the comparative detail.

11. The IS has been coordinating wider benchmarking activity across all Scottish councils and has also determined family groups for more relevant comparisons, analysis and sharing of best practice. A pilot to test this approach has been ongoing around the data on positive destinations for school leavers and roads. The council is participating in these pilot projects. A report on this activity is expected in summer. It is anticipated that if successful this approach will be extended to other indicators.

## **OVERVIEW OF COUNCIL PERFORMANCE**

12. The IS has provided detailed comparative analyses for each indicator at the council level. East Renfrewshire's performance against the indicators is provided at Annex 1. The indicators are grouped and analysed within the service headings at paragraph 4. These have been broken down further into subgroups/services where appropriate. For each of these services, contextual information has been provided setting out responses to the following questions:

- (a) What is the national overview?
- (b) What is our strategic policy intention?
- (c) What is the data telling us about our performance?
- (d) What work is being undertaken in this area?

13. Councils have been ranked from 1 to 32 for each indicator and allocated to appropriate quartiles (1 being the top quartile, 4 being the bottom). This data does not support crude "league table" analysis and it is inappropriate to consider individual indicators in isolation. The format of comparative reports has meant that historically the rankings have been

inappropriately used as council 'league tables' failing to account for legitimate variations in performance.

14. In the first instance the data can be regarded as a useful "can opener" in flagging up issues worthy of further investigation. For example, high costs for one indicator may reflect investment to affect a policy change rather than inefficient spend and a trade off between cost and performance can be expected. Considering related indicators together under service headings provides a more rounded and accurate indication of performance in relation to other councils, and the balance between investment, efficiency and outcomes.

15. When considering the data, it is also important to be aware of intended/expected levels of performance, rather than focussing on the collective number of indicators in the top quartile. For example, investment in our schools means we are meeting our objective to achieve the highest educational attainment in Scotland. We would not however expect to be in the top quartile (the lowest costs in Scotland) for our education costs and our position in the second quartile is appropriate and more efficient than average.

16. Comprehensive performance information for each of the service areas are listed in Annex 1. However by way of example a few areas are highlighted below.

- (a) Children's Services: Performance is particularly strong in relation to our education services, ranking top in Scotland for the educational attainment of children at level 5 (Standard Grade A – C equivalent) and 6 (Higher A – C level). This is despite relatively low school costs. We are also positioned in the top quartile with 95.8 percent of pupils, our highest ever, entering positive destinations in 2012/13.
- (b) We are in the upper quartile for our balance of care for looked after children and have improved the percentage of children looked after in the community from 92 to 95 between 2011/12 and 2012/13. Our unit cost for community placements, at £108 per week remains in the best performing quartile. While our weekly unit cost for residential placements has increased, and our ranking and quartile performance slipped, this is as a result of high intensity support being required for a small number of individuals.
- (c) Culture and leisure: The data shows positive performance with falling costs and high levels of satisfaction with libraries and parks and open spaces, but also room for improvement around our sports facilities with our costs remaining in the bottom quartile and comparatively high in relation to other councils.
- (d) Environmental services: Despite a slight reduction since 2011/12 we remain in the top quartile for our recycling rates and our costs have reduced. The data shows relatively high levels of spend on our road network and an overall improving picture of performance in terms of the proportion of our roads in need of maintenance treatment. Our performance in relation to the condition of our streets also shows some improvement and we have the lowest costs in Scotland.
- (e) Housing services: The data shows that more of our homes were energy efficient and met Scottish Housing Quality Standards over the last three years. Our performance around rent lost in year due to voids and repairs completed within target time has improved although there remains work to be done in this area.
- (f) Economic development: We perform above average and are 9th in Scotland for the percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from council employability programmes.

## **DATA ISSUES**

17. The wide range of approaches to service delivery across Scotland's 32 councils has meant the collection and comparison of data has been challenging and further investigation is still required. Data issues include:

- (a) Varying data collection methods meaning indicators may not always be fully comparable e.g. LFR data;
- (b) SHS data used for local satisfaction measures in the framework are less robust for smaller authorities like East Renfrewshire due to small sample sizes;
- (c) Trend issues (comparing data from 2010/11 to 2012/13 ) e.g. "changes" can be due to natural annual fluctuations, better information gathering, organisational restructures etc;
- (d) Varying methodological techniques to analyse data (e.g. rounding to different decimal places which can affect ranking and quartile positions).

18. Within the Council, Citizens' Panel data is used as the key measurement of customer satisfaction with services. The data is more appropriate than SHS in that it reflects the local demographic profile and response numbers are higher. Citizens' Panel data has been included where relevant in the report. This is significant, where, for example, the SHS survey records low levels of satisfaction with refuse collection (77 percent; quartile 4) for this national benchmarking indicator while our Citizens' Panel records satisfaction of 88 percent.

19. The LGBF indicators are only one means of recording and measuring the Council's performance, and there are a number of these measures that are not particularly useful as indicators of progress on our performance – especially when considered in isolation. Nevertheless, they are nationally reported and we will use these indicators as appropriate to evaluate and continually improve our service delivery for our customers.

## **PERFORMANCE REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS**

20. Within the Council, performance against the indicators will be monitored as part of our well established performance management arrangements (which includes six monthly reports to Cabinet and Committees) and published on our website.

21. All Scottish councils have a statutory duty to report performance information publically. All councils are required to report on LGBF from 2013-14 as well as ensuring that our public performance reporting covers a wider range of corporate management and service performance information.

## **FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY**

22. There is a small annual charge paid by all councils of £2,016 to participate in the framework which is covered within existing budgets.

## **CONSULTATION**

23. The LGBF has been reviewed in consultation with councils over the last year as well as working with the IS during the validation of the data for 2012-13.

## **PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

24. All 32 councils are participating in the development of the LGBF and working together to identify best practice through participation in the Family Group process (see above).

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS**

25. As this report is primarily a progress and performance update, there are no particular implications in terms of staffing, property, legal, IT, equalities and sustainability. Each of these issues has been mainstreamed through service plans and equality impact assessments carried out where appropriate.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

26. Departments are working hard to continually improve services. Where an indicator in the attached report shows areas for improvement, this is being progressed to ensure positive impacts on future performance for our residents and customers.

27. The LGBF indicator set is only one means of recording and measuring the Council's performance. To achieve a balanced picture, the outcomes we are delivering through the Single Outcome Agreement; Outcome Delivery Plan; Service Standards and through various audits, inspections and self-assessments should be noted. There is a wide range of performance information scrutinised and reported by the Council which are not statutory and provide detailed information on performance.

28. Benchmarking is not about who is best/worst overall. Comparing spending and performance information allows councils to investigate their performance further and identify best practice. The use of the LGBF and other benchmarking data to support service improvement is already ongoing within the Council and we are committed to developing this.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

29. It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (a) Consider the Council's performance against the LGBF indicators and the action being taken by departments to address any performance issues; and
- (b) Note that the national benchmarking indicator set will be recorded and publically reported by all Scottish councils as a statutory requirement from this year.

## **REPORT AUTHOR**

Leanne Dunlop, Corporate Policy Officer, 0141 577 3660, [Leanne.dunlop@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:Leanne.dunlop@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive

Cabinet contact: Councillor Jim Fletcher, Leader of the Council,  
Tel: 0141 639 0265 (Home), 0141 577 3107 (Office)

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Comparative Results for Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) 2012/13, Cabinet, December 2013  
National Benchmarking Project, Cabinet, 28 March 2013  
SOLACE Benchmarking Project, Cabinet 27 September 2012

## **KEY WORDS**

SOLACE, benchmarking, Improvement Service, performance, indicators, SPIs

## Children's Services

Annex 1

### Attainment

#### Indicators:

Indicator type	Full name	2010/11 value	2011/12 value	2012/13 value	2010/11 quartile	2011/12 quartile	2012-13 quartile	2010/11 rank	2011/12 rank	2012/13 rank
Outcome	% of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 5 (Standard Grade A – C equivalent) (pre-appeal)	61	67	71	1	1	1	1	1	1
	% of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 6 (Higher A – C level) (pre-appeal)	49	53	46	1	1	1	1	1	1
	% pupils in 20% most deprived areas getting 5+ awards at level 5	25.2%	33.1%	32.1%	1	1	1	1	2	2
	% pupils in 20% most deprived areas getting 5+ awards at level 6	19.4%	16.1%	13.3%	1	1	1	2	2	3
	Proportion of Pupils Entering Positive Destinations	93.3%	95.3%	95.8%	1	1	1	1	2	2
Efficiency	Cost per Primary School Pupil	£4,424	£4,586	£4,647	1	2	2	4	11	14
	Cost per Secondary School Pupil	£6,148	£6,298	£6,435	2	2	2	9	14	14
	Cost per Pre-School place	£3,931	£3,968	£4,249	3	4	4	22	27	28
Customer	Percentage of adults Satisfied with Local Schools	87.9%	n/a	87%	2	n/a	2	9	n/a	11
	<i>Citizens' Panel - Nursery education % of service users rating service as very good/good<sup>2</sup></i>	96%	96%	100%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	<i>Citizens' Panel - Primary education - % of service users rating service as very good/good</i>	96%	100%	100%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	<i>Citizens' Panel - Secondary education % of service users rating service as very good/good</i>	94%	97%	96%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	<i>Citizens' Panel – Additional support needs education % of service users rating service as very good/good</i>	88%	n/a	76%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

<sup>2</sup> Where supplementary indicators to the national benchmarking set (e.g. Citizens' Panel data) have been included these are highlighted in italics.

What is the national overview? Across Scotland there has been a continued improvement in relation to all measures of attainment, including the demanding criterion of % achieving 5+ awards at SQA level 6 and the percentage of pupils entering positive destinations. Progress is also being made in relation to closing the attainment gap in relation to Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). The Scottish average for positive destinations in 2012/13 was 91%, with a range from 88.3% to 96.1%. In terms of costs for preschool places, there was substantial variation between councils, ranging from £1966 to £5062 per place - a variation which seems more likely to reflect specific local choices about the nature and quality of the service provided.

What is our strategic policy intention? East Renfrewshire Education Department's vision is Inclusion, Achievement, Ambition and Progress for All. Underpinning our vision is our commitment to raising attainment for all learners exemplified by our ambition to be the highest attaining mainland council area as measured by national examinations. Maximising attainment for all learners is fundamental to their future success in securing a positive destination post school. In striving for this vision the Education Department seeks to ensure that all available financial resources are well directed and efficiently used to meeting needs and to improving learning experiences.

What is the data telling us about our performance? The data shows that we have maintained our position as the top performing education authority as measured by national examinations. Pupils in East Renfrewshire from deprived backgrounds (20% most deprived data zones) also perform within the top quartile. When considered together, all the attainment indicators rank in the top quartile. In 2012/13 the percentage of S4 pupils gaining 5+ awards at Level 5 was the highest ever result. S6 attainment in 2012/13 was down from the highest ever result in 2011/12. However East Renfrewshire was still ranked first in terms of the proportion of pupils achieving 5+ awards at level 6. There are a number of issues with the attainment data. The deprivation indicators are only based on the educational attainment of children living within East Renfrewshire. The Education Department also reports publicly on the performance of its *schools* (which will include children living out with the area but attending local schools). In addition, the percentage of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 5 and 5+ awards at level 6 above does not match exactly and is lower than the published Scottish Government/Education Scotland data due to the way this is calculated by the IS for the purposes of the framework. In terms of the proportion of leavers entering positive destinations, East Renfrewshire had its highest performance to date in 2012/13 (ranking joint second). The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) data – on which the national benchmarking satisfaction indicators are based – shows that satisfaction rates are high and our Citizens' Panel survey records even higher satisfaction among our residents.

Reflecting the relative budget protection afforded to schools during this period, the costs per primary and secondary school pupil marginally increased, to take account of annual general uplifts such as salary increments and inflationary adjustments. Our continued placing within the second quartile demonstrates the efficient use of resources to achieve our outcomes. There is a high cost per pre-school place given the investment in this important area to give children a good start in life. All children in pre5 establishments have access to teachers and Child Development Officers to help provide quality learning experiences, which coupled with the local policy of offering 570 hours of annual provision, against the current national entitlement of 475 hours, has resulted in a higher cost per place. From August 2014 all councils will be required to offer 600 hours. Overall we are performing particularly strongly in our educational services when compared to other Scottish councils.

What work is being undertaken in this area? Education will continue to challenge and support schools to further improve performance for all children and young people. Key activities include supporting schools to implement the Recognising Achievement Raising Attainment action plan; Curriculum for Excellence action plan; the Opportunities for All Plus strategy and a focus on raising the attainment of the lowest performing children and young people. The department and schools will continue to make rigorous use of attainment and benchmarking data at all levels to inform improvement. There continues to be an ongoing commitment to quality assurance and moderation as staff deliver Curriculum for Excellence and the new national qualifications.

**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

**Response to Local Government and Regeneration Committee**

**Benchmarking and Continuous Improvement**

**The Importance to Elected Members**

East Renfrewshire is delighted to be asked to share some of the Council's experience and views on this important area with the Local Government and Regeneration Committee.

The drive to raise attainment has always been a key focus of East Renfrewshire Council and underpins the Education Department's vision of *Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences*.

The Council's Education Committee has supported this agenda since its inception in 1996 including regular discussion of comparative performance information on how the Council's schools are doing relative to those in other education authorities across Scotland. Benchmarking and continuous improvement are as important to elected members, as they are to the Council's education leaders and staff in schools as they all work together to realise each learner's potential.

Detailed presentations are made to committee to show how as an education authority and as individual schools the Council performs, benchmarked against family groups of similar authorities and schools. Not only are similar comparators used to show performance against 'similar others' or family groups, but performance is also benchmarked across all available data, for example all education authorities. This is illustrated further in the paper from the Director of Education.

Full and open reporting of performance results, in the context of benchmarking with other authorities, enables elected members to better understand East Renfrewshire's schools and areas where excellent practice exists, to celebrate that, and request that this is shared to improve outcomes for all children and young people in our council area. It also enables elected members to more easily scrutinise performance, by highlighting areas where there is scope for improvement. Committee members can and do request that something is done to improve these relative weaknesses and in due course the reporting of subsequent results should provide evidence that performance has indeed improved, and if not members question why not.

Although the main focus of interest has always been attainment - at all levels and stages of education - performance results in other areas are also made and shared to inform and stimulate improvement, e.g. presentations and reports to committee on school leaver destinations, exclusion and attendance rates, HMIE quality indicators, etc.

The Education Department's annual Standards and Quality Report is the account of self-evaluation of the department and schools, and has always included comparator performance information. It is a strongly evidence-based exercise and the resulting document links to the department's Local Improvement Plan, supports the Council's strategic priorities and reflects the areas for improvement identified through this annual process. This plan has a clear focus on improving outcomes for all learners, and the impact expected on the experiences of children and young people in schools and centres. A framework for improvement in East Renfrewshire is therefore set within a benchmarking context.

As a Council we would argue that benchmarking of performance and information is even more important for elected members and officers in the current financial climate. Against a backdrop of budgetary pressures, growing public expectations and increasing demand for services, local authorities face difficult challenges of delivering efficiency gains, managing risk and raising performance. Elected members need to know how best to allocate resources, as do officers in the drive for continuous improvement. Benchmarking performance helps provide to elected members useful insights that can inform and support sound strategic and operational decision-making.

It is hoped that this statement is helpful in understanding the importance and use elected members in East Renfrewshire place in benchmarking and continuous improvement.





The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Official Report

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday 20 March 2013

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**Wednesday 20 March 2013**

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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE**  
**9<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2013, Session 4**

**CONVENER**

\*Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)

**DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*John Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Stuart McMillan (West Scotland) (SNP)

\*Anne McTaggart (Glasgow) (Lab)

\*Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con)

\*John Pentland (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)

\*Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)

\*attended

**THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:**

Hugh Carr (Scotland Excel)

Dorothy Cowie (Scotland Excel)

Ian Crichton (NHS National Services Scotland)

Ronnie Hinds (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers)

Colin Mair (Improvement Service)

Mark McAteer (Improvement Service)

Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (SNP) (Committee Substitute)

**CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

David Cullum

**LOCATION**

Committee Room 5



## Scottish Parliament

### Local Government and Regeneration Committee

*Wednesday 20 March 2013*

[The Convener *opened the meeting at 10:01*]

#### **Public Services Reform and Local Government: Strand 3 (Developing New Ways of Delivering Services)**

**The Convener (Kevin Stewart):** Good morning, and welcome to the ninth meeting in 2013 of the Local Government and Regeneration Committee. As usual, I ask everyone to ensure that they have switched off their mobile phones and other electronic equipment.

Agenda item 1 is the first of this morning's evidence-taking sessions for our inquiry on public services reform and local government. It is on strand 3 of the inquiry, which is about developing new ways of delivering services. We will concentrate on local government benchmarking. As part of this strand of our inquiry, the committee agreed to revisit this important local government project once the benchmarking data had been published, which happened last week. I welcome to the committee Ronnie Hinds, who is a past chair of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers. I also welcome, from the Improvement Service, Colin Mair, who is chief executive, and Mark McAteer, who is director of governance and performance management.

Do you wish to make opening remarks?

**Ronnie Hinds (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers):** Yes, convener. We have agreed a slight division of labour with regard to our opening remarks. As we have been advised that the committee's interest lies in how we will take forward the benchmarking project, any remarks that we make will be built around that.

I want to make two or three points. First of all, the project was, as you will be aware, launched a couple of weeks ago at the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities conference. Some of you might have looked at the data on the Improvement Service website. We have always said that although this marks a significant stage in the process, it is really only the first stage in our benchmarking journey. For me, there are a number of key things that we want to take forward from now on, the first of which is to embed the

practice. To that end, we will be working with the Improvement Service on establishing systems, by which I mean having families of councils that will collaborate and drive improvement through use of the data.

Secondly—if you have looked at the data, you will see where I am coming from—there are still some gaps. We have always said that our 55 or so indicators do not, even at the high level, cover everything for which councils are responsible. There are certain conspicuous areas—for example, economic development—in which there is relative silence. The second strand of development, therefore, is to flesh out the indicators and ensure that we cover all council responsibilities.

Finally, we see the project as quite a significant stepping stone towards embedding deeper in the public sector benchmarking and comparative use of data on good practice. We still have a long way to go in using the work in local government, but our aspiration is to take it beyond that level—to combine it with similar exercises that we know happen in, for example, the health service and to take it into community planning, broadly speaking.

Those, for me, are the key ways in which the work can be taken forward.

**The Convener:** Do Colin Mair and Mark McAteer have anything to add?

**Mark McAteer (Improvement Service):** I have a couple of remarks to make, convener.

First, I say to those of you who have had a chance to look at the website, that it will, as part of the project, be subject to on-going improvement and will feature other materials, such as the case studies that will emerge from the work that Ronnie Hinds mentioned.

Ronnie Hinds also alluded to the process whereby councils will work together. We, COSLA and SOLACE are clear that councils will go through a standard investigation, which we will support, into why variation occurs. [We will then capture the learning that comes out of that process for sharing across all 32 councils. Again as Ronnie said, the indicators will be reviewed to ensure that they are fit for purpose, that they plug any gaps and that the data sources that we need for the project are robust and secure.

Another area of discussion that the committee might wish to pick up on is the on-going involvement in the process of elected members. You will have seen COSLA's briefing note, and we will produce similar materials and run workshops with members not only cross-council to bring people together on benchmarking, but—if it is requested—within councils, in order to give members a better sense of what the data are

telling them about their authority and how the improvement process will work.

Finally, on Ronnie Hinds's last point about how this will connect with other improvement processes, I simply note that if the project produces only interesting data that do nothing to help drive improvement, it will have failed. As a result, an on-going stream of work will focus on how all of this will feature in councils' improvement planning and how the data will feed into the process of creating service plans to ensure that the services themselves pick up and deal with these issues, look at the good practice case studies and embed them in their own authority.

**The Convener:** Can you give us an idea of the buy-in to the benchmarking project from political and officer leadership, and what do staff on the front line think about it?

**Mark McAteer:** At this stage, it is difficult to respond to that in great detail; after all, we launched the project only a week and a half ago. However, the last time we looked at the website statistics, we found that it had had more than 1,000 hits and that, within a week and a half of the launch, there had been something like 15,000 downloads. Because we can track only the overall numbers, I cannot tell you whether those hits are from council staff or members of the public, but I can say that the figures dwarf anything that the Improvement Service website would get in a month—never mind in a week and a half. There has been a high degree of initial impact, at least as far as awareness is concerned, but we would like to track use by politicians, officers and front-line staff. We will certainly take note of that important point.

**The Convener:** The project might have been launched only a week and a half ago, but given the quite long lead-in to it you must have some indication of what council leaders and senior officials think. Are they sold on it?

**Ronnie Hinds:** I can give you the perspective from my council, which I think is representative. Of course, I cannot speak with authority about the other 31 councils.

This afternoon, I will be having a meeting with my chief officer group. At its request, benchmarking is on the agenda because we want to discuss how best to embed it in the council's on-going performance management processes. Having spoken to my fellow chief executives, I think that that pretty much indicates where all this is going.

The profile of the project, which has been raised partly because of the committee's interest, has served us well and, as Mark McAteer has suggested, has made people ask how best they might use it. As for what is happening at political

level, I can speak partly for my council and perhaps more widely. My leader, the whole administration and all the political groups are very interested in benchmarking; they want to see how it can be built into the council's on-going scrutiny processes and are discussing the best way of achieving that.

More broadly, the written communication that the committee has received from the president of COSLA shows local government's political position in relation to the project. As you know, it was initiated by chief executives; however, over the past year, there has been significant pick-up at political level and I expect to see nothing but further developments in that respect.

**Colin Mair (Improvement Service):** The convener is right to highlight the project's long gestation. One merit of that was that a very large number of staff in all 32 councils were involved in preparing and standardising data and so on, so council staff probably have a certain level of awareness of the project that they might not have had if we had simply dragged it into a corner, done all the work ourselves and bounced them with it. The fact that the project has been generated participatively means that there is much more awareness of it.

To echo Ronnie Hinds's point, in discussions with a number of chief executive colleagues across councils, many have said that they intend to use benchmarking in six key areas where their relative performance is not what they want, target those for improvement in the first year of the data being available, and have discussions with the relevant staff across the council about why there is variation in performance in comparison with other councils.

There is a degree of publicity and awareness around the project and there is also a commitment from Ronnie Hinds's colleagues to use benchmarking in an intensive way to reshape their improvement activities.

**Mark McAteer:** On the point about officers and staff, we set up a knowledge hub, which is a learning platform that allows for electronic exchange between people so that we do not have to be physically together in a room to discuss things. We have more than 200 officers signed up to that knowledge hub and all 32 councils are represented on it.

A quick skim through the officers' profiles shows that we have officers from finance, corporate performance and, increasingly, service backgrounds. That relates to Ronnie Hinds's point that as services have become aware that the corporate centre of the council is looking at the material, colleagues at service level have requested to join that knowledge hub. That

request has been granted, so they have access to all the material and can start to exchange through the hub, as well.

**Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** I will start with a wee observation. I am slightly surprised that you do not know who is visiting your website. At the end of the meeting I will give you a free bit of code that you can put in your website that will help you to do that. I know who visits every page of my 2,850 page website and it does not cost me a penny. However, that is for another time.

I preface my questions by saying that I do not want to engage with the detail of the data—although you might be tempted to—because that would divert us from the main thrust of the issues that we should be interested in.

First, from the graphs generally, I can immediately conclude—correctly or incorrectly—that under some headings there are divergences in performance between councils that look as though they ought to be similar. Do you have evidence that the process of producing and publishing the data is leading councils to pick up the opportunity—I use that word quite deliberately—that exists when a council sees that it is a bit above what it might perceive to be the line. Is that happening?

**Ronnie Hinds:** It is early to give a comprehensive answer to that, so I will offer a perspective from my organisation, and perhaps the Improvement Service can say something more general.

I will give an example, as examples always help, although we want to stay out of the detail of the data. If we look at the data from a Fife perspective, we see that in relation to the number of Scottish Qualifications Authority level 5 awards—one of the key measures of attainment—we are still not where we want to be. We are somewhere around the Scottish average, which does not surprise me because Fife is broadly representative of Scotland in demographic and other terms. However, in educational terms we are somewhere—not hugely, but significantly—below the average. Already, as you can imagine, that has led to dialogue in my organisation.

One thing that we have done with the data is use the sheer force of comparison, even before we get to the point where we can sit down with other councils that are comparable to us in social and economic terms and ask what they are doing differently. The comparison is enough to provoke people in what I regard as a constructive way. My director of education is looking hard at why we are below the average, even allowing for the social characteristics of Fife.

I will spare you the detail, but one thing that we did was to sit down with the 19 secondary headteachers and ask why we are not—although we have said for five or six years that we are improving—breaking through the average, never mind anything higher. We have undertaken a specific targeted initiative with those headteachers with a cohort of pupils in mind whom we know could just about manage to get level 5 plus, all things being equal. They may not get there because they, or their equivalents, did not last year. We have pushed that.

10:15

**Stewart Stevenson:** I suspect that we have got the point: Fife has done that. Do you think that other councils are already doing that sort of thing, if it is relevant to their interests? I am happy with a subjective answer to that question.

**Ronnie Hinds:** I am sure that they are.

**Mark McAteer:** When we launched the website at the COSLA and Improvement Service conference a week and a half ago, I had a discussion with a number of chief executives. Glasgow City Council is doing some work at corporate management team level with the City of Edinburgh Council and with North Lanarkshire Council using the benchmarking indicators. They have picked up half a dozen of the indicators from across the suite on which to focus initially, to ensure that the discussion that was described can take place.

As Ronnie Hinds and I said at the beginning, we want now to have a more managed process. We would never stop councils talking to one another or sharing perspectives and learning, but we want to manage that process more—hence the development of the family groups. We want to ensure consistency in how we manage the process so that in future months and years we will be able to report more systematically on what has happened.

**Stewart Stevenson:** That is fine. I have a couple more points to make. Mr Hinds used the words “significantly below”. I want to be clear, because I am a pedant, whether you are using the word “significant” in a statistical sense. Are we able to understand what is statistically significant about variations, or is it that simply looking at the data energises people to take action in an area regardless of the statistical significance of the variation that might be displayed? That would not be a bad thing, so I did not phrase my question to suggest that it might be.

**Ronnie Hinds:** In responding on my account, I say yes. However, although not everybody will look at the data with a fine-grained statistical mind, the key point is that people see the differences in

their own terms and act on them. I was referring earlier to an example in which we are statistically below where we should be; not just in terms of the average, but in terms of councils that I consider to be comparable—allowing for the various factors that I referred to—and which are outstripping the norm and doing “better than they should be”. I want to know why that is so, because that difference is statistically significant.

**Stewart Stevenson:** That is good. I think that Mr Mair was fidgeting to come in there.

**Colin Mair:** I just fidget—I apologise. I wrote the overview report which may have remedied insomnia for people around the room, if they had read it. We looked in some depth at statistical relationships across the data—and I cannot say that those statistical relationships will energise people. For example, the pattern of the relationship between the level of deprivation and educational attainment within a council area is long-established. Indeed, over time that pattern becomes more dispiriting than energising.

One of the interesting things from the discussions with chief executive colleagues is that councils with very limited amounts of deprivation are often doing very interesting things with children from deprived backgrounds. The most logical benchmarking family member for Glasgow would not be East Renfrewshire Council, but it can be interesting to ask how, when an area has a low overall level of deprivation, the council is doing so well with children who are from very disadvantaged backgrounds.

To look at a statistical trend can be energising, but thinking beyond the statistical trend can be energising, too. It is heartening that people are probably using both methods of interpretation, so they are taking a best-in-class view that goes beyond thinking purely, “I only look at councils that are like my own council.” If other councils are doing very interesting things, you would not want to miss the learning opportunities around that, as Stewart Stevenson expressed.

**Stewart Stevenson:** Right. I think that the next item can be dealt with relatively concisely. The other comparison, which I am making superficially, is on single areas within a council where there is a significant divergence between the adjacent years. At the moment we have only two years’ data, so I need to be extremely cautious.

However, in one or two cases there are very big variations. Are we satisfied that such variations are proper in relation to normalisation of data? Might the variations be exaggerated because we have more work to do on normalisation? Are councils likely to understand that variations may be caused by changes in policy, as well as by a change in performance? Is there evidence about

why such year-on-year variations occur? I note that some of the bigger variations are in the smaller councils, and I can see why that might be the case. Are we satisfied that that comparison is leading to questions? The whole point is that councils should be asking themselves questions.

**Colin Mair:** We absolutely agree with that. Stewart Stevenson has astutely identified that the most striking year-on-year variations are in small councils. They are also in areas where it is hard to standardise and make year-on-year comparisons. For example, there are striking figures within childcare and child protection costs. One year we might have a kid who has very severe personality, physical and other difficulties, as well as learning disabilities, which may require a very significant investment if that child is to have any chance in life. The next year we might not have such a case. Ronnie Hinds and his colleagues can confirm that a very small number of cases on the childcare side could bust budgets, because the council needs to respond to the actual needs of children. The year-on-year comparison can be suspect because the pattern of need that is identified in each year leads to variations.

In terms of normalisation, we checked very closely with councils that some of the most spectacular outlier figures were not just recording errors, so we have gone through a process on that. However, there are some areas where the variation year on year was so strong that maybe presenting a unit cost is misleading rather than helpful, on our part. Childcare costs are probably the best example of that.

**The Convener:** It was remiss of me not to say that Mark McDonald is substituting for Stuart McMillan today. You are very welcome—you make six ex-councillors out of seven folk on the committee.

**Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (SNP):** Thank you, convener. To think that I thought I had escaped your clutches when we left Aberdeen City Council—but there we go. [*Laughter.*]

At the end of the day the focus is on how this translates into improved outcomes. Gathering and sharing data are all fine and dandy; however, unless we actually start to see improved outcomes for communities and individuals, all the data in the world will not make a jot of difference. Could you highlight where you see this exercise resulting in improved outcomes? There has been benchmarking in the past: it is not a new concept, although the way it is being done now may be different from the way it was done in the past. The COSLA “Connections” briefing states that:

“Benchmarking should support change and improvement based upon knowledge about best practice.”



How can we ensure that “should” becomes “does”?

**Ronnie Hinds:** I go back to my opening remarks to some extent. Let us recognise the limitations of what we have done here. The genesis of the project lies in a time before outcomes were quite as prominent on the landscape as they are now. We have targeted service improvement and cost reduction. They are not unrelated to outcomes, but there is more to do if we are going to achieve outcomes. I have always said about this project that a significant part of the benefit is the working practice that it establishes of making comparisons and collaborating with each other to find out why something apparently has been done better in another place. Once those habits are ingrained, they will be just as relevant to the work of community planning partnerships, for example, which is more directly related to outcomes.

You can see from some of the data that a number of the indicators touch directly on outcomes. If, using benchmarking, we improve educational attainment more quickly than we would have done without it, surely that is a better outcome for the children who attend our schools. I would not sell the project short in that regard. The habit and practice that we build on will deliver against the outcomes.

**Colin Mair:** Your point was well made, Mr McDonald. A robust improvement process is required within councils. Mark McAteer will correct me if I get this statistic wrong, but 25 councils—is it 25?

**Mark McAteer:** It is 21.

**Colin Mair:** Twenty-one councils use a common self-assessment and improvement planning process. We work with them and support that process, but they also have a network to support themselves. We see benchmarking as fitting into that. It is not a substitute for other forms of self-assessment; it augments and creates opportunities for identifying improvement within existing forms of self-assessment. It is important to say that it is one part of the jigsaw; it is by no means all of it and it needs to be underpinned by a robust commitment to use comparisons for the purposes of improvement.

To take the education example about which we have talked, ambition plans for children in deprived areas would be harder to use in an area that has a massive amount of deprivation than in one that has a small amount, but it is still an interesting construct. Rather than say that, because those children are deprived, they will almost certainly fail in the education system, we do the opposite: we start out with coherent planning for individual children, run that through

the system and monitor closely whether they develop as we want them to develop, and whether they have the opportunities that they need to do that.

It is a matter of picking up from the comparative statistics what underpins that, how we get very good results with deprived children in an education system and whether there are transferable elements of that that councils can share to allow all people to benefit from the insights that some councils have had.

Ronnie Hinds's final point is important. All the work that has been done on health and educational inequalities—the committee will be familiar with it—has tended to emphasise the fact that no one service in isolation could conceivably crack the problem. Health inequalities are not down to the healthcare system; they are driven by many other economic and social factors that influence people's health outcomes. That is also true of children's attainment in school.

Ronnie Hinds emphasised the point that improvement must take place within community planning and the sharing of services among agencies, not simply within councils. Some of the big impacts will come from better co-ordination across public services, as well as within public services.

**Mark McDonald:** Beyond simple collation of benchmarking, consideration of the results and asking why another service is doing well, there is a mindset issue, which is that, however much we might hope otherwise, individuals—whether council officials, council leaders or councillors—are often reluctant to admit that the approach that they have taken has not delivered the best results. They often take a territorial position that what they are doing is the best thing to do. What work is being done to try to get beyond that mindset and to bring people together to ensure that they share best practice, where it exists?

**Mark McAteer:** To pick up the point that Colin Mair made on the 21 councils that use the public service improvement framework, other councils use similar frameworks and we support both camps.

With those councils, we will work to ensure that the data and information feature in the exercises that they go through when they use the self-evaluation frameworks, which are based on the EFQM model. They will take that information and start to consider, for example, how their business process connects to what the information tells us, how leadership works in the organisation and how that relates to the results.

Those 21 councils will systematically work their way through that over a period to interrogate themselves and share practice and learning with

one another. That will actively be part of the improvement-level discussion within councils in the future.

General training and development are also important. Mark McDonald is absolutely right about the cultural aspect. Data and information are not enough in and of themselves if people do not engage, take the learning from them and translate that into change within their service, organisation or partnership.

There will be training and development opportunities for elected members on benchmarking. Through some of the other work that the IS leads on on behalf of councils, there will also be training and development opportunities for officers and officials. That will help to pick up the culture that needs to be in place to make the translation from interesting data to real change and improvement.

10:30

**The Convener:** The committee has stated before that we are interested in going to some of the training events for elected members to get a clear indication of how folks feel about benchmarking and of what is being done to educate people.

**Mark McDonald:** The community planning partnerships were raised—it will not come as a big shock that I am going to refer to the Audit Scotland report “Improving community planning in Scotland”, which is out today. The report indicates that, although CPPs have had a statutory basis for 10 years, there is still a feeling that they are not able to show that they have had a significant impact through delivering improved outcomes. How do you see the benchmarking approach being fed into the CPP system to ensure that, when partners work together, they use that data appropriately and then start to deliver—or at least demonstrate delivery?

**Colin Mair:** The Audit Scotland report is useful because it challenges head-on the degree to which community planning has added value and the degree to which it will add value in the future if we carry on as we are. It is a head-on challenge to the system.

You will be aware that the report arose out of the current review and reform process for community planning. Part of that approach has led to the development of a group to provide better local evidence of need and performance across the whole of Scotland. That is available to CPPs. As Ronnie Hinds said, publishing the first iteration of the benchmarking framework demonstrates its importance. That has not been done and then shared surreptitiously between councils; it has

been done with a commitment to place the framework in the public domain.

Part of the challenge that flows out of that publication is that people can monitor whether they have changed over time, which is why we need to get better outcome measures. The critical point is the outcomes—whether people’s lives are getting better over time. The approach is not merely about a certain process with statistics getting better over time. The same applies to CPPs.

There was significant engagement between us and a variety of bodies—such as Health Scotland and Healthcare Improvement Scotland—about not just working together to make the best information about need and performance available at local level so that people can see where they stand but making it possible to compare communities in a local area as well as to compare different areas of Scotland. That is because the variations in a community planning area are often much more striking than the variations between it and other parts of Scotland. A lot of work is going on to make such data available.

All CPPs will be challenged to have an improvement process—that partly flows out of the Audit Scotland report. All CPPs will be scrutinised externally over time, so there will be pressure to demonstrate that they understand what they are doing, that they are driving their resources behind their priorities, that they are doing systematic improvement planning and that they are developing.

We have moved from a situation where we had lost impetus to a situation where there are strenuous efforts nationally through the Scottish Government and through local government, in the form of SOLACE and COSLA, to put impetus back into community planning. That means that community planning has to improve. The strapline in the statement of ambition about community planning from ministers and from COSLA was that it must make demonstrable improvements to people’s lives. Measuring demonstrable improvement over time will become the key way of driving that process.

**Mark McDonald:** You mentioned—rightly—that the outcomes are the key point and that the process is not just about having a range of statistics. I am a committee substitute, so forgive me if my next point has been rehearsed before. Of the 55 measures that are being benchmarked, how many would be classed as inputs and how many would be classed as outcomes?

**Colin Mair:** About 80 per cent are input-output measures; only about 20 per cent involve any sort of measure of outcome. We noted at the end of the 2013 Scottish local government benchmarking

overview report that in a range of respects there is work to be done to improve on that. To take a simple example, it is not until secondary 4 that we have any ability to link inputs to outcomes for children on a standard basis.

A section at the end of the overview report refers to the key things in the development programme for next year. If the outcomes are the public's satisfaction and sense of wellbeing, we have no consistent way of measuring that. That is inadequate and needs to be remedied, too. Your question is pointed and valid.

**Mark McDonald:** You would like the balance to shift over time as the project develops.

**Colin Mair:** Yes. The aim was to link cost to outcomes. We have put a lot of effort into that and we have comparable costs for the first time. They are pretty standard, and realistic comparisons can be made between councils. However, the suite remains deficient in relation to outcomes.

**Mark McAteer:** As Colin Mair said, a lot of work is on-going in a variety of groups. Last year, the improving evidence and data group was set up, which brings together public sector partners from across CPPs and Scottish Government analysts. The group has been charged with building on the benchmarking work to develop a framework that will support benchmarking in community planning partnerships. That work is part of the on-going development of community planning, and some of the insights and learning that we have had from developing the benchmarking process will be fed into that process.

We will also talk to other partners. For example, the national health service has its own benchmarking arrangements and we have set up dialogue with it to exchange learning. Benchmarking between services and, critically, in partnership with them is certainly something that we will work on.

**The Convener:** I will ask about the last point that you made about benchmarking by other public bodies. A huge amount of what we are about to embark on relates to the integration of health and social care services, for example. It would be pointless to measure a huge amount of different things.

In dealing with some aspects of community planning partnerships, it was always said to be a difficulty that budgeting and a number of the measures and targets that the health service uses came in at different times from local authority measures. The health improvement, efficiency and governance, access and treatment—HEAT—targets were always given as an excuse for the inability to measure or say what was going on in certain areas. How will we ensure that the data that we use in the benchmarking process matches

up with what is going on in the health service so that, when we get greater integration, we do not measure different things all over the place and we hit the nail on the head in regard to what we want to see?

**Mark McAteer:** The framework has some measures for health and social care, with more on the social work end of the spectrum. We know that we need to factor that in as we proceed. There is development work on what the likely outcomes and performance in the measurement framework will be on health and social care. As that is clarified, that will be built into our framework and reflected in what we do.

As for your more general point about ensuring that data provision across different services is planned better so that data is available at the right time for people and we have consistent timing of the publication of health and local government data and so forth, we have discussed that with Scottish Government officials. We will press for that approach because, as we move towards more shared services, joint integrated work and so forth, that will become imperative to maintain the performance framework or any others that emerge. Your points are well made. We have certainly picked up those issues with Scottish Government officials.

**The Convener:** I am sure that we will come back to that in the future.

**Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con):** Good morning, gentlemen. The local government benchmarking overview report is a fair and helpful analysis of the work that has been carried out. Without going into specifics, it would be helpful to look at areas where you have said that, taking into account key factors, variations still need to be explored further, particularly in environmental services such as waste collection; road maintenance—you refer to the total maintenance cost, which is the cost per kilometre of road maintained; and support services, on which you helpfully say that we need to look at organisation and practice. Where are you going with the first two things that I mentioned—environmental services and road maintenance?

**Colin Mair:** It is interesting to see what proves and does not prove to be controversial in benchmarking and in trying to get data. To the detriment of councils that have sought to recycle more, we have not taken account of the income that is generated through recycling. We express the gross cost, not the netted-off cost, to the council of delivering the service and, for understandable reasons, some colleagues around Scotland are modestly teed off with that. They feel that, although they are doing the right thing in outcome terms—which is also economically efficient, as it generates business opportunities

and income flows—if the income that flows from that is not captured, the council looks more extravagant than proper.

Within the timescale, we could not arrive at a way of estimating that income accurately and netting it off, so some of the comparisons are just of gross cost. Some of the practice in low-cost councils, where there is a low cost without an outcome against it, may be disastrous in the long term.

**Margaret Mitchell:** It is a process of elimination.

**Colin Mair:** It is a process of elimination. These are very high-level measures that people need to drill down from, and the councils know that. We struggled to standardise the data in time to get it into the framework, but the councils know the detail and, in their comparisons with each other, they need to take that into account.

If councils were still routinely using landfill, neither this committee nor any other committee of the Scottish Parliament would want to encourage that, as it is not in line with local or national Government policy in Scotland. Making the investment often means that the cost of waste collection goes up, as the council asks households to sort at source and has to run multiple collections. It would be quite cheap if we went back to telling people just to heave all the waste into a big grey bin and if we buried it in the countryside somewhere, but that is not sustainable or a desirable outcome in the long term.

I hope that it comes through in the text that we are anxious about how good the reporting is in that respect. It is accurate on the gross cost, but we are not sure whether that expresses anything terribly helpful.

Road maintenance has been much explored and discussed over time, as the committee's adviser will know from his former roles as a civil servant and a chief executive. Some variation can be explained by traffic volumes, but there is still a lot of unexplained variation that is to do with practice. There is quite a drive to consider whether service sharing would make more sense and whether every council maintaining its own depot, fleet and so on is remotely sustainable if we take a five-year view.

We hope that the information will not just get people comparing how their council stacks up but get them to see opportunities—as Mr Stevenson said—that are more about working with other councils to take out some of the costs while still delivering a decent road service to the public.

That is another area in which we lack quality measures. I leave you to make your own judgments, as you drive around your constituencies, about whether the lowest-cost

council offers the best and safest road service to its population.

**Margaret Mitchell:** I am aware that some councils have been able to do maintenance very quickly with some kind of new method. That must have been quite cost efficient as well as efficient for drivers.

**Colin Mair:** We hope that that will be picked up through the framework and that councils will adopt technologies and techniques that allow them to respond very quickly and quite cheaply. If that happens, the other bit that we need to capture is the up-front investments that councils must make to get those technologies. There are some remarkable road maintenance technologies now, but they are vastly expensive to acquire, although they pay for themselves over a 10-year period. The framework will have to adjust to monitor that.

On support costs, it is clear that the democratic core costs of councils vary according to scale and are often very high in small councils that represent diffuse communities. Such councils might have quite a large number of elected members, although the overall population is small, because we have chosen to have democratic representation in that way. Therefore, as a proportion of their overall costs, the democratic core costs for small councils look much higher.

If the cost is spread across a population of the size of Glasgow's, there is more economy of scale for the elected-member costs than is possible in the Western Isles, Orkney or Shetland. That has been noted in the past and has been consciously protected by previous Governments, because we want that pattern of local political representation across remote, rural and island communities.

10:45

**Margaret Mitchell:** I will explore the issue of leadership. Mr Hinds mentioned that Fife Council was not happy with some of the figures, so it went off and did some work of its own. Who is driving that across the 32 local authorities?

Given that local authorities are often seen as the key drivers in CPPs, which deliver a fair chunk of public services, will benchmarking also apply to CPPs? Hoping that everyone co-operates sounds a little airy-fairy to me, as we know that that does not happen.

Another key issue that is of huge concern to the committee is CPPs' engagement with the public. We found that, nine times out of 10, the public did not even know about CPPs. How will the public be involved? How will the data be used? To what extent will the CPPs be subject to benchmarking?

**Colin Mair:** I will answer one bit of that and Ronnie Hinds can deal with the other. The

benchmarking initiative was driven by the 32 chief executives of Scotland's councils. The initiative has been discussed at every one of our monthly branch meetings, for far longer than we would all prefer, to get to this point. Therefore, there has been a high level of engagement among the executive leadership, which is committed.

I genuinely think that the decision to publish was critical. Once the information is out there, the question that people will ask next year, when we have three years' data, will be, "Why is this not improving?" A challenge is built into the act of publication itself.

With community planning partnerships, there may be a big shift across the next year or so. Until now, we have had the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, which obliges councils to put in place a community planning process and obliges a number of named statutory partners to participate in that. In fairness, everyone has done both those things. However, a change in the law is being proposed, which I think has been agreed between the Scottish Government and local government, whereby all public partners across the public sector will be placed under a duty to work together to improve outcomes.

Until now, none of us has had a duty to improve outcomes. Most local government law simply puts a duty on people to make arrangements—for the education of children, for example—but they have no duty to do that successfully. Putting it in legislation that every public agency in Scotland has a duty to work with other public agencies to improve outcomes will create a statutory framework, which will be much harder to duck, about working together. Equally, that will make it hard not to work together with communities. The honest truth is that all the evidence suggests that, unless we are working in different ways with communities, we will not improve outcomes.

In that sense, although one does not want to exaggerate the importance of statute, given that we have all been separately mandated in the past with no common duty, it will be helpful to move to a common duty that is expressed in terms of outcomes. That will put a driver into the system and will allow external scrutiny bodies to challenge partnerships much more than they have been able to, because there will be a binding statutory duty on all the public sector partners. That will open up and force a lot of the issues that you have raised.

**Margaret Mitchell:** Personally, I am not convinced.

**The Convener:** Anne McTaggart has a wee supplementary.

**Anne McTaggart (Glasgow) (Lab):** On the back of that question, I want to ask about how that work will be measured and monitored. Will there

be a public information campaign? How will that be run and who will lead it?

**Ronnie Hinds:** It is worth going back a step from the question whether there will be a public information campaign. The original concept for the benchmarking initiative was that all the information would form part of the public performance reports that councils are under a statutory duty to produce. That remains the intention for taking it forward. I make that point because that means that the information should really carry weight in the context of an individual council. If a council reports its performance against that of the other 31 councils or its closest comparators according to various terms, that is a drive to improvement for that council.

The point that I am making is that improvement is ultimately the responsibility of individual councils, which brings us back to the previous question about leadership. There must be some form of collective leadership—and there has been, as Colin Mair said—to apply the benchmarking project to the situation. If health authority chief executives were sitting here, you would get a straightforward answer to the question, which would be that there is a chief executive of the health service in Scotland. There is no such position in local government, so the response must be collective to some extent, but the nature of local government means that the drive for improvement and reporting on it must come from each council. The benchmarking data is a means to that end.

**The Convener:** Will you pick up on Margaret Mitchell's other points?

**Ronnie Hinds:** The other points were on community planning partnerships—is that right?

**Margaret Mitchell:** Yes.

**Ronnie Hinds:** I have reflected on the earlier discussion on that subject and, having worked with CPPs for a long time, I think that it would be fair to say that the sheer effort that is required to bring collaboration to bear around the table has taken up a lot of our time and energy. Little time has been left for looking across the horizon to see what a CPP in some other part of the country might be achieving. That is hard enough to do within a council, to be frank, which is partly why we chose to undertake this work.

When we bind everything up into a community planning partnership, effort unavoidably goes into asking how we can work more collaboratively—within Fife, in my case. We have missed a trick by not looking across the horizon to see what is being done differently—and perhaps better—elsewhere, and that represents a further challenge.

I return to what I said in my opening remarks: by undertaking this work, and—as Mark McAteer said—building on it and integrating it with what we know is happening in other parts of the public sector, we should be able to get better at that work. We have to do it, because the delivery of benefits and outcomes will take place increasingly in CPPs.

**Margaret Mitchell:** I have to say that that is worrying.

**Stewart Stevenson:** When Colin Mair answered my colleague Margaret Mitchell's questions on waste collection, a discussion followed on the absence of any reflection of income in the figures. That leads me to an important question: is the presentation of income across the board a difficulty for councils because of potential commercial confidentiality issues in the relationships with the commercial companies from which the incomes derive? If so, is there a mechanism by which councils can share commercially confidential information in a secure way that does not breach confidentiality? If there is not, will you do something about that?

**Colin Mair:** The information is not always commercially confidential. I note that paragraph 61 of the overview report—by which point most people will have rightly fallen asleep—refers to a lot of areas in which costs and income are not well related. We express the cost to the council without the income stream that follows—

**Stewart Stevenson:** Forgive me, but I asked a very narrow question on commercial confidentiality, and I do not want to open up the whole—

**Colin Mair:** Commercial confidentiality applies narrowly in some areas, such as waste collection and disposal. I do not think that it applies to sports and leisure services, which are now set up largely as charitable trusts throughout Scotland. Social care provision may be viewed in that way, but it should not be, and the future requirement for self-directed support—

**Stewart Stevenson:** Let us cut to the chase: is there a mechanism whereby you can share data on commercial relationships?

**Colin Mair:** Yes—absolutely. The knowledge hub that Mark McAteer mentioned allows for a completely private space that no one but key holders can access.

**Stewart Stevenson:** That is sufficient.

**John Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP):** Good morning. The data make for very interesting reading. All three witnesses have mentioned the buy-in from elected members, and the Improvement Service representatives indicated

that you have circulated a publication among all elected local government members.

I would like some clarification. Is there buy-in from elected members, or is the agenda being driven only at officer level, with a carrot-and-stick approach being taken towards elected members whereby, if they do not follow the benchmarking criteria or try to address some of the issues, a big stick is wielded against them? I seek your opinion on that view, gentlemen.

**Ronnie Hinds:** I give you a categorical assurance that elected members are fully on board with the benchmarking data.

**John Wilson:** I referred to all elected members.

**Ronnie Hinds:** Well, I do not know all 1,223 of them but, as a group, they are definitely on board with the work. You must remember that it was right that the work was led by officers, as it was management stuff to begin with. It would be surprising if 32 council leaders had decided to do the work, because it is within the remit of chief executives. That is why it was done in the way that it was.

That does not mean that we have done the work against the grain or the tide or that elected members are indifferent to it—they are not. However, we had to bring the work to a level of maturity and demonstrate that we could make the approach work before we could ask elected members to endorse it, which they have certainly done.

The framework provides an enormously powerful piece of accountability for elected members and they are quick to see its potential. If an elected member looks at the benchmarking data—you have clearly done so—they immediately have the question in their mind, “Why is my council in this position rather than that one?” I have already seen at first hand, as have others, the demonstrable power of that in the hands of elected members.

The added point, which Colin Mair made, is that we decided that we wanted the benchmarking data to be public. Again, public accountability is clearly an issue for elected members. If an elected member has to stand up in public and justify, explain or defend what the data tells us, they are going to go back to their officers with double intensity to ask, “Why is that the case?” We knew that that would be the consequence of producing the data, but we think that it is right to have done that. I am absolutely clear that elected members know the value of the data and how to use it.

**The Convener:** Mr Wilson?

**John Wilson:** Thank you, convener. I was hoping that Mr Mair or Mr McAteer would respond.

**Colin Mair:** I absolutely endorse what Ronnie Hinds said. We have had a lot of interest in our discussions with elected members about the issue. Their drive will be on outcomes, as I think that the committee's drive has implicitly been this morning, to be frank.

Part of what elected members want to know is that life and opportunities in life are improving for the people whom they serve in their area. I think that elected members would certainly raise the issue that Mr McDonald raised about the balance of indicators and would want to know whether they were having—or failing to have—a positive impact on people's lives in the area.

We are being challenged to move the benchmarking data work on. We have made a good start, but we need to get better at saying where the outcomes lie so that members can be satisfied about whether things are getting better across their administration or, if they are in opposition, so that they can be satisfied in that regard as they scrutinise.

**The Convener:** I will stop you there because I want to make a particular point. I will paraphrase what someone said at a committee meeting, which was that councillors go through performance indicators as quickly as they can. That is not my experience, because I am an anorak. However, if that attitude exists in certain areas, I am sure that it will exist in many. The question is how we get over that. In some regards, it is about how we make the area sexy so that councillors pay attention—I think that that is the key point.

**Mark McAteer:** I do not know whether I can make it sexy, but I will try my best. We have a development programme in place for elected members in which I think 18 councils now participate. Much of this material will be repackaged for learning purposes for members who have signed up to the programme. A raft of materials will be developed in the months ahead that will be targeted at those members, but it will also be available to members who are not part of the programme.

**The Convener:** I will stop you there, because you have just said that there will be a "raft of materials". Elected members are busy people. We get rafts and rafts of things, and the more rafts of material that we get on a particular subject, the less likely we are to delve into it in depth. I think that we must be careful about the production of materials.

11:00

**Mark McAteer:** We have a briefing series for elected members of documents that are typically a maximum of four or five pages long. The briefing will consider what an issue is, what questions it

raises for elected members and how they can get further information. That is the broad template of the briefings. A series of those types of paper will be constructed from the data and targeted at elected members across the country.

We also run a masterclass programme, which is a series of workshops. It works across councils and across parties. That is programmed through to the summer. After the summer recess, when the next wave of masterclasses kicks in, benchmarking and discussions with elected members will feature as part of the programme so that we can physically bring members together to engage with some of the issues, including how they might use some of the information as part of the internal challenge process in their council. That will ultimately be determined by them and the issues that they raise with us. There will be both written and other learning materials for members and opportunities to engage with other councillors, without officers being present in the room, and ask "What does this tell us?", "What do we do?" and "How do we pick this up?" We are there to facilitate that exchange between the councillors.

**The Convener:** I ask Mr Mair to be brief, as I am conscious that I interrupted John Wilson's line of questioning.

**Colin Mair:** I take all Mark McAteer's points, but the critical point here is that elected members, certainly the ones with whom I work most closely, want killer stuff. They want less and more important rather than more and less important, so there is a question here about how much data is presented and what it tells elected members. If it tells them real things about their area, my experience is that they are hugely interested in it. If they feel that it is a pile of management information that is relevant to a tier 4 officer but not relevant to them, they are not interested in it. Part of the job here is to get killer kits together for elected members with the things that really matter, are really interesting and are really engaging. We need to put that in front of elected members and engage with them around it.

**John Wilson:** I will try to stay away from white-water or any other type of rafting and from killer kits for councillors.

The issue for me is that a lot of the decisions and a lot of the reporting on benchmarking are cost based. Local authorities have a democratic process in which they make budgetary decisions before the end of the financial year for the coming year. Some of the figures that we see before us clearly reflect the budgetary decisions that have been made between 2010-11 and 2011-12. As Mr Mair mentioned, decisions to transfer leisure services or other services out of council control to arm's-length trusts will show a decrease in cost, but some authorities still make political decisions

to retain services in-house rather than transfer them over. In cleansing, some authorities continue to operate a weekly uplift service while some have moved to a two-weekly service.

How do we measure the political decisions that local authorities make about service delivery when the benchmarking report puts things down in pounds-and-pence costs per head? When we took evidence on the matter last year, Councillor Cook from Scottish Borders Council said that local authorities will still be in a position to make political decisions as they see fit, but if you produce information such as this, surely there could be greater pressure on local authorities to make political decisions based on the benchmarking evidence that is before them and not on the basis of the quality of service that is delivered to residents.

**Ronnie Hinds:** That question goes to the heart of the issue, in many ways. The short answer is that it is done by a process of elimination. Ideally, how this ought to work is that, by the time we have stripped out all the other causes of variation, whether that is largely uncontrollable circumstances to do with sheer geography or the level of deprivation in a given community, and by the time we take out the inefficiencies that the cost indicators are showing us and the variations in performance that some of the other measures are showing us, what we should be left with are political differences.

That will be the position in an ideal world. I recognise that it is not as simple as that, but that is the construct that we have. The purpose of the exercise is to allow us to better segregate those different components. Once we can control for the variables that are, if you like, environmental, we should be focusing in on those things that are under our control as managers in organisations, and as political leaders.

If we do that, the variations that remain should result from the fact that political choices have been made that reflect a number of things, including geography. That is the key to it. We have never really been able to show that before. Without this breakdown of the data, if someone was challenged with a raw figure and it was said to them, "Your cost or performance indicator is this, but theirs is better," they could always excuse themselves by saying that it was a matter of political choice. It may have been, but we never really knew. This breakdown gives us a means of finding out, and part of the purpose of the framework is to enable us to answer the question a little better than we were able to do in the past.

On the final part of your question, I do not think that there is a risk that political members will steer by the wake and make policy decisions on the basis of benchmarking information. I think that

they will drive hard through accountability to people such as me to eliminate waste and variance, but they will then make policy decisions that are based on the resources that are left to them. In my experience, that is exactly what they do.

**Colin Mair:** I agree with what Ronnie Hinds says. I hope that the framework will inform people about the costs of political choices. If I benchmarked between the cost of care for an 80-year-old down south and the cost of care for an 80-year-old up here, people would have to factor in the policy choice that the Scottish Parliament has made about the provision of free personal care, which has not been made down south. A political choice has been made that means a higher cost for us up here, but it is a cost that we think is in line with our social values, our commitment to older people and so on. However, there is nothing wrong with saying that there is a cost attached to having those values and that that is a distinctive use of resources that we are choosing to make in the context of overall resources being finite. That is a pile of clichés, but you will take the point that the framework does not necessarily drive people down.

Costs worth considering include the cost of museums. The honest truth is that the cost per visit to a museum is driven by the scale of visitor flow. By Scottish standards, Glasgow City Council spends a very large amount of money on its museums and galleries, but it gets a staggeringly high visitor flow, so the cost per visitor is the most efficient looking in Scotland. A museum that the council thinks is culturally fantastically important in Orkney could not possibly achieve the sort of visitor flow that the Burrell collection in Glasgow could achieve, so the council makes a political decision that the museum really matters to its community, celebrating its life and history, and it funds it. However, there may come a point at which, if nobody is visiting the museum, the council will question why it is running it. If the unit cost gets up to a certain point, that alerts elected members to the fact that the choice that they have made needs to be reviewed. The benchmarking is aimed at that level, rather than necessarily at driving costs down.

However, as I said, I have anxieties about the waste collection and disposal side because we are measuring gross cost and not taking account of any income that is generated. That may be catching out councils that are trying to do the right thing and which should stick with that political commitment, the investment for which will be paid off over time.

**Mark McAteer:** I have nothing much to add to that. The key point in what Colin Mair said is that, from the outset, we envisaged that the framework



would provide elected members with information that they could use in making their decisions. If that is what it does, it is an aid to the democratic decision-making process. However, councils will have to stand by the choices that they have made. We have consciously not driven benchmarks—standard ways of doing things—because we believe that it is for the 32 councils to reflect the needs and priorities of their communities. This information simply adds to the decision-making process.

**John Wilson:** Colin Mair gave the interesting example of museums, which I have looked at. If the cost is counted by footfall rather than per head of population, there will be wide variations between neighbouring authorities, particularly in Glasgow's case. The overall cost as a percentage of the budget or per head of population will be skewed if the local authority has a large visitor attraction that people are prepared to visit. A smaller authority may aspire to have a museum reflecting local issues but, based on the benchmarking criteria, it may look as though it is spending grossly too much money on providing museum services compared to a neighbour such as Glasgow. That goes back to the issue that was raised earlier about families of local authorities. Mr Hinds referred to the need, in looking at comparisons between local authorities, to look at all the different factors in the decisions that have been made. When will we see those families set up? How quickly will we be able to look at that?

Further to Mr Mair's reference to expenditure on care for the elderly, expenditure on self-directed support might increase year on year by 15 per cent in one local authority and by 8 per cent in another. Those types of decisions, which are taken at local level, can certainly have an impact on the benchmarking figures. How do we get to the root cause of those wide variances while ensuring that, in so far as is possible, we compare like with like in looking at service delivery by different authorities?

**Ronnie Hinds:** Again, the question is very well put. Different variances can arise from comparing on one basis or another, such as cost per head of population or cost per footfall. That will be dealt with partly through the refinement of the indicators, which we talked about earlier. If there is a better way of measuring something, we will measure it in that way.

Another aspect is that people will drill down into the figures. Even if the indicator looks fine at a high level, when the professionals in a given area sit down with their peers, the discussion will naturally lead on to, "Well, it looks as though my unit cost is very high, but how many people go through your turnstiles compared to mine and what is that as a percentage of your population?"

That dialogue will unfold and we hope that a beneficial result will come out of that. That bears on the families.

To answer your question about the families, I will take that issue to SOLACE's meeting this week. As Colin Mair said, we have been discussing the benchmarking initiative every month that we have met, for as long as I care to remember, and we will carry on doing so. I will take the question about the composition of the families to my SOLACE counterparts later this week. I hope to get a definitive answer on exactly what families we will work within and on what basis.

**Colin Mair:** From the data in the benchmarking framework, it is clear that a family would logically form, for example, among those councils that have quite high levels of deprivation. However, that may not be true for every service of those councils. For example, I would not seek to explain variations in road maintenance expenditure in terms of the levels of deprivation of the population in those areas. Therefore, each council may belong not just to one family but to this family for the purposes of a particular service and to that family for the purposes of other services. In other words, I think that we will need to be fluid on that.

Secondly, when we have explored the issue previously, we have found that we can end up putting Glasgow and Clackmannanshire in the same family due to their deprivation profile. On the other hand, given the scales involved, people in Clackmannanshire will say, "Why the hell would we want to be benchmarked against Glasgow?" and vice versa. In a way, we need to balance a range of factors and have some flexibility around families rather than regard them as a straitjacket.

The final point to make is that sometimes we can learn from someone who is totally outwith our family. If a council is clearly doing something really interesting, all of us should learn from that. We should not hide behind families. Families can sometimes become an excusatory framework as well as a facilitative one. I agree that families are important, but I think that we need to be flexible and constructive, rather than rigid and inflexible, in our use of families.

**The Convener:** Thank you for your evidence this morning, gentlemen. You are not entirely off the hook because, from the start of the process, the committee has said that we want to continue to keep an eye on what is going on. Therefore, I think that we have pencilled in a return visit from you some time in September so that we can see how things are going out there and what difference the project is making throughout the country. We will see you again soon.

11:14

*Meeting suspended.*

11:19

*On resuming—*

**The Convener:** Agenda item 2 is another evidence-taking session for our inquiry into strand 3 of public services reform. I welcome back Colin Mair and Mark McAteer, not that they have really been away. I also welcome Ian Crichton, chief executive of NHS National Services Scotland, and, from Scotland Excel, Dorothy Cowie, director, and Hugh Carr, head of strategic procurement.

Does Mr Crichton wish to make any opening remarks?

**Ian Crichton (NHS National Services Scotland):** First, I welcome the committee's interest in shared services. I would encourage the committee to be ambitious about what Scotland can achieve, and I suggest that, in the times that we face over the next decade—members will be fully familiar with this—the country has everything to play for.

NHS National Services Scotland has been around for 40 years, so the discussions on whether shared services can work are always interesting for me. Our submission covers a range of services, from those that are health specific, such as the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service, which ensures that we get enough blood to meet the needs of our hospital service, to those such as the NHS Scotland central legal office, in which we have 50 solicitors who do nothing but health business in litigation, property, employment law and contracts. We are fairly well used to providing a range of shared services.

There are lots of reasons why shared services have failed in the past and I encourage the committee not to dwell on those. Learning from the past is important but thinking about the future is more so. We believe that we offer a range of services that could be used beyond the health sector and I hope that as we go through the session we will touch on some of the areas in which we have tested the water to give members a sense of what we have found so far.

The NHS itself is an interesting space. I heard somebody in the previous session say that the good thing about the NHS is that it has a chief executive to provide leadership, but actually the NHS operates as 22 different boards so it is much more of a federation than a neatly controlled, single-point organisation. Our organisation has learned a lot about how to keep 22 different chief executives happy in their own bits of the organisation and providing an effective service.

The debate on shared services can sometimes focus too much on the concept rather than what we are trying to achieve. There are genuine benefits of scale from transacting shared services at a national level in a country the size of Scotland. Although my organisation is national, it is spread across 21 different areas of Scotland and we take pride in the fact that we deliver our services locally where we need to.

I want to make the clear distinction that, for me, shared services are not the same as collaborating around the citizen. The shared services that my organisation provides enable other bodies to do what they are better at doing than we would be.

**The Convener:** Do colleagues from Scotland Excel want to say a few words?

**Dorothy Cowie (Scotland Excel):** To echo Ian Crichton's comments, I welcome the opportunity to share our five years of experience. We are about to celebrate our fifth birthday, so we are not quite as long in the tooth as NHS National Services Scotland, but we have experience of developing and delivering collaborative contracts and of working with councils to help them to get better at procurement. I hope that that experience will be helpful.

We submitted a briefing paper that gives the background to and scale of what we do, so I will not regurgitate that. I look forward to answering the committee's questions about our experience over the past five years.

**The Convener:** Does Colin Mair want to say something about the Improvement Service?

**Colin Mair:** The Improvement Service is a shared service that is governed by COSLA and SOLACE together. We have had responsibility for working on their behalf to develop a range of shared services both across local government and in partnership with colleagues in other parts of the public sector.

Our submission covers two aspects. It reflects on key factors in being successful, as opposed to unsuccessful, with shared services. It also contains a case study on what is probably the largest shared service that we run directly—the customer first programme, which operates on behalf of local government, aspects of the health service and aspects of the Scottish Government, such as the national transport concession schemes and card services.

I have no more to add other than to echo and reinforce a point that Ian Crichton made. We have found that if we talk about purpose—about why we are doing something and what it will achieve for people—we have much more chance of getting engagement and people moving with something than we have if we talk about shared services,

which seems to be relatively close to being a doomed brand name. Too often in the past, we pursued shared services for the sake of shared services rather than because they would advance a practical purpose of efficiency or better outcomes for communities. That is the key learning that we take from our experience.

**The Convener:** Mr Crichton said that his organisation has existed for four decades. Apart from co-ordinating services across the NHS, do you have shared services with other public bodies?

**Ian Crichton:** Over the past year, we have had a programme of work to explore that. As we speak, a public services reform order is being laid before the Parliament that will give us the formal ability to operate beyond the health service. Thus far, we have not had that formal ability.

**The Convener:** On the formal ability, is it legislation or guidance that has stopped you operating in that way?

**Ian Crichton:** The terms of reference for my organisation are clear—it is there to support the health service. The public services reform order, on which we are consulting various public bodies and which the Parliament will consider shortly in whatever way it does that, will enable us to operate for other public sector bodies that might want our assistance.

That said, given some of the challenges and the forthcoming integration of health and social care, we have been keen to support various Scottish national initiatives beyond health, when we have felt that we could add value and when the risks of going marginally beyond our remit were small.

I will describe what is probably the most significant initiative. Members will be familiar with the McClelland reforms on information technology. We have supported Scottish Government procurement in relation to a wide area network for Scotland. One of my shared services is the national information assistance group, which has done that technical procurement. We can do that because the construct of the BT contract that the health service in Scotland has is similar. We have a lot of expertise in telecommunications and IT procurement that we can bring to bear to help Scotland. We are leading the procurement of that IT programme in partnership with local authorities.

**The Convener:** Will Ms Cowie and Mr Carr give us an example of the best piece of procurement that you have done across the board and say how much that has saved in your five tender years?

**Dorothy Cowie:** Crikey—it is quite hard to pick.

**The Convener:** The question should be easy to answer; the issue would be top of my agenda.

**Dorothy Cowie:** If we are looking at percentage savings, the contract that has probably been the most significant is that for washroom solutions, although it is not a terribly exciting contract.

**The Convener:** Tell us about it.

**Dorothy Cowie:** It was quite fragmented. The heart of the operation—I guess that it is one thing that makes us successful—is that we do not do things in isolation; we work very much in collaboration with local authorities, which come along and inform the strategy.

**The Convener:** You said that the washroom solutions contract was the greatest success. Can you tell us a little more about that and how much it has saved?

**Dorothy Cowie:** Can I pick a better example? I referred to washroom solutions because of the overall percentage. The contract that probably gives local authorities the biggest return every month is for heavy vehicles.

**The Convener:** What kind of savings are we talking about?

**Dorothy Cowie:** Hugh Carr has the numbers. He delivers the contract, so I will let him talk about it and about the changes that we have made.

11:30

**Hugh Carr (Scotland Excel):** One thing that has become apparent as we have continued to develop our contract portfolio is that some of the greatest savings come from the most unlikely sources and are testimony to the old adage and cliché about economies of scale. When we originally awarded the contract, the forecast spend on heavy vehicles was around £15 million a year. However, with the joint collaborative contract, the combined spend is more than £20 million a year, and we are seeing savings of approaching 10 per cent on that basis.

As I said, some of the best contracts come from the unlikeliest sources. To pick up on a point that Dorothy Cowie made, one of the reasons that I can attribute to that is that heavy stakeholder engagement is at the heart of what we do in our collaborative contracts. We have very active forums with the local authorities, particularly the roads and transport forum with the transport and fleet managers. Some of the vehicle contracts yield savings in excess of what we expected, partly because of the degree of stakeholder engagement that we manage to acquire.

**The Convener:** You say that you have achieved savings of 10 per cent in that contract across the board. A canny barterer—me, for example—could probably go out into the market at this moment and get 10 per cent off any vehicle that they

wanted to buy if they were clever about it. Why do you think that that success is down to your organisation rather than anything else, including the current market?

**Dorothy Cowie:** I think that it is a matter of horses for courses and that the market conditions can be quite challenging.

I would like to rewind and start again. I picked washroom solutions to give members an idea of the magnitude of some of the savings that the organisation has been able to deliver. In pound note terms, the savings in that example are probably not a lot, but it shows what—

**The Convener:** What were the savings in percentage terms?

**Dorothy Cowie:** In washroom solutions?

**The Convener:** Yes.

**Dorothy Cowie:** Some councils saved up to around 42 per cent. That was not a lot of money, but I chose that example because it shows the value of collaboration.

If members can bear with me, there are a couple of other examples that I would like to share with them.

I am always keen to ensure that Scotland Excel is not seen as being just about delivering things at the lowest cost. Scotland Excel, as a 32 local authorities-wide organisation, has been in place for five years, but it was built on the back of a west of Scotland collaboration that had been in place since 1996. I came in in 2006 with a remit to develop a national approach.

Quite a lot of the Authorities Buying Consortium's contracts were in the traditional areas that procurement services got involved in. I am talking about things such as exercise books, wheelie bins and vehicles. Scotland Excel's remit was to look at some of the high-spend areas for local government in construction and social care. If members asked me to pick out examples that I am most proud of, they would be in areas in which professional procurement has not really been involved. I suppose that we have dispelled the myth that those areas could not be gone into. Some of the benefits that we are particularly proud of are not necessarily to do with cost savings; rather, they are to do with improving outcomes for service users or relationships with suppliers.

**The Convener:** Tell me where there has been a great change in outcome, please.

**Dorothy Cowie:** Our telecare contract is a good example. That is very much a monopoly contract—there is a monopoly market. For a long time, local authorities incurred quite heavy costs for connecting telecare equipment with internal systems, and the near-monopoly supplier was

very reluctant to engage with individual authorities to change the standards that were used.

When local authorities got together and went to the market on a consolidated basis, the supplier took that barrier away, which meant that councils were able to connect up the equipment to other services in their own areas. The whole challenge of interoperating those systems was removed, and that meant that the services that councils were able to provide were much improved. We got cost savings there, and we took away a lot of additional hidden costs for councils. We hope that that improved the service.

**Stewart Stevenson:** My management guru, Fred P Brooks, wrote a wonderful book in 1974 called "The Mythical Man-Month". One chapter is on the non-commutativity of time and effort. In other words, it might take 10 hours for one man to dig a grave, but that does not mean that 10 men can dig it in one hour. Mr Crichton referred to economies and benefits of scale. If we were to identify, through the aggregation of services, that there are actually disbenefits of scale, would you have a process, and would you have the courage, to recommend the abolition of your service?

**Ian Crichton:** I will start at the back and work forward. If I felt that my organisation did not add value to Scotland, I would be duty bound to recommend its abolition. I am clear with myself on that.

Your point about scale is a good one. In theory, there are economies of scale and diseconomies of scale. The trick is picking the right point—the sweet spot. As I said, we need to start with the purpose, as opposed to whether the service is shared or not.

Scotland gets two major things from my organisation in terms of scale. First, as I said, we have 22 health boards, and if I can do something once, rather than have 22 different health boards do the same thing 22 times, there is a genuine saving from that. Secondly, many of the things that I do are quite specialised. If we consider the facilities experts in Health Facilities Scotland, we can recruit from a pool of only about five or 10 people in Britain for the level of expertise that is required. An individual health board would not have a hope of amassing that kind of expertise in one place, but I can do it for Scotland.

There are definitely some services that are hugely beneficial. The NHS Scotland central legal office is an example. Scotland's performance around patient litigation concerning mistakes made in hospitals and so on is infinitely better than that of England, even when adjusted on a pro rata basis. England uses private lawyers, whereas we use public lawyers. For every case that they consider, our lawyers have an expertise that is

built around knowledge of the NHS. We might think that we have seen it all—perhaps we have not quite seen it all, but for most cases we will have come across something similar before, so we are very comfortable with the environment in which we work.

We can be quite transparent with our performance. For instance, at the end of litigation, both sets of lawyers' costs will be published, and we know that we are cheaper. We also consider the number of cases that we win, and we perform very well in that respect, too. Those are some tangible examples of where there is a genuine effect from scale.

The purpose of my organisation is to support Scotland's health. Patients are extremely important—they are important for the broader health service, where the territorial boards are hands-on. The patient does not need me around their bed, and I do not want to be around their bed. I want to ensure, however, that there is a bed for the patient to be in—so we buy the bed, and the bed works. I want to ensure that practice around the patient is safe, and we provide a range of services that do that. We have a role, and there is a real role for shared services around how to enable different organisations to deliver the services that they need locally.

**Stewart Stevenson:** In our discussion with the previous panel, we focused on local government's benchmarking activities. When you centralise and use a single service, who do you benchmark against? Do you do benchmarking, and what do you learn from it? That question is not just for Mr Crichton—it goes to all three witnesses.

**Ian Crichton:** We do not centralise; we standardise. There is an important distinction. For example, on benchmarking, a decision was taken last year that it would be highly advantageous for Scotland to start to do better on looking after its health service facilities. We therefore commissioned a survey of the entire estate. That was done in partnership with all the boards, but we commissioned one survey, so there was one way of doing it across the piece. From that, we came to understand the scale of the maintenance backlog that the NHS faces and we generated accurate benchmarking data that was not variable. We did not have 22 boards picking different estate agents or others to do the survey. We commissioned the survey and ensured consistency in the way that it was done. However, it is for the local areas to work through the results of that.

I listened with interest to the committee's earlier evidence session on benchmarking. We absolutely get benchmarking from standardising the way in which we do things. On centralisation, by design, we have 21 different offices, because where we

are best deployed depends on what we are trying to provide.

**Dorothy Cowie:** We benchmark in a couple of areas. In bringing together 32 councils through the contracts, we are, I guess, benchmarking them against one another, and that has been a useful learning experience in itself. We work closely with the other procurement centres of expertise in health, higher and further education and central Government, and benchmarking takes place there. For areas that are specific to local government, we tend to benchmark against England and Wales.

We also use market research reports that we buy in. One benefit of doing that through an organisation such as Scotland Excel is that we have to procure such reports only once. We also have the luxury of having people with sufficient time to go through those assessments. If that was being done 32 times in councils, it would not be possible to build up that level of expertise. That is how we do benchmarking in relation to the contracts.

The earlier discussion on benchmarking was interesting. In procurement, there is national work called the procurement capability assessment—Ian Crichton's organisation carries that out, too. That is a framework that we developed nationally across the procurement community that is used to assess procurement capability in health, higher and further education and local and central Government. We work closely with Ian Crichton's procurement team to compare and contrast, learn lessons, swap notes and take things forward.

I am keen for us to start to expand the boundaries of that. The procurement capability assessment is based on a maturity model, with the top level being world-class procurement. I am keen for us to start to broaden that out from just the public sector. At our most recent annual event, a private sector organisation came to talk to us so that we could learn lessons from what goes on in the private sector and apply the bits that are applicable to what we do in the public sector. That is our approach.

**Stewart Stevenson:** Clearly, standardisation can deliver short-term benefit but, equally, it carries with it a potential longer-term risk. That risk is captured by the first law of epigenetics, which is that the more highly optimised an organism is for one environment, the more adversely it is affected by change in that environment. How do you protect against the risks of, if you like, betting on one good standard solution today that might be whisked away from you in the not-too-distant future?

**Ian Crichton:** The answer to that is about choosing where we standardise. To return to the legal example that I used earlier, it is important to

me that we have a standard approach to things such as customers understanding how they engage with us and the costs that they might expect, and the fact that we transact under Scots law. However, we expect discretion from each individual lawyer in dealing with cases, because each case is different, so we cannot take a cookie-cutter approach. The cookie-cutter approach that we are taking is about ensuring that the quality of lawyer, the training and the accessibility are at a certain level. Those are the choices that we make, but the service is then customised to meet the client's need.

If we are customer-driven or customer-centric and if the reason for the service is to generate an outcome for the customer, that helps to avoid becoming some big frumpy thing that cannot move and which generates things that look okay from a scale/cost perspective but which do not bring value in the sense of innovation or new thinking.

Dorothy Cowie mentioned the capability assessments, which are important. I have a team that is dedicated to that. It is not my capability that they are assessing—they go out to health boards and help them. The point is that the level of expertise in somewhere like an island board with three or four people will be totally different from the level of expertise in somewhere like Glasgow. We can help Glasgow to get even better, but what it gets from us will be different from what, for instance, Shetland gets from us.

There are a range of ways to mitigate the risk that Stewart Stevenson identifies. However, it is a valid point, which is why we need the organisations that do such work to have an understanding of what they are doing and to manage the risk effectively.

11:45

**Colin Mair:** I have a point about standardisation and the argument around economies of scale. As we move towards integration—rather than aggregation—and as integration becomes the key focus of public policy in Scotland, if we have standardised in different ways in different parts of the public sector, such as health and local government, when we come to consider how to put together a health and social care partnership, we get into the issues raised by the first law of epigenetics. Which version of standardisation should characterise how a health and social care partnership goes about its business? There are genuine issues about the way in which we have conducted standardisation.

In support of Ian Crichton, frankly, there are areas where the issue is economies of skill rather than economies of scale. We need the ability to generate a critical mass of expertise—in other

words, something that cannot be done in any one of the 32 councils can be done across them.

I absolutely endorse the point that we need to pick our targets. We created the myjobscotland website, where all councils advertise their employment vacancies. That requires a fairly standardised way of putting out job adverts and so on, but it saves councils the best part of £5 million per annum and gets a far better uptake than we ever got through newspaper advertising and the other methods that we used previously.

In one sense, that is a bog-standard thing, but it gives us a collective presence, takes a lot of cost out of the system, speeds up the application process and is well viewed by applicants and councils.

Therefore, there are areas where we can simply standardise and there is no loss to anybody. Each council can have its own micro-site, so if Argyll and Bute Council wants to tell people how beautiful the area is and what a fabby place it is to work, it can do that on its bit of the site. However, the bog-standard process still underpins that.

**John Pentland (Motherwell and Wishaw (Lab):** I was going to ask about that later, but I will ask my question now, as Mr Mair has introduced the issue. There are different views about whether shared services are successful. Mr Mair, your submission states that

“‘shared service’ is a doomed brand name”

and you identify six key points that probably give us reasons for that. Do you have any solutions that would improve the situation?

**Colin Mair:** I emphasise that I said that talking about shared services as ends in themselves is a doomed exercise and that we need to talk about purpose, outcome, cost and efficiency. My point is that, when we focus on those things, we get leadership and engagement from staff. When people see themselves as being caught up in an abstract desire to create a shared service, we get a mammoth amount of resistance.

My six points set out what we need to have in place to take that approach consistently. Many of them almost echo one of Ian Crichton's earlier points. It would be good if we had all been here for 40 years and had all the information generated in that time. The trouble is that, as we are starting with 32 councils, baselines are difficult. Many of the efforts on shared services in the Clyde valley and elsewhere got terribly bogged down because of the absence of good baselines and benchmarks at the outset. It took so long to rectify that that much of the will, impetus and momentum had gone. The more we can improve and standardise the core information that we keep, the easier it will

be to look at where shared services opportunities arise.

Another element is precision. At the beginning, we generated huge shopping lists of services that could, in principle, be shared. There were no other arguments; services were just on the list. The process was terribly back-office focused, even though such services form only a small proportion of the cost of running public services, so we became weirdly obsessed with one narrow area.

Hearteningly—as I documented at paragraph 2 of my submission—a lot of things are now happening that involve more out-there services. For example, how do we get together to collaborate on road maintenance? A whole range of scientific services—council and Scottish Environment Protection Agency services—are being integrated into a single service in Scotland. How can we build a more robust and resilient framework through that sharing exercise?

My point was not that shared services are a bad idea but that we have been talking about them in a certain way and using “shared services” as a brand name. All the things that councils have found easiest to do—which include the public service improvement framework, the myjobscotland website and our public notices framework, which allows people to go online and pull up the ways in which local authorities will mess up their lives in the coming month on their travel-to-work route and so on—have happened because we did not call those things shared services at all.

We talked about the purposes and outcomes to be achieved and about improving customer service, but we never used the term “shared service”, so those things happened easily. When we set up a shared services programme, that appears to create a pattern of resistance almost because we have used that language. I was simply making an observation about language rather than the merits of shared services.

**Margaret Mitchell:** Good morning, everyone. I thank Scotland Excel for its briefing, section 7 of which states:

“Scotland Excel is ... an example of a successful shared service”.

The briefing mentions the framework contracts and notes:

“For every £1 invested in the operating costs of Scotland Excel, the sector sees a return of £4 in direct cost savings.”

What do you include in those operating costs?

**Dorothy Cowie:** Salaries and transport are the main thrust of Scotland Excel’s costs; we do not have many non-salary-related costs.

**Margaret Mitchell:** The briefing refers to your headquarters in Paisley. Are they located in council property?

**Dorothy Cowie:** Yes.

**Margaret Mitchell:** Is a nominal price put on that? How much are your operating costs?

**Dorothy Cowie:** We pay Renfrewshire Council rent for the premises. We are based in Paisley, and we have a couple of staff in Edinburgh, the Highland Council area and Aberdeen. The running cost for the organisation is £3.247 million this year, and it will drop slightly next year.

The savings that we have generated over the past four quarters purely from the contracts that we put in place—not from any of the additional stuff that I have mentioned, such as the savings that councils might be able to make through interoperability in telecare—amount to £16 million.

**Margaret Mitchell:** Do you start from a baseline every year? Let us say that you have delivered some savings. You start again at year zero, but your overheads—such as your staff and the market research that you are building in—continue, and yet every year you are delivering £4 for every £1 invested.

**Dorothy Cowie:** The market research is part of the £3.247 million; it is one of our extra costs over and above staff. Most of our contracts are in place for two to three years, and some have the option of being extended to four years.

We calculate at the start of the contract award process the difference between what councils are paying and what they will pay through the Scotland Excel contract, and we come up with a percentage. We apply that percentage, which can vary widely among councils, to the spend that we capture from our suppliers that is going through the contract during that period.

**Margaret Mitchell:** Is a breakdown of that available? Do you publish that information every year?

**Dorothy Cowie:** One of our many governance arrangements involves our chief executive officers management group. Every quarter, the group gets a report that shows the make-up of that £16 million saving by council and by contract, so the savings can be seen across the 32 councils and across our range of contracts.

**Margaret Mitchell:** Are your operating costs broken down and published?

**Dorothy Cowie:** Yes.

**Margaret Mitchell:** Are they in the same document?

**Dorothy Cowie:** No. That information is separate and it goes to our joint committee—we are governed by a joint committee of 40 elected members.

**Margaret Mitchell:** So it is possible to look at that information.

**Dorothy Cowie:** Absolutely.

**Margaret Mitchell:** It would be interesting to look at it.

**Dorothy Cowie:** I would be happy to provide the committee with some information, as it would save you from having to look for it.

**Margaret Mitchell:** Thank you.

I will ask Mr Crichton a similar question. How many people are employed in NHS National Services Scotland and across the eight support services that you have listed?

**Ian Crichton:** My organisation employs about 4,000 people, which amounts to about 3,500 whole-time equivalents. The distribution varies hugely by service. We have a couple of hundred people in national procurement. We try quite hard to ensure that procurement does not focus just on savings, because the quality of what we buy is extremely important.

It is easy to underestimate the complexity of the public procurement legal landscape. It was mentioned that it is possible to go to a garage and negotiate a 10 per cent discount on a car. That is the case but, although someone who tried to do that in a public procurement arena might get a discount on the car, they might subsequently find themselves in court for breaching European Union rules.

There are many highly constraining rules. As we move forward, we need to ask—particularly in relation to big contracts—how many people we want to learn those rules and how well connected they are to, for example, legal advice to do with those rules.

**The Convener:** We hear about constraints in procurement all the time. Centralisation and standardisation have been mentioned. Do you think that we sometimes make a rod for our own backs by trying to procure too many of the same thing at one time, which probably drives up costs, because of the need to deal with the European rules, rather than driving them down, which could be done with a good negotiator?

**Ian Crichton:** No, I do not. The McClelland approach to procurement was clear. It broke things down into three categories in quite a sensible way. It recognised that there was a category A, which is for things that can be bought nationally. Risks are associated with that, because it is possible to end up aggregating demand and

supply but, overall, that approach has forced the different sectors to think about how they manage demand rather than just what they buy.

Category B is sector specific, so—

**The Convener:** Do you think that that is the case? Does that approach make people think more about what they are buying?

**Ian Crichton:** I think so.

**The Convener:** That is not my experience in areas such as IT. When it comes to schools buying IT equipment, folk spend an absolute fortune on equipment to get rid of budgets at the end of the year. If they had spaced out the buying throughout the year, they could have got the equipment at much reduced rates.

**Ian Crichton:** You will find plenty of examples of people doing silly things at the end of the year.

There is a local authority that I am deployed in to support. It has an IT contract that did not involve a banner negotiation, and it got its consulting advice from the people from whom it bought the IT. I have the capability to give the authority advice that is in its interest, because I am acting in the public interest, not in the interest of whatever company it chooses to use. Those are the positives.

You can undoubtedly find situations in which something was bought nationally that could have been bought more cheaply locally. One of the challenges that we have when we buy on frameworks is that, once people have gone to market and put the framework in place, the people who lost have nothing to lose by providing much cheaper deals to people who are on the framework who have an option to opt out. However, over time, the health service has worked through that culture so that we have a three musketeers-type approach—it is all for one and one for all.

We will go to market on certain things and get people a really good deal. In some cases, we will even be able to shift the market, because we can leverage scale. With other things, it might well be better for people to buy locally. The classic McClelland category C example is taxis. National taxi contracts make no sense for anyone.

The important thing is that a shared service is a service. I am totally against the idea that myplace, for example, would be imposed on bodies to force them to buy things. Myplace is there to ensure that if, collectively, we agree that there is benefit in scale, we will go to market and get that scale. My organisation has a responsibility to manage the legal risk and to deal with the market.

We are majoring on procurement, but we do a lot more than that. I have people who do nothing



but develop an understanding of the marketplace so that, when they go to the market, they know what they are buying. That does not mean that I can always secure value, but it means that our buyer is well informed.

12:00

**Margaret Mitchell:** What are the total operating costs of NHS Scotland annually?

**Ian Crichton:** I cannot tell you the figure for NHS Scotland. For NHS National Services Scotland it is about £580 million.

**Margaret Mitchell:** Are analysis and review always undertaken of the various support services to see whether there is a better way to provide them—for example, to see whether providing them nationally is the best way forward?

**Ian Crichton:** Yes.

**Margaret Mitchell:** How is that done?

**Ian Crichton:** It works in various ways. We do it differently for different services.

**Margaret Mitchell:** Let us move off procurement and on to something else, such as information technology.

**Ian Crichton:** There is a steering group that sits above IT that is not part of my governance; it is part of NHS Scotland's governance. There are two boards: a strategy board, which worries about how IT is done across the piece and what we are strategically trying to achieve at the national level; and a programme board, which is more about the techie guys sitting down and comparing who is doing what in IT. Those bodies—not me—direct the priorities for my organisation, and that enables the stakeholders whom I support to influence what we are tasked to do. We report back to those bodies on progress and performance.

Once a year, service audits are done so that the service auditor can assure the different boards on which we operate that we are delivering value for money and that what we have told them that we have done is in fact what we have done. We do a myriad of such things to provide reassurance to our customer base.

**Margaret Mitchell:** On visits, we have heard that computers in the health service do not talk to each other, because they are on different systems. Where does that problem land? Is it with you, nationally?

**Ian Crichton:** I do not provide 100 per cent of the health service's IT; I provide a range of five national services. One of those services is an integrating service, which is starting to join different systems together. The IT landscape in

the health service is complex, with things at very different stages.

If we look at the journey that we have been on over the past five years, my organisation has been heavily involved in supporting NHS Scotland to improve its architecture and consulting and to start thinking about all the different joins and how they work. It has supported the health service in converging. For example, there were 10 different patient management systems five years ago, whereas about 70 per cent of Scotland is now on one patient management system. IT remains challenging, but my organisation is starting to be able to provide people with expertise that we have perhaps not had at the local board level and to encourage boards increasingly to make those joins.

**Margaret Mitchell:** Who is leading that?

**Ian Crichton:** The health strategy board takes the lead in determining what Scotland will prioritise in joining up its national IT.

**Margaret Mitchell:** You are satisfied that your input, the amount of money that is being invested and what you are providing are ensuring the best and most effective use of money in delivering a service in which the computers all talk to each other.

**Ian Crichton:** We can always do better. One of the challenges in procurement—whether it involves IT or anything else—is in getting good front-line input. Often, the debate is about the local procurement department versus the national one. However, what determines the relevance of what is bought is how well local needs have been identified by people who are not procurement people. Strengthening that commissioning continues to be a challenge for the NHS and other bodies. We must improve the commissioning; the procurement is the technical bit.

**Margaret Mitchell:** I suggest that it is a very important technical bit.

**Ian Crichton:** It is, but I suggest that most of the failures in the IT procurement space relate to the requirements not being properly understood and translated into a contract and then to the challenges that organisations have in managing a contract once it has been negotiated. The Atos contract is a huge contract for NHS Scotland, and it is very complicated to manage. An organisation needs to be able to manage the vendor once it has the contract and not just to negotiate the contract. That is another area in which we can provide strength.

**Margaret Mitchell:** You can provide leadership and an overview.

**Ian Crichton:** Yes.

**Mark McDonald:** I should point out that I was appointed by Aberdeen City Council to be its representative on Scotland Excel, although I never managed to attend a meeting, because the meetings always ended up clashing with other events.

Are all 32 local authorities signed up to every procurement that is undertaken by Scotland Excel?

**Dorothy Cowie:** No. All 32 councils are members, but—I suppose that this may answer a couple of questions—we do not have a one-size-fits-all approach. Councils choose to opt in or opt out. Sometimes, the nature of the contract that we are providing might not fit in with a council's overall business model. Sometimes, a specific local issue might need to be addressed.

As Ian Crichton outlined, when we analysed the opportunities for our contracts, we found that a local approach provided a better fit for some issues, such as taxis. We have a mixed economy: most councils participate in most contracts, but not all councils participate in all contracts. I hope that that answers your question.

**Mark McDonald:** I would find it interesting—I am not sure about the rest of the committee—to know how many councils are signed up to the contract portfolio that is listed in your submission and what savings those councils have realised. You mentioned the combined savings that have been delivered, but what savings have individual councils realised? Obviously, individual councils might not wish to give some of that data, but it might be beneficial to have the data if it is available.

**Dorothy Cowie:** That forms part of the report that goes to the chief executive officers management group and it is available on the web.

**The Convener:** It would be useful for the committee to catch sight of the most recent such report.

**Dorothy Cowie:** We would be happy to provide it.

**The Convener:** Like Mr McDonald, I am an anorak when it comes to these kinds of things.

**Mark McDonald:** Indeed, you taught me well, convener.

I will shift on to the shared services agenda, on which everyone might want to chip in. I note that Colin Mair's submission makes a point about the challenge of the long-term realisation of outcomes and savings and the short-term nature of politics, which I have majored on quite a lot over the years. How do people see us getting beyond some of those blockages? In general, getting politicians to agree to something whose benefits will not be

seen for 10 to 15 years is a difficult sell. Some of the benefits may come more quickly than that, but the optimal benefits might not be realised for perhaps another 10 years.

**Colin Mair:** People are engaged in such a process now, at national and local levels, in relation to prevention. Better integration across the public service in dealing with prevention will pay off, but it will not pay off in any timescale that is directly salient to anyone in this room being re-elected.

Such investments—particularly the efforts that we are starting to make on the very early years, at prenatal stage and so on—will pay off across 10, 15 or 20 years. Because the pattern of outcomes that we have achieved across the past 50 years is dire, the case is made almost negatively, in that we cannot conceivably carry on in the same way, because we would simply reproduce that pattern over time. That is the issue with a lot of shared services.

To take the example that I used in my submission, let us suppose that the committee felt that someone should explore the idea of a payroll Scotland service, whereby every single Scottish public servant—whoever and wherever they were—was paid through a single payroll system. There would surely be economies of scale in that and so on. The honest truth is that we would not expect Angus Council to drive that. Angus Council is interested in the people and communities of Angus. It has a perfectly functional payroll system now so, if there were to be 20-year benefits from the total integration of payroll practice across the Scottish public sector, I suspect that the drive for that would need to come from the Government downwards rather than from a local council upwards.

There is a space in how we create security around longer-term programmes, which people feel are often high risk. Promising benefits 10 years from now is like not promising benefits at all, because nobody will be around to notice. Indeed, 10 years from now, people will have forgotten that those benefits were supposed to arrive. In a political system that is geared towards four-year or five-year cycles—and with a financial system that is geared largely to three-year cycles, although people can do longer-term financial planning—there is a genuine difficulty with the requirements that would need to be put in place for some shared services to make sense, which is that they have much longer-term realisation rates.

You could proceed by fiat—in one sense, Ian Crichton's organisation is an example of an organisation that exists due to a decision of Parliament. If an organisation is set up statutorily, a plan can be developed for how best to play from such a position. However, as Ronnie Hinds

emphasised in the previous evidence session, in local government there are 32 councils that are independent constitutional entities in their own right; they are self-governing and so on. They have to be persuaded that there is a good business case in the foreseeable future for going down a shared service route.

My final point reinforces a point that Dorothy Cowie and Ian Crichton made about benchmarking. In some contexts—that of the Clyde valley programme, for example—we found that the creation of the benchmarks and the baselines caused individual councils to go off and massively improve. Without putting a shared service in place, we got a staggering improvement against the benchmarks, because people were suddenly aware—for the first time—of what the benchmarks were. There are benefits to be had even if an exercise leads to the conclusion that there is no good case for creating a shared service; efficiencies and improvements can still follow.

**The Convener:** Mr Mair, before the other witnesses answer Mr McDonald's question, I have one. You said that the Clyde valley experience led other councils to go on and improve. Where is the tangible evidence that there was improvement?

**Colin Mair:** The evidence is in the councils' own measurements against their own benchmarks. For example, information and communication technology was one of the strands of a potential shared service. It emerged that it did not have a terribly compelling business case—quite a high risk factor was attached to it. However, it gave councils ways to compare their relative performances, costs and so on and that led to improvement and they continue to—

**The Convener:** Did councils perhaps just change their measures because they saw that other councils were measuring in a different way?

**Colin Mair:** That is a proposition that I have not investigated in depth. I am quite happy to go off and do so and report back to you. However, councils were using the measures that they started from as the benchmarking basis of a shared service case.

**The Convener:** It would be interesting for the committee to see whether there were tangible changes. We hear a lot about things being improved here and things being improved there, but it is difficult to get proof of that. If you could find us that information, we would be grateful.

**Colin Mair:** We will.

**The Convener:** We will move back to answering Mr McDonald's original question. Mr Crichton?

**Ian Crichton:** There are a couple of different points in the question. If we consider what is achievable within the five-year political lifespan, I do not subscribe to the idea that everything that is worth doing needs to take 20 years. For example, five years ago, the NHS had no national capability for distribution and warehousing. The minister for health at the time made an active decision that they wanted it. We put it together and, today, every health board in Scotland is serviced from a central distribution point at Larkhall. The benefit is not just the fact that you have all your goods in one place or that you have a resilient distribution network, with transport going all over Scotland even in bad weather; it is the expertise that you start to have about how you manage the ordering of goods at the ward end—at the hospital end—and all the knowledge that you accumulate. We have achieved that in five years.

The business case was set out—committee members can have a look at it if they want to see something tangible about what has been achieved. It was complex but, because there was a definite focus, we were able to make progress in a relatively short time. Not everything is like that. Some of the really big set-piece stuff, such as joining up information support or health and social care integration, will be a much bigger thing to bite off. However, you want a combination of smaller things that can be done more quickly and that make a big difference together with bigger things that are done over a longer time.

As I told you earlier on, one of the benefits that one gets from some of these shared services is expertise. Colin Mair is familiar with the pilots that we have been doing with two local authorities to test out our expertise and see whether it could help. That is an example that is perhaps the opposite of what you are talking about. It is not a big bang-type thing; it is a small, grass-roots, putting-people-with-a-common-interest-together-type thing.

12:15

Just to give you a flavour of that, in one local authority area, we put the council's facilities people together with our facilities people and got them to talk about what we could share that would be helpful to them. Those people are now working on about 14 different things, including the council applying the health service's national cleaning services specification for facilities to its own facilities—after all, a lot of scientific work has gone into that specification and it can be used as it is. The council is also looking at our facilities monitoring tool because—surprise, surprise—monitoring a local authority facility is not that different from monitoring a health service facility. We are also working together on adapting for care

homes the NHS's national food, fluid and nutritional standards for hospitals because—surprise, surprise—the people in those homes are no different from those in hospitals. Their average age might be a bit older, but their nutritional needs are the same. We could have 32 councils working all this stuff up themselves or we could start working together better and using well-evidenced approaches that work. I get as excited about the small stuff that can be done to do the right thing locally as I do about the big national stuff and we really need to be doing both.

**Dorothy Cowie:** I echo those comments. When we started five years ago, we were up and running pretty quickly, albeit on the basis of what we had inherited from the Authorities Buying Consortium.

Again to echo Ian Crichton's point—and speaking from my experience over the past five years—I have to say that we were not really seeking to change the procurement community; actually, we were plugging a gap. As Mrs Mitchell has suggested, procurement might be very technical, but it is very important. There was a little bit of tension to start with, but our experience is that, if you start small, build up trust and get people on board, you will find it much easier to expand things. That was certainly our experience in vehicles and waste. Because we were a bit of an unknown quantity—people did not know how we operated or what was going to happen—there was some fear, so we did a couple of pretty minor contracts and as a result of working with people and getting them used to Scotland Excel's way of doing things, which is very much about collaboration, they are bringing more and more to the party and both contract portfolios are expanding well.

We need a mixture of both approaches that have been mentioned, because key for us has been not just stakeholder engagement and the need to build up relationships but the leadership aspect that we have already discussed and the support that we have received from elected members through the joint committee and from the chief executive officers management group, which comprises six of Scotland's chief executives. On the basis of the past six years' experience, I think that those are among the key ingredients for success.

**The Convener:** Before I bring in Mr Pentland, I have an anorak-ish question about some of your regular, everyday procurements. Do councils use the PECOS system to buy in to you?

**Dorothy Cowie:** About half do. The system is not universally used by all councils. Some with back-office ledger systems have chosen to use the purchase order module but, irrespective of what electronic procurement system is used, we develop and deliver catalogues for all of them.

**The Convener:** Thank you. That was very useful. I call Mr Pentland.

**John Pentland:** Convener, you will be pleased to know that Mr McDonald has already asked my question about contract portfolios. I thank him very much for that.

**Mark McDonald:** Happy to be of service.

**The Convener:** That was brief and to the point, Mr Pentland.

**John Wilson:** Convener, I apologise for not being present for the earlier part of this evidence session.

I thank Scotland Excel for its submission. I note that the contract delivery schedule contained in appendix 2 refers to fostering, adult specialist care and residential children's care. What exactly are you doing in those services? Usually one would expect local authorities to deal directly with fostering services and residential children's care, and I find it strange that Scotland Excel has been asked to become involved in that type of procurement.

**Dorothy Cowie:** I know that the committee was keen to understand how these kinds of opportunities developed. When we analysed spend across the 32 councils, we started off by looking at the areas where a vast number of the local authorities in our community were spending significant amounts of money with the same suppliers. The area of fostering came up very early in that analysis, largely because of the very small number of very large private foster care providers that are involved. We found that total annual spend was about £40 million, the vast majority of which was going to the handful of providers—there were perhaps five or six of them—that most local authorities were dealing with independently.

That was the rationale behind the foster care contract, which took a couple of years to develop using the kind of expertise that, as Ian Crichton has pointed out, Scotland Excel can pull together from directors of social work, social workers, COSLA and the Scottish Government. Indeed, last Friday, the elected members gave us approval to go ahead and award those contracts.

**John Wilson:** So, instead of private foster care providers negotiating with individual authorities, local authorities will now go through Scotland Excel and there will be a flat rate and so on. Out of curiosity, if a local authority had already negotiated a good rate with foster care providers, is there any guarantee that the Scotland Excel rate would be lower than the rate that had been negotiated?

**The Convener:** Mr Wilson, I think that you were out of the room when someone said that local authorities can opt out of any of these contracts.

Nevertheless, it is important to stress that point again.

**Dorothy Cowie:** Absolutely. Because the contracts cover a range of services, it is hard to make a straight comparison, but most of the councils participating in the contract are very keen to use the Scotland Excel framework for new placements. However, it is up to them. There are a number of providers on the framework and individual local authorities can choose which of them to use.

That said, going back to the original question, I think that an awful lot of good stuff is being done in the fostering framework with regard to the arrangements that are in place, the contract itself and the quality of information that will come back to local government to help it manage those providers, some of which are very big international organisations. What we are missing is clarity on the expenditure rate across local government; in other words, those organisations know more about what is going on in local government than local government does and one of the advantages of this kind of framework is not only that we can sort out the up-front aspects of the contract and put in place much more robust terms but that an organisation such as Scotland Excel can gather this kind of management information and feed it back to councils.

We have come at the other areas that Mr Wilson mentioned from the same perspective. The huge amount of work that has gone into the residential schools framework, for example, was again driven by the fact that only a small number of providers were in receipt of what was multimillion-pound expenditure across local government. An Audit Scotland report on this very subject that was published a number of years ago found that, although the number of children who were receiving those services had remained pretty static, the costs had gone up significantly over a number of years. There has been a lot of tension with the suppliers in that market, because they are not used to the degree of scrutiny that we are putting them under in our efforts to understand cost drivers.

However, I hope that we have tried to consult providers. A providers group has supported the strategy's development to ensure that if whatever we develop is going to cause them or the children on the receiving end of that service problems, we can try to iron out those issues. We have had a 12-week consultation period and will have a round-table discussion on that towards the end of April before we launch the tender. It is quite unusual for procurement professionals to be involved but, with regard to secure care and foster care, we have built up relationships with colleagues in COSLA, the Scottish Government

and—most important—the Association of Directors of Social Work, who see the value of what we are delivering back to them. There might not be a reduction in the rate, but the contract will be of much higher quality.

**Anne McTaggart:** I have a small question about residential care, convener. I can say from my experience of social work in Glasgow that our greatest concern with regard to care provided outwith the Glasgow area was with the NHS. Did you say that, in procuring shared services, you collaborate with and speak to the NHS? Normally there would be a whole stramash with the NHS in cases where a Glasgow child was to be in care outwith Glasgow; the education services and the local authority were able to meet each other over that but, as far as the NHS was concerned, it was an absolute no-no.

**Dorothy Cowie:** We have probably not cracked that one entirely, but I think that, because 32 local authorities are no longer trying to connect with however many health boards there are, it is a bit easier to make connections than it used to be. We are working very closely with Ian Crichton's procurement team across the health and social care agenda. When, for example, we carried out a forensic analysis of what we were paying for in our secure care contract, which also involves children, we realised that we were paying for the kind of health provision that health boards were able to provide. Because no one had really been managing those secure care providers and analysing the costs, a lot was hidden. We are flushing out lots of things and now have a big pile of things that we need to find solutions to. The example that you have highlighted is one of them.

**Anne McTaggart:** The situation that I alluded to was, if nothing else, dangerous and very frustrating if you were trying to secure the best outcome for the child.

**Dorothy Cowie:** Indeed.

**The Convener:** My final question is again for Dorothy Cowie and relates to the procurements themselves. In how many of your contracts and how much of your day-to-day procurement do you deal with third sector organisations?

**Dorothy Cowie:** We have a couple of contracts with reserved businesses. Many third sector organisations are involved in the health and social care areas of our development plan, and we have a lot of engagement through the provider forums that we have set up with the sector.

We are also working with the Scottish Government's developing markets for third sector providers programme and the Ready for Business consortium, whose whole raison d'être is to work with us and councils to develop opportunities for third sector providers and to try to embed more

community benefits into the clauses of our contracts.

**The Convener:** So none of the new social care contracts that you have just signed up to involves the third sector at all.

**Dorothy Cowie:** Not to the best of my knowledge. The residential care and some of the further care packages that we are looking at will involve the third sector. Moreover, something that the Ready for Business consortium is keen to do and which we are keen to support is to find a couple of areas where we could use a PSP model in working with third sector providers.

**The Convener:** What is a PSP model?

**Dorothy Cowie:** I have forgotten. I think that it stands for public social—

**Ian Crichton:** Partnership.

**Dorothy Cowie:** Thank you very much. There are a couple of examples of that third sector model in local authorities, and we are keen to support them.

**The Convener:** It would be extremely useful to get some indication of the number of deals that you have with the third sector and how much that business is worth.

**Dorothy Cowie:** Okay.

**The Convener:** I thank all the witnesses for their time. We move into private session.

12:28

*Meeting continued in private until 12:46.*

Members who would like a printed copy of the *Official Report* to be forwarded to them should give notice to SPICe.

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# School education



Prepared by Audit Scotland  
June 2014



# The Accounts Commission

The Accounts Commission is the public spending watchdog for local government. We hold councils in Scotland to account and help them improve. We operate impartially and independently of councils and of the Scottish Government, and we meet and report in public.

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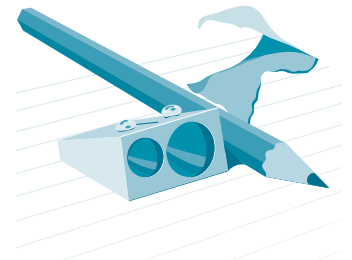
- securing and acting upon the external audit of Scotland's councils and various joint boards and committees
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- carrying out national performance audits to help councils improve their services
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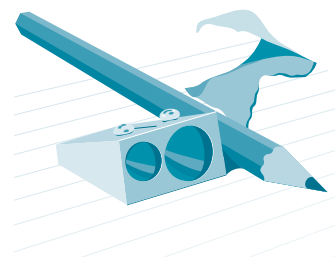


## Exhibit data

When viewing this report online, you can access background data by clicking on the graph icon. The data file will open in a new window.

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# Summary



## Background

- 1.** Education is fundamental in shaping a child's life. Getting a good education improves the likelihood of earning a higher income, enjoying better health and living longer. An effective school education system is an important factor in supporting the Scottish Government's strategic objectives to be a 'Smarter Scotland' and a 'Wealthier and Fairer Scotland'.<sup>1</sup> Better educational outcomes are a strong predictor of economic growth, and success in a global economy means that Scotland needs to keep pace with the best countries in the world.
- 2.** In 2013, there were 665,499 primary and secondary pupils in Scotland being taught by 47,770 teachers in 2,418 council-run schools.<sup>2</sup> Education is compulsory between the ages of five and 16 in Scotland. Children spend seven years in primary school (P1-P7) and at least four years in secondary school (S1-S4). Pupils can then leave school at 16 or stay on for one or two more years (S5 and S6). Pupils undertake a range of qualifications between S4 and S6. These are delivered not only in schools but also through colleges and third sector organisations. Pupil numbers have been declining since the mid-nineties, but started to increase in 2013 and are projected to continue increasing.
- 3.** The main organisations involved in the Scottish education system are:

  - **The Scottish Government**, develops national policy and sets the overall direction of education policy.
  - **Councils**, responsible under the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 for providing school education for every child of school age. This includes developing local education policy, and planning and managing resources to improve the quality of school education.
  - **Education Scotland**, works to improve the quality of education, for example by inspecting schools and by developing the curriculum.
  - **The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)**, accredits and awards qualifications at both secondary and college level.
  - **The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership**, manages the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. This sets out the level and type of qualifications that are available.
  - **The General Teaching Council Scotland**, the independent professional body that promotes and regulates all teachers in Scotland.
- 4.** In 2002, the then Scottish Executive set up a 'National Debate on Education' to develop its long-term education policy. A year later, it established a Curriculum Review Group to identify the purposes of education for the 3-18 age range and to determine key principles for curriculum design. The group published its report, *A Curriculum for Excellence* (CfE) in

2004, setting out the aims of education and the principles that should underpin the modern curriculum.<sup>3</sup> Exam performance (attainment) is still an integral part of the system but CfE also aims to ensure pupils develop a range of skills for living and working in the wider world (wider achievement). Pupils receive a broad general education from early years through to the end of S3 and take formal qualifications in the senior phase. CfE was formally implemented in schools in 2010.

## About this audit

**5.** School education accounts for a significant proportion of local government spending, and a number of important education policy developments have taken place in recent years, such as the introduction of CfE. However, there has been no independent evaluation of how much councils spend on education and what this delivers in terms of improved attainment and wider achievement for pupils. 2014 is the first year in which pupils are sitting new qualifications introduced as part of CfE. Comparisons with previous years will not be possible for some time. This audit is therefore timely as it provides an assessment of attainment over the last decade and identifies how effectively councils made improvements during this time.

**6.** Our audit assessed how efficiently and effectively councils are using their resources to maximise pupil achievement in schools. We examined:



- how much councils spend on school education and what they spend it on
- how effectively councils are driving forward improvements in pupil achievement
- how efficiently councils are using their resources to maximise pupil achievement.

**7.** The audit focused on primary and secondary school education in Scotland. We did not examine early years, pre-school, or special school education; independent schools; or further and higher education establishments. We also did not look at progress in implementing CfE or the quality of teaching in Scotland. We reviewed how councils deliver education, but did not examine the role of the Scottish Government, Education Scotland or other stakeholders such as the SQA.

**8.** There is a range of attainment measures used within Scottish education. We have selected ten of these to examine performance across the entire senior phase, S4-S6. The selected measures are closely aligned to the measures that councils report to their own education committees.

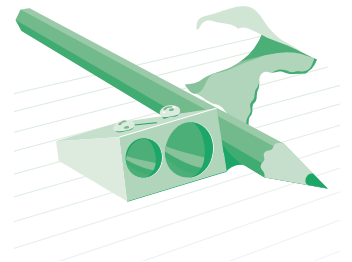
**9.** This report has three parts:

- [Part 1](#) examines how much councils spend on education and how this has changed
- [Part 2](#) assesses exam performance over the last decade for S4-S6 and examines what wider achievement activities are available for pupils to prepare them for life and work
- [Part 3](#) comments on what councils have been doing to improve attainment and wider achievement and how they are targeting their resources to seek improvement.

**10. [Appendix 1](#)** outlines performance in the ten attainment measures we use in the report. **[Appendix 2](#)** lists members of our advisory group who provided support and advice throughout the audit. We have also produced a separate [checklist of issues \(PDF\)](#)  for elected members to consider when scrutinising education services. Details of our audit methodology are provided in a separate [supplement \(PDF\)](#) .

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# Key messages



- 1** In 2012/13, councils spent £4.8 billion on education services, of which £3.8 billion was spent on primary and secondary education. Around two-thirds of this expenditure (68 per cent) was on staff costs. Councils' spending on education fell by five per cent in real terms between 2010/11 and 2012/13, largely as a result of employing fewer staff. Councils' education services are likely to continue to face budgetary pressures, and they need to be alert to the potential impact of increased workloads on remaining staff.
- 2** Performance has improved against all ten of the attainment measures we examined over the last decade. However, there is significant variation in attainment between individual councils, schools, and groups of pupils; and there is a considerable gap between Scotland and the top performing countries. Current measures at both national and council level focus on the attainment of secondary pupils at S4-S6 level. There are no comparable measures available at a council and national level on wider achievement, or the performance of pupils from P1-S3.
- 3** Levels of deprivation have a large influence on attainment. Some schools have achieved better attainment results than their levels of deprivation would indicate, suggesting that the gap between the lowest and highest performing schools cannot be wholly attributed to different levels of deprivation. Closing the gap in performance between schools is likely to be critical to improving overall attainment levels.
- 4** Councils that have made the most improvements have focused on areas such as developing leadership skills, and improving both teacher quality and systems for monitoring and tracking pupil data. There are also increasing opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of skills for living and working in the wider world. Councils are starting to target resources to improve both attainment and wider achievement but there is scope to improve strategic planning and strengthen the role of elected members in holding education services to account.

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## Recommendations

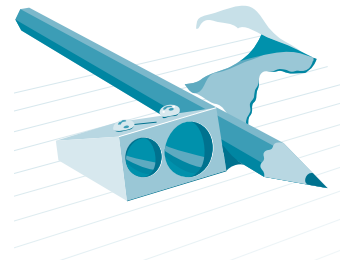
The Curriculum for Excellence represents a significant shift in the way education is delivered in our schools. This has important implications for the economic wellbeing of Scotland, and the future prospects of young people. The recommendations outlined below are intended to support further progress and will involve councils working with key stakeholders.

### Councils should:

- ensure they fully understand why levels of attainment vary between their schools and different groups of pupils
  - develop and implement strategies to reduce the gaps in performance between the highest and lowest performing schools
  - continue to work with the Scottish Government and Education Scotland to develop a suite of agreed performance measures which would provide an overall picture of educational attainment and achievement across Scotland
  - review the sufficiency of information provided to education committees on attainment at S4-S6, pupil performance between P1-S3 and wider achievement. They should also ensure committees have the time and support to adequately challenge and hold to account education services
  - develop more coordinated approaches to gathering and recording information on the range of wider achievement activities offered in schools, including the levels of pupil participation and the outcomes they achieve. This will help councils to scrutinise performance and ensure resources are being used as efficiently as possible
  - ensure education strategic documents contain clear priorities and actions that set out what is to be achieved in the short, medium and long term. Performance management arrangements should monitor outcomes and report regularly on delivery against strategic objectives, such as raising attainment among the lowest performing pupils
  - consistently use the Scottish Local Government Benchmarking Framework to compare their performance against other councils, and share good practice to improve educational attainment and wider achievement
  - fully assess the potential long-term impact on attainment and wider achievement of budget reductions
  - monitor and act on the impact of revised working practices and staff reductions across all affected groups (eg, teachers, administrative staff, classroom assistants) on staff wellbeing by, for example, monitoring sickness absence levels, and through specific questions in staff surveys.
-

# Part 1

## School expenditure



### Key messages

- 1** In 2012/13, councils spent £4.8 billion on education services, of which £3.8 billion was spent on primary and secondary education. Two-thirds of this expenditure (68 per cent) was on staff costs. Councils' spending on education reduced by five per cent in real terms between 2010/11 and 2012/13, largely as a result of employing fewer staff.
- 2** Spend per pupil varied across councils in 2012/13 from £4,433 to £10,821. Factors influencing how much councils spend on school education per pupil include rurality, the proportion of promoted posts and the number of chartered teachers employed.
- 3** As well as employing fewer staff, councils have adopted other strategies and approaches to reducing their education spending. These include changes to teachers' terms and conditions, increasing classroom teaching time, seeking efficiencies in school transport, and reducing training budgets. Councils' education services are likely to continue to face budgetary pressures, and they need to be alert to the potential impact of increased workloads on remaining staff.

spending  
on school  
education  
has been  
reducing,  
largely  
through  
councils  
employing  
fewer staff

### Education is the single largest area of council expenditure

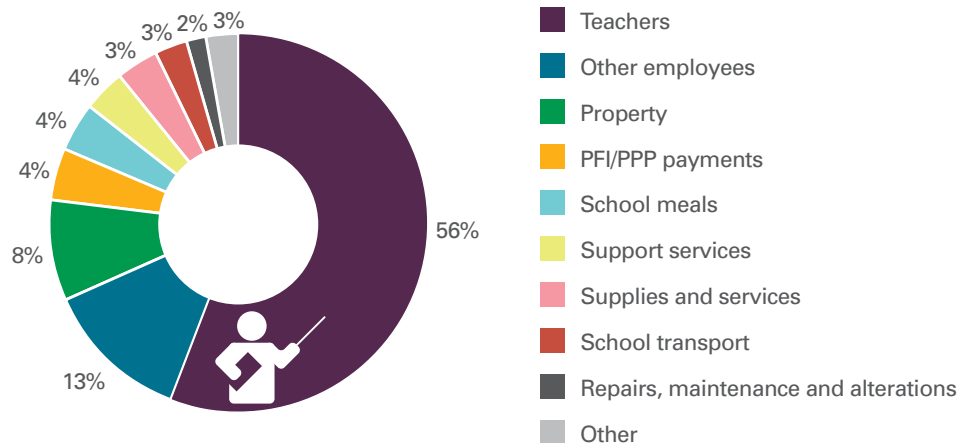
**11.** School education is mainly funded through the block grant that the Scottish Government provides to councils. The Scottish Government provides indicative funding allocations for each of the main council services. Councils then decide how best to allocate funding to individual services, based on their own priorities. In addition to the block grant, councils raise funding through council tax and service charges. They can also receive funding for specific education programmes and initiatives from a range of bodies including sportscotland, and independent trusts and charities. Schools and parents also contribute through fundraising activities.

**12.** In 2012/13, councils spent £4.8 billion on education, of which £4 billion was provided through the block grant.<sup>4</sup> Education is the single largest area of council expenditure, accounting for almost a third (31 per cent) of total revenue expenditure in 2012/13. The majority of education expenditure, £3.8 billion (80 per cent), was on primary and secondary school education ('school expenditure'). The remaining expenditure was on community learning and development, pre-school education, and special schools. Over half of school expenditure, £2.1 billion (56 per cent), was spent on teachers. Councils spent another £470 million (13 per cent) on other staff such as classroom assistants, laboratory technicians and administrative staff ([Exhibit 1, page 9](#)).

## Exhibit 1

### Breakdown of primary and secondary education revenue expenditure, 2012/13

Over half of council education spending is on teachers.



Note:

1. PFI and PPP stand for Private Finance Initiative and Public Private Partnerships. PFI/PPP charges are made against councils' education and corporate budgets, depending on the nature of the spend. The costs shown here relate only to the school education budget.

2. 'Other' includes parent council funding and expenditure on school textbooks.

Source: Audit Scotland analysis of councils' Local Financial Returns and additional information provided by councils, 2012/13



**13.** Councils spent almost as much on the primary sector as they did on the secondary sector in 2012/13, with £1.8 billion (48 per cent) spent on primary education and £2 billion (52 per cent) spent on secondary education. Spend per pupil across Scotland in 2012/13 was higher in the secondary sector at £6,525 per pupil, than in the primary sector at £4,667 per pupil (see [paragraph 17, page 10](#) for further explanation of spend per pupil).

### School expenditure reduced by five per cent over the last three years

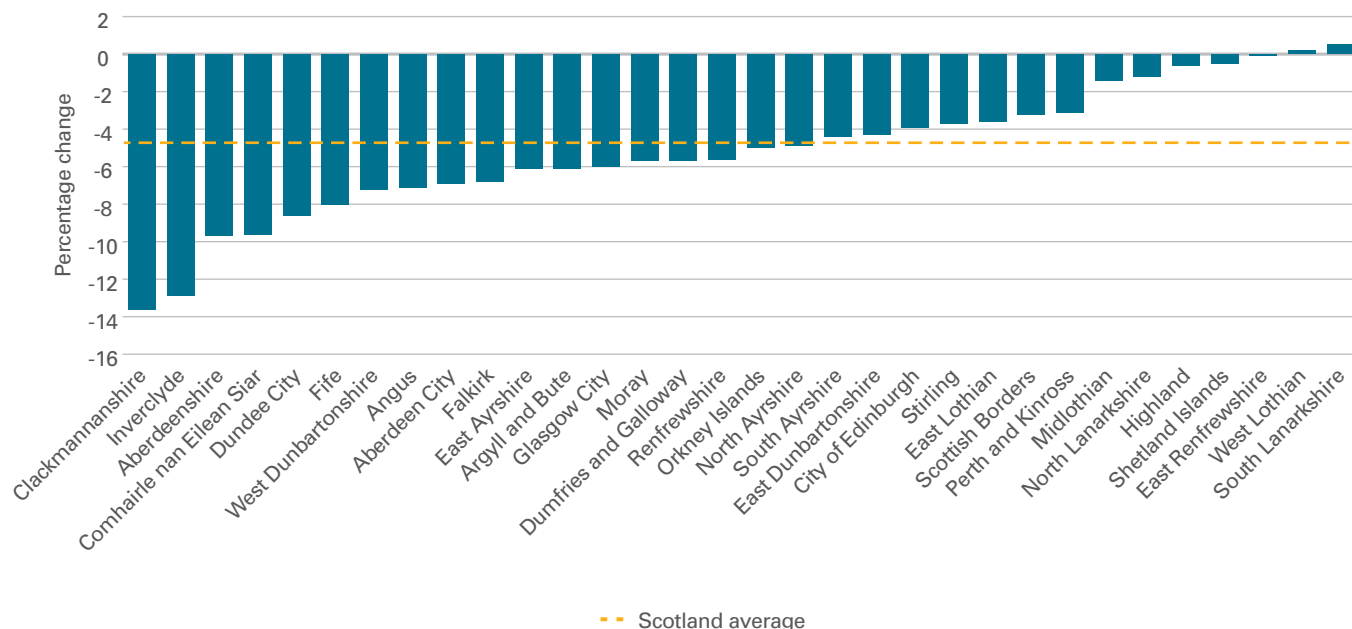
**14.** Between 2010/11 and 2012/13, councils reduced spending on primary and secondary education by five per cent in real terms, that is, taking into account the effects of inflation. The reductions in spending were similar across both the secondary school sector (five per cent reduction in real terms) and the primary school sector (four per cent reduction in real terms). However, the reductions do not fully reflect changes in pupil numbers over the same period. Between 2010 and 2013, the number of secondary school pupils declined by four per cent. In contrast, the number of primary school pupils increased by three per cent. At a council level, changes in school expenditure over the past three years varied widely, ranging from an almost 14 per cent reduction in Clackmannanshire to an increase of almost one per cent in South Lanarkshire ([Exhibit 2, page 10](#)).

**15.** It is important to note that these figures represent a snapshot in time. Councils started making changes to education budgets at different times, so over the period on which we have based our analysis, councils were at different stages in making savings. It is also not possible to compare education expenditure between 2010/11 and 2012/13 with earlier years. This is due to changes in international accounting standards and how councils account for unitary charges for Private Finance Initiatives and Public Private Partnership contracts.<sup>5</sup>



**Exhibit 2****Changes in school revenue expenditure in real terms, 2010/11-2012/13**

Most councils have reduced spending on schools over the past three years.



Source: Audit Scotland analysis of councils' Local Financial Returns and additional information provided by councils, 2010/11-2012/13



**16.** Reductions in education expenditure between 2010/11 and 2012/13 mirror wider reductions in council funding and expenditure. The Scottish Government's overall block grant to councils reduced by eight per cent in real terms between 2010/11 and 2012/13.<sup>6</sup> Councils' overall expenditure reduced by five per cent over the same period.<sup>7</sup>

### **Spend per pupil varies widely across the country with rural councils spending the most**

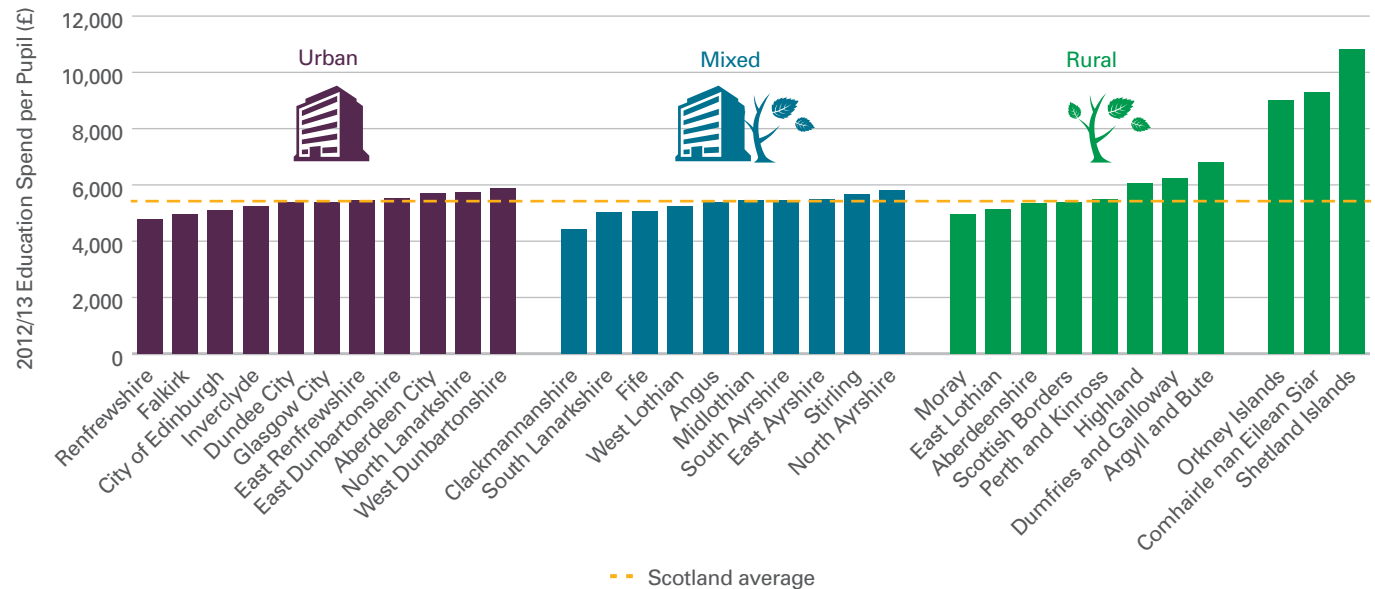
**17.** In 2012/13, the average spend per pupil across Scotland was £5,468 ([Exhibit 3, page 11](#))<sup>8</sup> and varied:

- across urban councils, from £4,782 in Renfrewshire to £5,899 in West Dunbartonshire – £1,117 difference
- among councils with a mix of urban and rural areas, from £4,433 in Clackmannanshire to £5,799 in North Ayrshire – £1,366 difference
- across rural councils, from £4,966 in Moray to £6,796 in Argyll and Bute – £1,830 difference
- among the island councils, from £9,005 in Orkney to £10,821 in Shetland Islands – £1,816 difference.

### Exhibit 3

#### Spend per pupil by council, 2012/13

Spend per pupil varies widely across Scotland.



Note: Councils were categorised using the Scottish Government's Urban Rural classification, 2011/12.

Source: Audit Scotland analysis using councils' Local Financial Returns and additional information provided by councils, 2012/13; and data from *Pupils in Scotland*, Scottish Government, 2013



**18.** Councils with more rural areas, including the island councils, generally spend more per pupil for a number of reasons:

- In general, there is a lower average number of pupils in each school. As a result, teacher costs per pupil are higher. In 2013, there was an average of 113 pupils per primary school in rural councils compared to an average of 265 primary pupils per school in urban councils.
- Because distances are greater and pupils are more widely spread, school transport costs are higher. For example, Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute and Highland councils spent six per cent of their total school expenditure on school transport in 2012/13, the highest of all mainland councils. In comparison, school transport accounted for 0.2 per cent of Dundee City Council's total school expenditure in 2012/13.
- The school estate tends to be larger due to high numbers of small primary schools. This brings increased maintenance and running costs.
- Recruiting both permanent and supply teaching staff can be more challenging for rural councils. As a consequence, employment costs can be higher as councils try to attract staff. For example, Aberdeenshire Council has found it difficult recently to fill teacher vacancies. To address this, the council ran an international recruitment campaign offering benefits such as help with housing to successful applicants.

**19.** In urban councils, differences in spend per pupil are mainly influenced by how much is spent on teachers. Higher proportions of promoted posts in the teacher workforce; more chartered teachers; and greater incidences of salary conservation among teachers (ie, when a salary is protected for a specified length of time) all impact on how much councils spend on teachers.<sup>9, 10</sup> To ensure services are being provided as efficiently as possible, councils must fully understand the factors influencing their spend per pupil, and how this compares to other councils.

### **Councils have reduced what they spend on school education mainly by employing fewer staff**

**20.** Councils have reduced spending on schools in the past three years largely as a result of employing fewer teachers. Between 2010/11 and 2012/13, spending on teachers reduced by seven per cent in real terms. All councils (except East Lothian which remained the same) reduced expenditure on teachers over this period. This ranged from a two per cent reduction in South Lanarkshire to 19 per cent in Stirling.

**21.** Overall teacher numbers reduced by 815 full-time equivalent (FTE) (two per cent) between 2010 and 2013 ([Exhibit 4, page 13](#)).<sup>11</sup> Teacher numbers reduced in the secondary sector over this period by 1,081 FTE (four per cent) and in the primary sector by 190 FTE (one per cent). In contrast, teachers classified as centrally employed increased by 456 FTE (64 per cent) over the same period. These are teachers who may work across more than one school, for example music teachers. However, because of the way data is collected, we are unable to assess the extent to which these changes are a result of:

- councils re-categorising staff from school-based teachers to centrally employed, or
- councils employing additional centrally employed teachers.

**22.** The biggest reduction is in teachers in their 50s leaving work, either through retirement or voluntary early release schemes. In 2012/13, 29 out of 32 councils used early departure and early retirement schemes to reduce staff numbers.<sup>12</sup> The average age profile of teachers is now 41.9 years, a reduction of 0.9 years since 2010. Twenty-seven councils have reviewed teaching staff formulas in the past three years to help make efficiency savings.<sup>13</sup> Pupil/teacher ratios have remained almost the same in the secondary sector since 2010, increasing by 0.1 pupils per teacher to 12.2 in 2013. In the primary sector, the pupil/teacher ratio increased from 15.8 pupils per teacher in 2010 to 16.5 in 2013.

**23.** Councils also reduced their spending on other education staff by 11 per cent in real terms between 2010/11 and 2012/13. Reasons for this include:

- councils using Quality Improvement Officers (QIOs) in a more proportionate and risk-based way, encouraging schools to evaluate their own performance. QIOs provide support and challenge to schools to help them improve and those that remain in post are increasingly targeting their efforts only at those schools that need extra support.
- service efficiency reviews and restructurings that have taken place within many council education departments.

## Exhibit 4

### Changes in FTE education staffing numbers, 2010-13

Reductions have been made across all staffing groups.

#### Teachers

(school-based and centrally based)



<b>-2%</b>	2010	2013	Change
	48,585	47,770	<b>-815</b>

#### Business managers

(school-based)



<b>-22%</b>	2010	2013	Change
	261	204	<b>-57</b>

#### Admin and clerical

Office managers; other admin, professional, technical and clerical staff (school-based)



<b>-5%</b>	2010	2013	Change
	5,415	5,162	<b>-253</b>

#### Laboratory assistants and technicians



<b>-12%</b>	2010	2013	Change
	1,272	1,122	<b>-150</b>

#### Classroom assistants



<b>-2%</b>	2010	2013	Change
	5,048	4,944	<b>-104</b>

#### Quality Improvement Officers



<b>-22%</b>	2010	2013	Change
	472	369	<b>-103</b>

Notes: 1. The staff types are those used in the Scottish Government annual census of education staff.  
2. Changes to staff are shown in calendar years rather than financial years as the data is gathered through an annual census of education staff carried out in September each year.

Source: Audit Scotland, using *Teachers in Scotland*, Scottish Government, 2010 and 2013

**24.** Other than staffing, councils have been reducing their education spending in a range of other ways. Examples include:

- Making savings from changes to teachers' terms and conditions of service, following the 2011 Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers pay and conditions agreement. This reduced annual leave for teachers on maternity and long-term sick leave from 66 to 40 days, increased time in the classroom for probationary teachers and introduced changes to supply contracts.
- Reducing the length of secondary school classroom periods from 55 minutes to 50 minutes and increasing the weekly number of periods from 30 up to 33. This has helped maximise teachers' class contact time and reduce the need for supply teachers. In keeping with the aims of CfE, schools also now have more flexibility to provide vocational opportunities and wider achievement activities for pupils.
- Re-tendering school transport when contracts are renewed. Some councils have also reviewed how they provide transport, for example by replacing larger vehicles with smaller ones and reviewing routes to reduce the amount of fuel usage.
- Reducing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes and training budgets to schools and using in-house staff to deliver training instead of external providers.

## Councils' education budgets will continue to face pressures

**25.** Public sector finances will continue to be under pressure for the foreseeable future. An ageing population, changes to the welfare system, and the impact of the recent recession are also increasing demand for many public services. Councils need to allocate limited money, staff and other assets to individual services in line with their priorities and needs. As a result, elected members will need to consider and balance the demand for resources from education services with those of other services.

**26.** Education services are also likely to face a number of specific challenges that will place increasing pressure on finances. These include:

- increasing demand for teachers and education services, as a result of rising pupil numbers in some areas, especially in the primary sector
- Scottish Government commitments to reduce class sizes, especially for younger pupils in P1-P3
- public and political opposition to proposals to close schools, which may mean councils are unable to make the financial savings that closures could bring
- meeting the requirements of pupils with additional support needs in special schools and classes, and in mainstream schools
- maintaining and upgrading the school estate. Although councils have made significant progress in recent years, 18 per cent of schools remain in poor or bad condition.<sup>14</sup>

**27.** Many of the approaches to reducing budgets have only been introduced in the last two or three years. Given that staff costs comprise over two-thirds of councils' expenditure, employing fewer staff is an obvious way to reduce spending. However, councils need to be aware of the potential impact on remaining staff. More work is needed to monitor the impact of staff reductions on front-line services and also on the capacity of functions such as central education staff. Pressures arising from additional responsibilities or extra workload could result in increased sickness absence or low staff morale. Councils also need to understand the longer-term effect that budget reductions could have on efforts to raise attainment among pupils.

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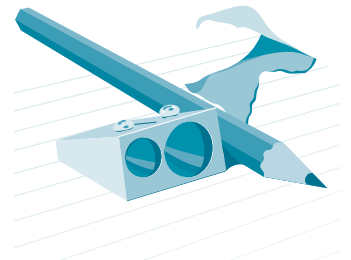
## Recommendations

### Councils should:

- fully assess the potential long-term impact on attainment and wider achievement of budget reductions
  - monitor and act on the impact of revised working practices and staff reductions across all affected groups (eg, teachers, administrative staff, classroom assistants) on staff wellbeing by, for example, monitoring sickness absence levels, and through specific questions in staff surveys.
-

# Part 2

## Pupil attainment and wider achievement



### Key messages

- 1** There is a lack of information on overall pupil performance at both a local and national level. Current measures focus on attainment of secondary pupils at S4-S6 level. There are no comparable measures of wider achievement, or the performance of pupils in P1-S3 available at both a council and national level.
- 2** Attainment in S4-S6 has improved over the last decade. However, it is not clear whether these improvements are greater or less than expected due to a lack of national targets. There is significant variation in attainment between individual councils, schools and groups of pupils, and there is a considerable gap between Scotland and top performing countries.
- 3** Deprivation continues to have a large influence on attainment. There are significant differences in attainment between pupils from deprived areas and those from more affluent areas. However, some schools have achieved better attainment results than their levels of deprivation would indicate, suggesting that the gap between the lowest and highest performing schools cannot be wholly attributed to different levels of deprivation. Closing the gap between schools is likely to be critical to improving overall attainment levels.
- 4** There are increasing opportunities for pupils to participate in activities that aim to improve their confidence and help them develop the skills required as they leave school and move into employment, training or continued education. Schools and councils need to ensure that they can scrutinise the outcomes from these activities to ensure that they meet the needs of pupils.

**attainment  
has improved  
over the  
last decade  
but there is  
significant  
variation  
between  
councils and  
pupils**

### Pupils' learning experiences have become much broader in recent years

**28.** Pupils in Scotland undertake a variety of courses and qualifications aimed at ensuring they gain both nationally recognised qualifications and wider employability and social skills. Traditionally, schools were the main providers of courses although learning has always taken place outside the classroom, at home and in the community. However, the range and types of courses available to pupils are now much wider and there is greater opportunity for pupil personalisation and choice ([Exhibit 5, page 16](#)).

**Exhibit 5****Pupil learning in Scotland**

Pupils learn in a wide variety of ways, with examples shown below.



## WIDER ACHIEVEMENT SQA QUALIFICATIONS

- ★ Employability
- ★ Leadership
- ★ Personal development

## ACCREDITED WIDER ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



- ★ Dynamic Youth
- ★ Duke of Edinburgh
- ★ John Muir



## PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT

- ★ Volunteering
- ★ Taking part in sports club
- ★ Taking part in music club
- ★ Caring responsibility at home

## VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS



- ★ Hairdressing
- ★ Early education and childcare
- ★ Computer skills
- ★ Sports and recreation



## NON-VOCATIONAL COURSES AND EXAMS

- ★ English and maths
- ★ Geography
- ★ History



**29.** In delivering educational opportunities to pupils, councils are increasingly working in partnership with colleges to provide vocational qualifications. For example, Falkirk Council has had a formal partnership with Forth Valley College for more than a decade, providing pupils with opportunities to attend college during the school day to gain qualifications in a range of vocational subjects. Third sector organisations such as the John Muir Trust are involved in delivering wider achievement awards and programmes.

### **Existing measures do not fully capture a pupil's performance throughout their time at school**

#### **Measures of attainment focus on pupils in S4-S6**

**30.** Pupil performance in Scotland is measured nationally by the number and level of qualifications passed by pupils in secondary school. There are a range of attainment measures used within Scottish education. We have selected ten of these to examine the range of performance across the entire senior phase (S4-S6) ([Appendix 1](#)). The selected measures are closely aligned to the measures that councils report to their own education committees.

**31.** The achievements of some pupils who take vocational courses at local colleges are not captured by existing attainment measures. Pupils can complete courses at college but their achievements are not recognised in existing school performance measures. The *Interim Report* of the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce in 2013 recommended that the delivery of vocational qualifications for school pupils should be explicitly measured and published alongside other school performance measures.<sup>15</sup> In addition, pupils can complete groups of units at school or college, without completing the full course. These are also not captured in existing measures.

#### **Some assessment of pupil performance between P1 and S3 is made but it is not possible to compare the results between councils**

**32.** Pupil performance during primary and up to S3 is collected nationally through the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN).<sup>16</sup> Introduced in 2011 to reflect the changes brought about by the Curriculum for Excellence, the SSLN is an annual survey of a sample of P4, P7, and S2 pupils across the country that tests literacy and numeracy skills in alternate years. The SSLN is designed to provide national-level results. Results cannot be used at a council level due to the small numbers of pupils selected to participate in each council.

**33.** At a council level, there is no consistent approach to tracking and monitoring the progress of pupils from P1 to S3. Twenty-seven councils use some form of standardised testing at council level to assess and track the progress of their pupils from P1 to S3. This involves testing pupils at various stages to assess their progress in literacy and numeracy and comparing this with expected progress. The type of testing used and the extent to which pupils are tested varies across the country. For example, some councils test pupils in P1, P3, P5, P7 and S2 while others test less frequently than this.

#### **There are no comparable performance measures addressing pupils' wider achievement**

**34.** There are no national performance measures on pupils' wider achievements, for example the number of pupils participating in specific award programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh. Sixteen councils were able to provide us with data on their pupils' wider achievements in formal awards and programmes but there is significant variation around what each council collects.



**35.** The Scottish Government is currently working with councils, national education agencies and other partners to develop a new benchmarking tool. The aim is that this tool will include a new set of performance measures that will take some account of pupils' wider achievement. This new tool is scheduled to be in place by August 2014. We discuss wider achievement in more detail in [\(paragraphs 56–60\)](#).

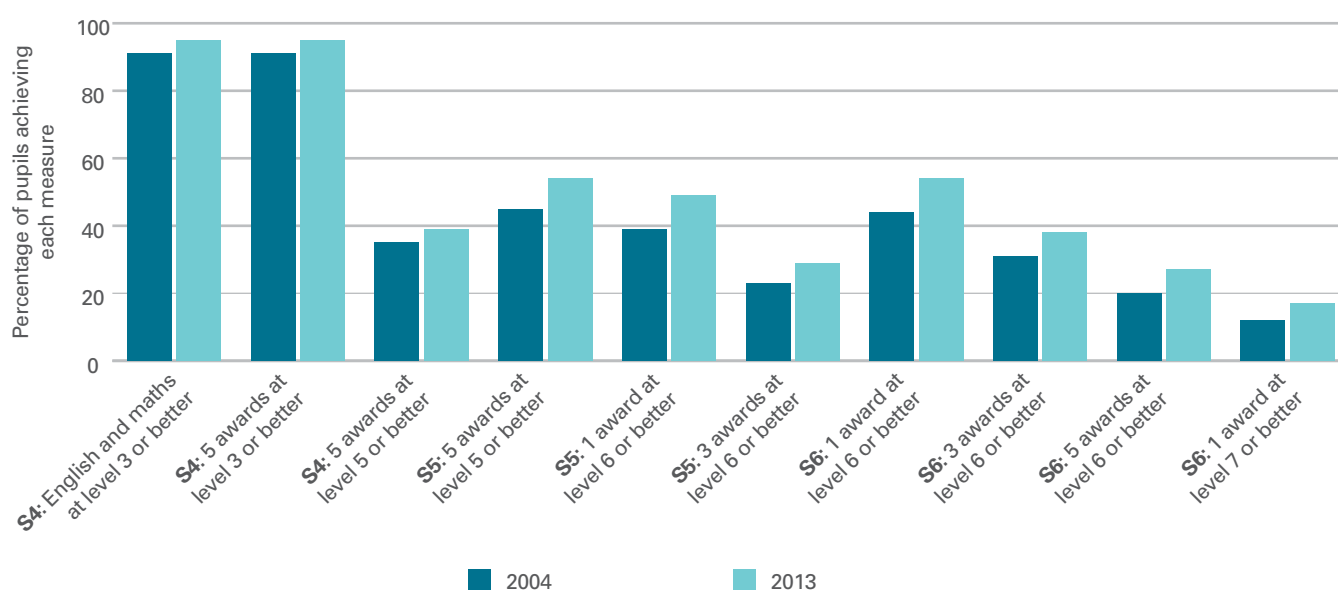
### Attainment levels have improved over the past decade

**36.** Nationally, attainment has improved across all ten of the attainment measures we selected over the past decade, although the level of improvement has been mixed [\(Exhibit 6\)](#). Attainment improved by four per cent for the measures at S4 level between 2004 and 2013. At S5 and S6 levels, attainment improved between five and ten per cent. The vast majority of the improvements in attainment have been made in the past five years.

#### Exhibit 6

##### Percentage of pupils achieving each of the ten attainment measures we selected in 2004 and 2013

Attainment has improved across all ten measures in the past decade although to differing degrees.



Note: Appendix 1 explains what each attainment measure means.

Source: Audit Scotland, using data from Scottish Government Education Analytical Services Division



**37.** There are no national targets for exam performance. Therefore it is not clear whether the rate of improvement across the ten attainment measures over the last ten years is above or below what should be expected by councils.

**38.** The attainment gap between the highest and lowest-performing pupils in secondary education has closed slightly over the past five years. Every level and type of qualification in Scotland has an accompanying points score. The points gained by each pupil are added to create an overall tariff score. In 2012 (the most recent year available at time of reporting), the highest performing 20 per cent of

S4 pupils in Scotland had an average tariff score of 298. The lowest performing 20 per cent of S4 pupils had a tariff score of 71. The national average is 187. The gap between the highest and lowest performing 20 per cent of pupils narrowed slightly from 235 points in 2008 to 227 points in 2012.

**Nationally, most P4 and P7 pupils are performing well but performance is not sustained into secondary school**

**39.** Results from the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy show that:

- The majority of P4 and P7 pupils tested are performing well, very well or beyond their expected stage in numeracy and literacy. However, the percentage of pupils performing at this level in numeracy declined by eight per cent for P4 pupils and by six per cent for P7 pupils between 2011 and 2013. Literacy was first tested in the SSLN in 2012 so trend figures are not yet available.
- S2 pupils' performance in literacy is similar to those of P4 and P7 pupils. However, S2 pupils performed significantly worse against the standard expected than primary pupils in numeracy in both 2011 and 2013. In 2013, 42 per cent of S2 pupils performed well or very well in numeracy compared to 69 per cent of P4 pupils and 66 per cent of P7 pupils. One-third (35 per cent) of S2 pupils in 2013 were not working at their expected level in numeracy compared to only 0.2 per cent of P4 pupils and two per cent of P7 pupils.

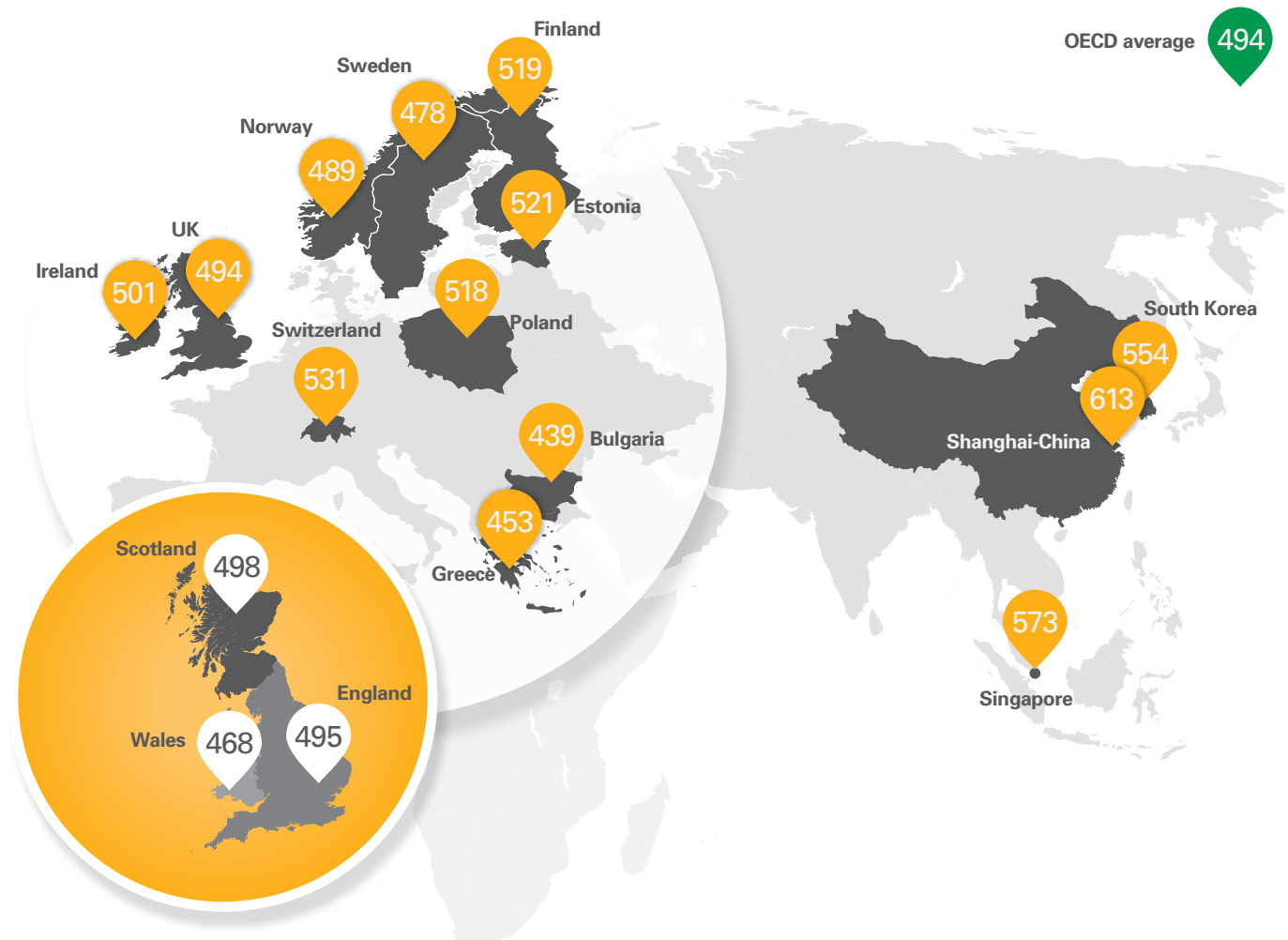
**There is a considerable gap between Scotland and top performing countries**

**40.** International comparisons show that the academic performance of Scotland's pupils in recent years is static, after a period of relative decline. As part of its national performance framework, the Scottish Government uses the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), run by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), to compare how Scotland is performing against other OECD countries.<sup>17</sup> A sample of pupils in each participating country is assessed in reading, maths and science every three years. Between 2000 and 2006, Scotland's performance in reading deteriorated and between 2003 and 2006 performance in maths also fell.<sup>18</sup> Since 2006, performance in reading, science and maths has remained static. Scotland's performance has been above the OECD average in reading and science since 2009 and has been similar to the OECD average in maths.

**41.** Compared to other UK countries, Scotland's performance since 2006 (the first year that can be compared) has been similar to England and Northern Ireland in most areas and better than Wales.<sup>19</sup> More widely, a number of other countries have continued to improve in recent years compared to Scotland (eg, Poland), while some have seen a relative decline (eg, Australia and New Zealand). Overall, there is a considerable gap between Scotland and the top performing countries ([Exhibit 7, page 20](#)). All countries have different education systems and the focus of these will differ according to each country's national and local priorities. However, it is important that Scotland is able to keep pace with the best performing countries if it is to compete effectively in the global economy.

**Exhibit 7****PISA scores in mathematics, 2012**

There is a considerable gap between Scotland and the top performing countries.



Note: These are mean scores for each country. As with all sample surveys, the values shown are subject to sampling error which means the true value could be slightly higher or lower than that shown.

Source: Audit Scotland using *PISA 2012 Results in Focus*, OECD, 2013

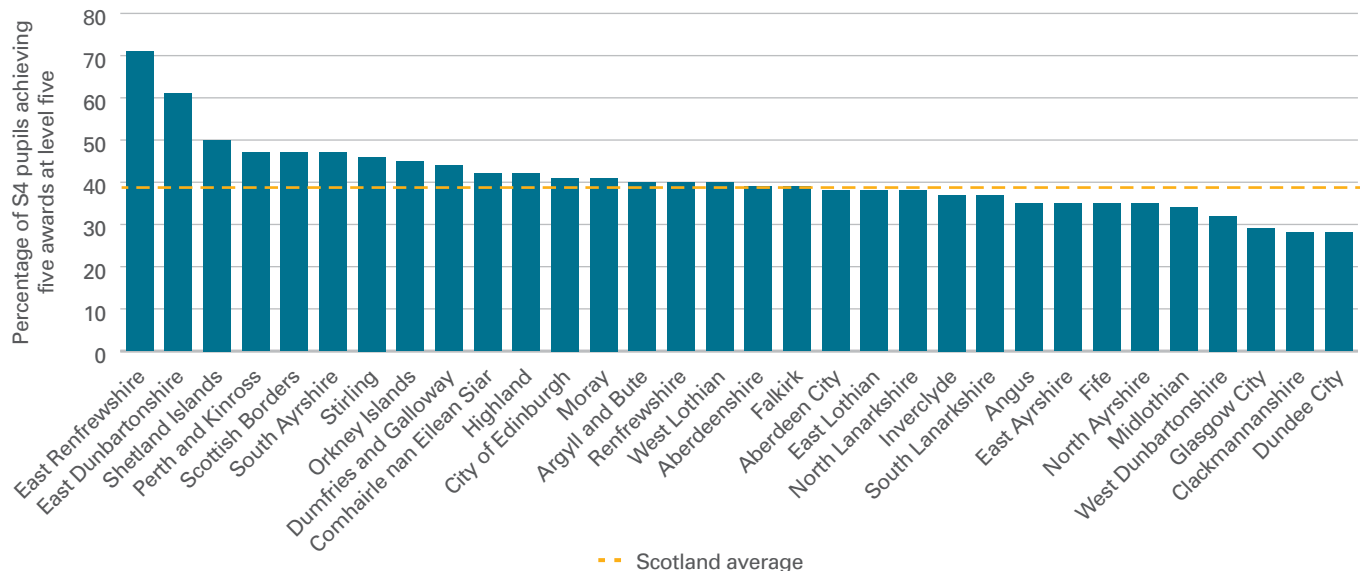
### There is significant variation in attainment levels between councils and between individual schools

**42.** There are wide differences in attainment levels between councils in Scotland across almost all of the ten measures we use in the report ([Appendix 1](#)). Seven of the measures had a gap between the highest and lowest performing councils of 30 percentage points or more. The widest performance gap was in the percentage of S4 pupils achieving five awards at SCQF level five with a gap of 43 percentage points in 2013. In 2013, 28 per cent of S4 pupils in Clackmannanshire and Dundee City achieved five awards at level five, compared to 71 per cent in East Renfrewshire ([Exhibit 8, page 21](#)).

## Exhibit 8

### Percentage of S4 pupils achieving five awards at level five in 2013 by council

Performance varies widely across the country.



Source: Audit Scotland, using data from Scottish Government Education Analytical Services Division



**43.** Attainment levels also vary significantly between schools in the same council area. [Exhibit 9 \(page 22\)](#) shows the range and spread of performance across schools in each council using the percentage of S4 pupils achieving five awards at level five in 2013. This is an important measure as S4 is the last year in which all pupils sit national exams. There is similar variation within councils using two other commonly reported attainment measures: the percentage of S5 pupils achieving three awards at level six; and the percentage of S6 pupils achieving five awards at level six.

**44.** Looking at the percentage of S4 pupils achieving five awards at level five in 2013 in more detail:

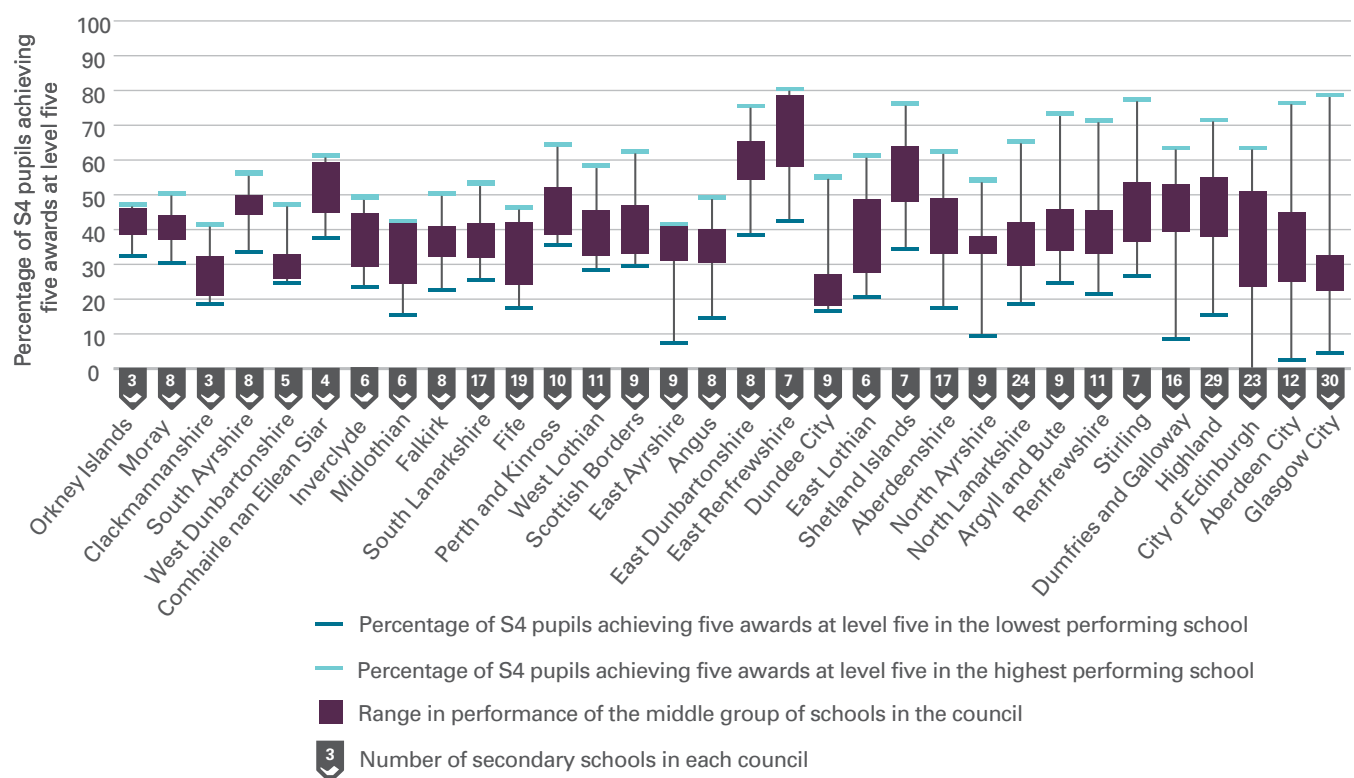
- Orkney Islands had the smallest gap between schools in 2013 at 15 percentage points. Aberdeen City and Glasgow City had the widest gap between schools at 74 percentage points. Across all secondary schools in Scotland, the percentage of S4 pupils achieving five awards at level five ranged from:
  - no pupils achieving this level in the lowest-performing school in the City of Edinburgh in 2013, to
  - 81 per cent of pupils achieving this level in the highest-performing school in East Renfrewshire.
- The spread of school performance in individual councils varies across the country. For example, the middle-performing group of schools in Glasgow City were within ten percentage points of each other. In contrast, in the middle-performing group of schools in East Lothian, the percentage of S4 pupils achieving five awards at level five in 2013 differed by 21 percentage points.

- The extent of the variation in performance across schools is not fully explained by a council's size, level of deprivation, or number of secondary schools. In 2013, Scotland's three largest city councils (Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen) had the widest gap in performance between schools. However, another four councils (Dumfries and Galloway, Highland, Renfrewshire, and Stirling) also had variations of at least 50 percentage points between their lowest-performing and highest-performing schools. All of these councils have a mix of deprivation levels, rurality, and number of schools.

## Exhibit 9

### Range and spread of performance between schools in each council in terms of percentage of S4 pupils achieving five awards at level five, 2013

There are wide differences in performance between schools in each council area.



Note: 1. One school from Argyll and Bute, two schools from Orkney Islands, and one school from Shetland Islands have been removed from the analysis as they had less than five pupils in S4 in 2013.

Source: Audit Scotland, using data from Scottish Government Education Analytical Services Division



## Lower-performing councils have made the most improvement in attainment over the past ten years

45. All councils improved attainment in at least four of the ten attainment measures between 2004 and 2013. The majority of councils (21) improved attainment across all of the measures. Within this ten-year period, however, councils' performance fluctuates. To identify more recent trends in performance

and understand how these compare to the longer-term ten-year period, we examined the most recent five years. This showed that of the 21 councils identified above:

- 14 continued to display an upward trend in all ten measures
- seven also displayed an upward trend in at least eight of the measures.

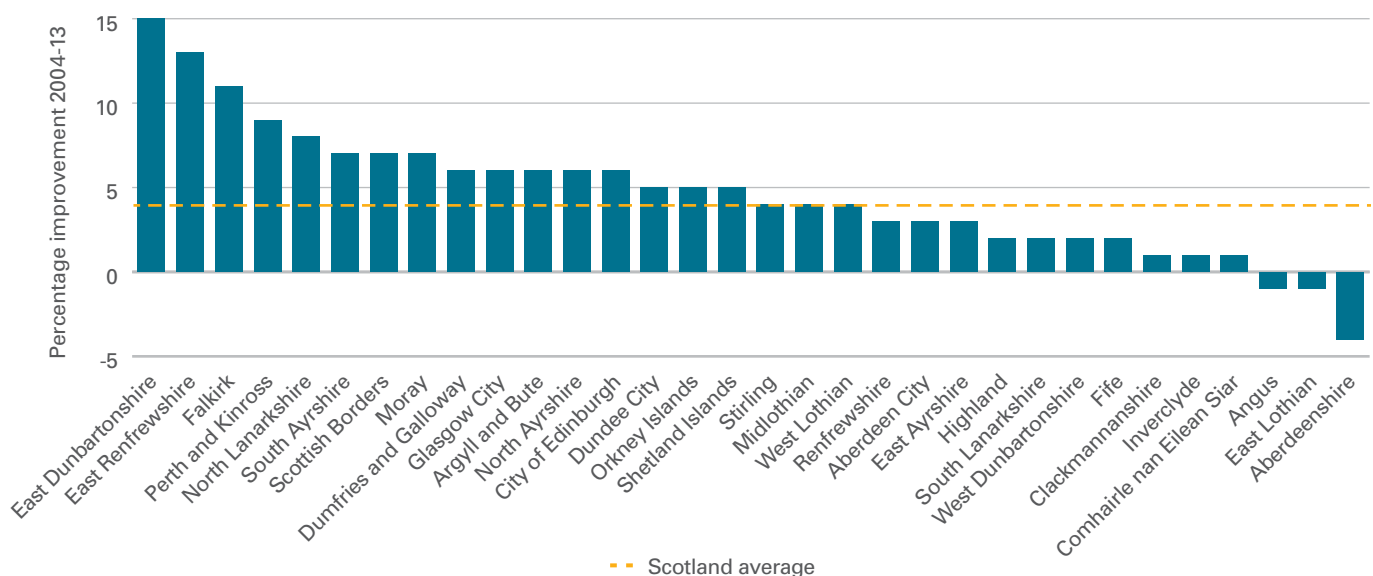
**46.** There is considerable variation in the scale of improvement among councils. [Exhibit 10](#) shows the level of improvement over the past ten years in the percentage of S4 pupils achieving five awards at level five in each council. There is similar variation in improvement levels across all other attainment measures used in the report. The biggest improvements in attainment have been made, in the main, by councils which were in the lowest-performing third of councils ten years ago.<sup>20</sup> For example, Glasgow City and Dundee City were the lowest-performing councils in 2004 in terms of the percentage of S4 pupils achieving five awards at level five. However, over the last decade, performance improved by six per cent and five per cent respectively in these councils, above the national average of four per cent.

**47.** Although it is mainly lower-performing councils that have made the most improvements in attainment in the past decade, continuous improvements have also been made by two of the highest-performing councils. Across all attainment measures, East Dunbartonshire and East Renfrewshire were the top-performing councils in 2013, despite already starting this period as high-performing councils.

## Exhibit 10

### Percentage improvement by council in the percentage of S4 pupils achieving five awards at level five, 2004-13

Improvements in attainment over the past ten years vary markedly across the country.



Source: Audit Scotland, using data from Scottish Government Education Analytical Services Division



**48.** Councils are slightly more likely to have improved attainment in S5 and S6 than in S4 over the past ten years. For example, 31 councils improved the percentage of their S5 pupils achieving one award at level six (equivalent to Higher-level). This compares to 27 councils that improved the percentage of pupils of S4 pupils achieving five awards at level three (equivalent to Standard Grade Foundation level).

**49.** Although all councils have improved attainment in at least some of the ten measures, there has been little overall reduction in the variation in attainment between councils in the past ten years. Of the ten attainment measures, the size of the gap between the highest-performing and lowest-performing councils:

- reduced in five
- stayed the same in one
- increased in four.

For example, in 2004 there was a 38 percentage point gap in the percentage of S6 pupils achieving one award at level six between the lowest-performing and highest-performing councils in Scotland. By 2013, this gap had reduced by six percentage points. Conversely, the gap in performance between councils in the percentage of S4 pupils achieving five awards at level five increased by eight percentage points between 2004 and 2013.

### **The gap in performance between the lowest and highest-performing schools continues to increase in more than half of councils**

**50.** Thirteen councils reduced the gap in performance between their highest and lowest-performing schools in the past ten years in terms of the percentage of S4 pupils achieving five awards at level five. They have reduced the gap largely by improving attainment levels in lower-performing schools, although there has also been a decline in performance among higher-performing schools in some councils. For example, Inverclyde closed the gap in performance between its schools the most between 2004 and 2013 (by 22 percentage points). The percentage of S4 pupils achieving five awards at level five increased from 14 per cent in the council's lowest-performing school in 2004 to 24 per cent in 2013. However, at the same time, the percentage of S4 pupils achieving the same award in the council's highest-performing school decreased from 62 per cent in 2004 to 50 per cent in 2013.

**51.** In 19 councils, the gap between the highest and lowest-performing schools increased between 2004 and 2013. This is mainly because the percentage point improvement in the percentage of S4 pupils achieving five awards at level five was greater over the past ten years in the highest-performing schools than in the lowest-performing schools.

### **Gender, ethnicity and looked after status all impact on levels of attainment**

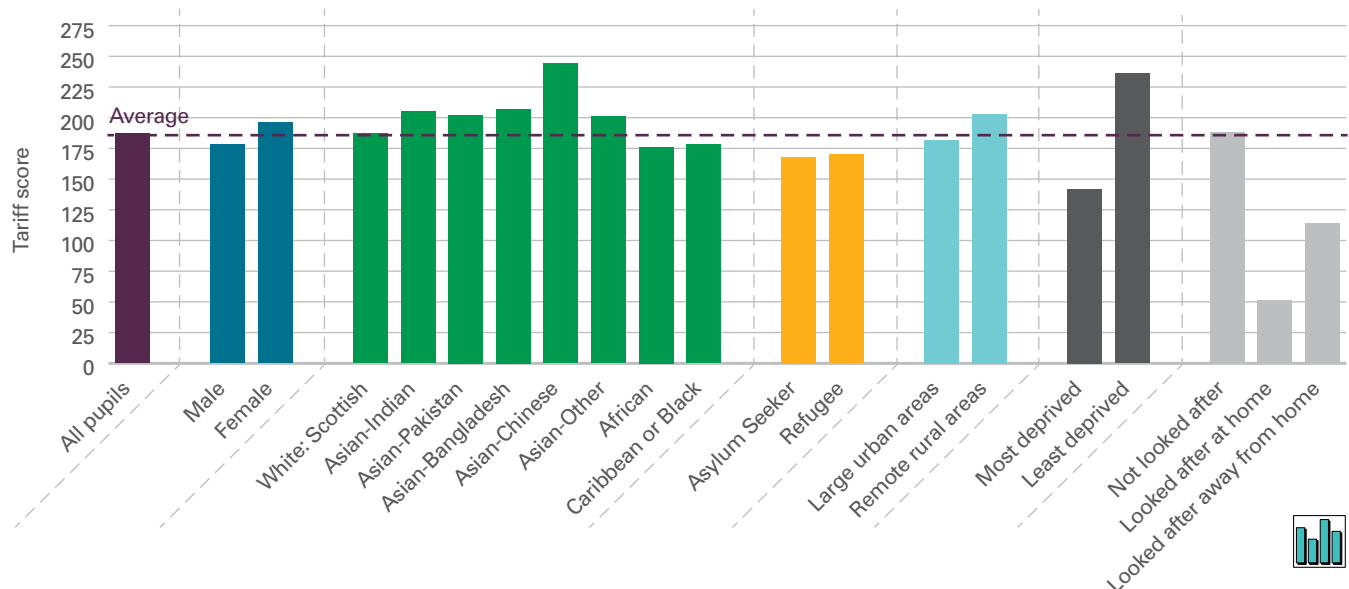
**52.** Attainment differs across different groups of pupils ([Exhibit 11, page 25](#)).<sup>21</sup> Among S4 pupils in 2012, Asian-Chinese pupils were the highest performers, with an average tariff score of 244 (the national average is 187). This is almost five times greater than pupils who are looked after by a council but are living at home under a supervision order. These pupils had an average tariff score of 51.<sup>22, 23</sup>



## Exhibit 11

### Average tariff scores of S4 pupils by different characteristics in 2012

Attainment varies widely between different groups of pupils in Scotland.



Note: Looked after children are in the care of the council, either at home under a supervision order from a Children's Hearing, or accommodated away from home (such as a residential unit, foster care, or with relatives).

Source: Audit Scotland, using *Summary statistics for attainment, leaver destinations and healthy living, No.3: 2013 Edition – Attainment and Leaver Destinations*, Scottish Government, June 2013 and data provided by Scottish Government Education Analytical Services Division

**53.** Overall attainment has improved among each of the different groups of pupils. However, the extent of the improvement varies across and within the groups:

- Improvements in attainment vary markedly by ethnic background. For example, tariff scores of pupils with an Asian-Indian ethnic background decreased by two points in the most recent three years, compared to an increase of 16 points for pupils from an Asian-Pakistan ethnic background.<sup>24</sup>
- The average tariff score of pupils looked after away from home improved by 34 points over the past three years, more than double the rate of improvement among pupils looked after at home at 15 points. Pupils looked after at home were the lowest-performing group of pupils in 2010 and remained so in 2012.

### Deprivation is a key factor influencing attainment in Scotland but other factors are also important

**54.** The OECD review of Scottish education in 2007 found that a pupil's social background mattered more in terms of attainment than in other countries.<sup>25</sup> While the link between deprivation and attainment is not unique to Scotland, deprivation continues to have a major impact upon levels of attainment across the country:<sup>26</sup>

- At a national level, tariff score is very closely linked to level of deprivation. In 2008, the average tariff score of pupils in the least deprived areas of Scotland was 106 points higher than pupils in the most deprived areas.



The gap has narrowed slightly in the past five years, but there is still a 94 point difference.

- In 2012, around half of the S4 pupils (51 per cent) who were in the lowest 20 per cent of achievers came from the three most deprived deciles in Scotland.<sup>27</sup> Around half (48 per cent) of pupils who were in the highest 20 per cent of achievers came from the three least deprived deciles in Scotland. This has not changed over the past five years.
- The impact of deprivation on pupil performance is also evident among primary pupils. The Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy in 2013 showed that 61 per cent of P4 pupils in the most deprived areas in Scotland performed well or very well at the numeracy level expected. This compared to 75 per cent of pupils from the least deprived areas.
- A Save the Children report in 2012 using data from the Scottish survey *Growing up in Scotland* found that children born into poverty are twice as likely as other children to face developmental difficulties when they enter formal schooling.<sup>28, 29</sup>

**55.** Councils with more areas affected by deprivation generally have lower levels of attainment than councils with higher levels of affluence. However, deprivation is clearly not the only factor influencing attainment. For example, Inverclyde and East Lothian have similar levels of attainment in terms of the percentage of S4 pupils achieving five awards at level five (38 per cent and 39 per cent respectively) yet have widely different levels of deprivation. At a school level, deprivation also has an impact on attainment. Using the recognised measure of free school meal registrations as an indicator of deprivation, in general the greater the number of pupils registered for free school meals in a school then the lower the attainment levels ([Exhibit 12, page 27](#)). However, as the wide spread of schools shows, deprivation is clearly only one contributing factor in how well schools perform. For example, some schools with higher levels of pupils registered for free school meals have similar attainment levels to schools with much fewer pupils registered for free school meals. We discuss the other factors that influence school performance in [Part 3](#) of the report.

### **There are increasing opportunities for pupils to develop wider employability and life skills**

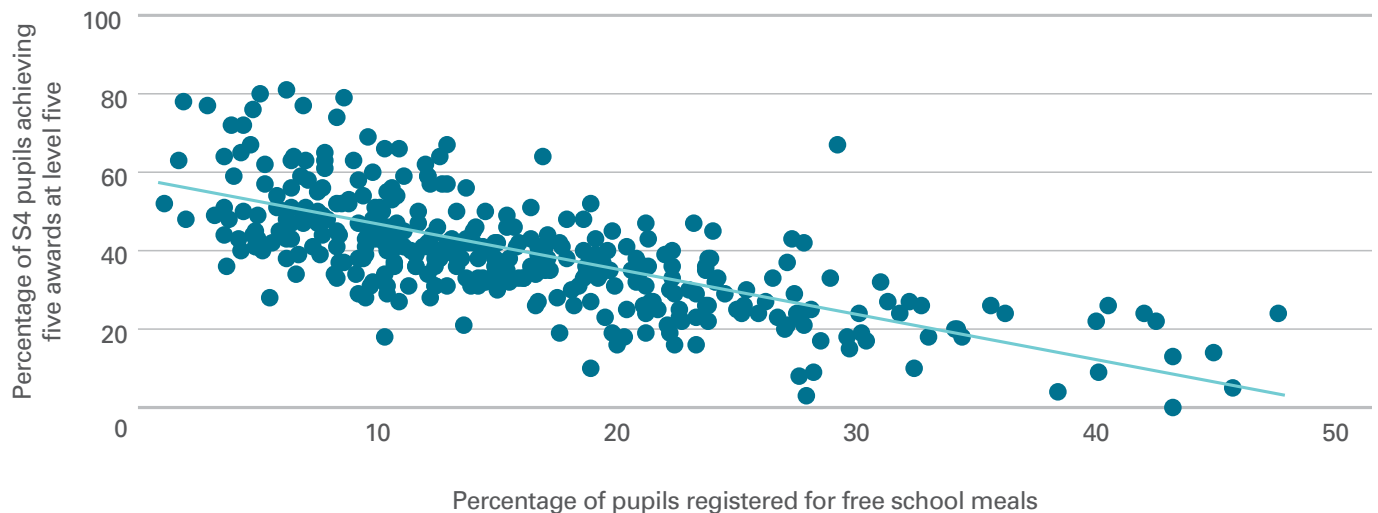
**56.** CfE places an emphasis on developing children to be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. It requires schools to recognise the breadth of pupils' achievement, and not only their ability to pass exams. Activities that pupils undertake both within and outwith school are more broadly known as wider achievement and these can take many forms ([Exhibit 13, page 28](#)).

**57.** Formal wider achievement programmes have been available in schools for some years. Councils told us that there has been a significant increase in the past five years, in both the types of programme being offered and the numbers of awards pupils are achieving ([Exhibit 14, page 28](#)). Pupils taking part in such activities must plan and identify their own personal goals. The programmes are designed to allow pupils to develop skills for life, learning and work, such as self-management, problem solving, teamwork and communication. These are attributes that major employers value when selecting prospective employees ([Case study 1, page 29](#)).

## Exhibit 12

### Free school meal registrations compared to the percentage of S4 pupils achieving five awards at level five in all secondary schools in Scotland, 2013

Deprivation (using registrations for free school meals as an indicator) is not the only factor affecting levels of attainment.



Note: The blue circles represent every secondary school in Scotland.

Source: Audit Scotland, using data provided by Scottish Government Education Analytical Services Division and school meals data from *Pupil Census*, Scottish Government, 2013

### Schools are beginning to target wider opportunities to those pupils who would benefit the most, but how this activity is recorded and monitored is variable

**58.** CfE emphasises the importance of pupils having access to learning opportunities that are personalised and appropriate for them. This ensures that pupils gain the most they can from wider activities and programmes that help them learn life and employability skills. There are examples of schools and councils targeting programmes and activities towards those pupils who would most benefit. For example, Perth and Kinross Council has developed an outdoor programme to engage vulnerable pupils at St John's Academy and Kinross High School. The programme uses kayaking, gorge walking and climbing to help pupils develop new skills and increase their levels of confidence.

**59.** These types of activities are mainly organised at a school level. This means schools can appropriately tailor programmes and activities to their individual pupils. This is reflected in the variation in the range of programmes and awards available to pupils in different schools within the same council area. To ensure that all pupils have access to the most appropriate opportunities, it is important that schools are able to fully capture and record all the activities that are available and the achievements of pupils undertaking such activities. Schools also need to be able to share this information with their council so that elected members can scrutinise performance on pupils' access to, participation in, and outcomes from the wider activities and programmes on offer within the council area.

**60.** The new Scottish Senior Phase Benchmarking Tool ('Insight') is planned to be introduced across Scotland in August 2014. The tool is designed to help councils, schools and teachers use data to analyse, compare and improve the performance

of pupils in the senior phase (S4-S6). By gathering and reporting information on both attainment and wider achievement, the tool should help build up a picture of pupil performance across Scotland. Work is ongoing to determine which programmes will be included. The main criteria are that programmes are SCQF-rated and fit in with the CfE principles.

## Exhibit 13

### Examples of wider achievement activities

Wider achievement can be undertaken in a number of ways.

Types of wider achievement	Example in practice
Formally recognised awards or programmes, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, the John Muir Award, and The Prince's Trust. These all provide opportunities for pupils to develop their potential.	The John Muir Award is an environmental award scheme that encourages awareness and responsibility for the natural environment. While working towards this award, P5/6 pupils at Slamannan Primary in Falkirk Council were trained in scientific techniques. Working alongside Scottish Natural Heritage and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the children visited the habitat of geese and studied their migration. The project encouraged pupils in other subject areas such as drama and landscape painting. The pupils' work was highly commended in the Nature of Scotland Awards, Youth and Education category.
Arrangements that do not lead to an accredited award but which are formally organised, for example voluntary work, enterprise work or leadership roles in the school.	Pupils from Ellon Academy in Aberdeenshire Council have been involved in a number of enterprise initiatives to develop skills for learning, life and work. This has taken the form of various projects such as raising money for charity, introducing fair trade school awards and working with local businesses. Through engaging in enterprise activities, pupils have gained an awareness of wider global issues and developed positive relationships with the local business community. In 2012, the school won a national award for Enterprise and Employability.
Developing skills through achievements in the school, home or wider community. For example, taking part in sport, the arts, music or activities in the community or being in a position of responsibility, such as a young carer.	The Instrumental Music Programme within West Lothian Council offers opportunities for pupils to develop their music skills, and play instruments in orchestras. This helps pupils develop confidence and team-working skills. In 2013, the Schools Wind Ensemble was awarded a Gold plus award at the Scottish Concert Band Festival.

Source: Audit Scotland

## Exhibit 14

### Number of pupils gaining the most commonly undertaken wider achievement awards, 2008-12

	Number of councils that provided data	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Duke of Edinburgh Awards	14	1,195	1,153	1,980	2,202	2,994
ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network)	9	276	512	1,277	1,417	1,966
John Muir Award	10	57	454	310	788	3,095

Source: Audit Scotland

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## Case study 1

### The Duke of Edinburgh award scheme

The Duke of Edinburgh award has benefits for both pupils and employers.

The Duke of Edinburgh award scheme (DofE) is a personal development programme that helps young people learn new skills, work with others, engage with their community and learn how to train and carry out an adventurous journey. It is open to all young people from age 14. There are three levels: bronze, silver and gold and each of these involve completing objectives to learn new skills, trying new activities and volunteering. Each progressive level takes more time and commitment from the participants.

In Scotland, 89 per cent of secondary schools have active DofE groups associated with them. This figure increased from 72 per cent five years ago, and around 15 per cent of participants have additional learning needs or have declared a disability.

Many organisations and companies have a positive view of the DofE. For example, a United Learning Trust survey in 2005 asked employers what activities undertaken in school were most valuable to them in prospective employees, and they rated DofE as the most important. In recent years, Scotrail, Scottish Gas and Northern Constabulary have sought to recruit DofE participants. These organisations support participants as they work towards their gold award. A recent impact study by the University of Northampton noted 82 per cent of participants wanted to continue volunteering after their DofE programme and 74 per cent noted an increase in self-esteem or self-belief.

Source: Audit Scotland

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## More than half of school leavers go on to higher or further education

**61.** In 2012, 90 per cent of school leavers went on to what is known as a positive destination, such as higher education or employment.<sup>30</sup> The largest single group of school leavers went on to higher education (36 per cent), while eight per cent of school leavers were unemployed and seeking work. The percentage of school leavers going on to a positive destination increased by six per cent between 2008 and 2012.<sup>31</sup>

**62.** At a council level, the percentage of school leavers going on to a positive follow-up destination in 2012 varied from 95 per cent in East Renfrewshire to 84 per cent in Glasgow City. All but one council has increased the percentage of pupils going on to a positive destination since 2008. Dundee City had the largest increase at 12 per cent, while Shetland Islands had a drop of three per cent. The percentage of school leavers entering employment fell in almost all councils between 2008 and 2012. This was mainly offset by an increase in pupils entering higher and further education.

**63.** Similar to attainment, the destinations of school leavers are also linked to levels of deprivation. School leavers from the most deprived areas in Scotland were:

- half as likely in 2012 to go on to higher education than pupils from more affluent areas (20 per cent compared to 42 per cent)

- twice as likely to be unemployed and seeking work (14 per cent compared to six per cent).<sup>32</sup>

**64.** Glasgow City Council and City of Edinburgh Council have put in place a range of initiatives to improve positive destinations ([Case study 2](#)).

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## Case study 2

### Improving positive destinations

Glasgow City Council's Employment and Skills Partnership Team offers a wide range of programmes to provide pupils with employment-related learning opportunities in a way that is tailored, responsive and flexible to meet their individual needs. It has focused on five workstreams including enterprise, skills and aspirations, and business partnerships. The various workstreams focus on offering pupils a range of tailored opportunities and experiences so that they develop the confidence and skills for living and working in the wider world. These include work experience, participating in school and college vocational programmes, learning in different environments and business mentoring. Between 2008 and 2012, Glasgow City Council increased the number of pupils going on to positive destinations by 6.3 per cent compared to a national increase of 5.5 per cent.

In 2011, City of Edinburgh Council introduced the 'Edinburgh Guarantee'. This is an initiative which aims to ensure young people leave school with the opportunity of a job, training or further education. It primarily focuses on Edinburgh school leavers within the last three years and to date 950 pupils have benefited from the scheme.

Source: Audit Scotland

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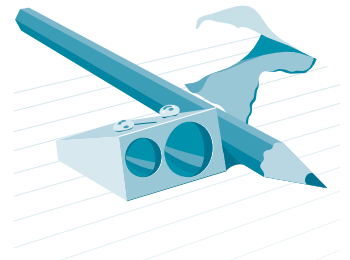
## Recommendations

### Councils should:

- ensure they fully understand why levels of attainment vary between their schools and different groups of pupils
  - develop and implement strategies to reduce the gaps in performance between the lowest and highest-performing schools
  - continue to work with the Scottish Government and Education Scotland to develop a suite of agreed performance measures which would provide an overall picture of education attainment and achievement across Scotland
  - develop more coordinated approaches to gathering and recording information on the range of wider achievement activities offered in schools, and the levels of pupil participation and the outcomes they achieve. This will help councils to scrutinise performance and ensure resources are used as efficiently as possible.
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# Part 3

## Improving pupil performance



### Key messages

- 1** Councils that have raised attainment the most over the last decade have focused on specific areas such as developing leadership, and improving both teacher quality and systems for monitoring and tracking pupil data. Increasing pupils' own aspirations and expectations of what they could achieve after school has also been important.
- 2** Strategic planning could be strengthened so that plans better identify the most important priorities for improvement. There is scope to strengthen elected members' role in scrutinising and challenging education performance around both attainment and wider achievement. Councils also need to continue to improve how they engage with parents.
- 3** Spending more money on education does not guarantee better pupil performance. Councils are starting to target resources to the lowest-performing pupils to raise educational achievement, but this could be developed further. In making spending decisions, councils need to fully understand what the most effective ways are to improve pupil performance.

developing  
leadership  
skills and  
improving  
teacher  
quality are  
key to raising  
attainment

### A range of factors play an important role in improving attainment

**65.** Improving attainment depends on a number of factors. There is no one solution and many of the elements are interlinked. There is a wide range of literature on what influences pupil attainment. Aside from deprivation, other key factors that are recognised as playing an important role in improving attainment include:

- improving teacher quality
- developing leadership
- improving systems for monitoring and tracking pupil data
- increasing parental involvement
- developing pupil motivation and engagement.

**66.** Evidence also suggests that a child's home environment, and the extent to which it is supportive and stimulating to children during their early years, plays a key role in future educational attainment. Public bodies' early years intervention activities are therefore important in tackling issues which can influence attainment in later years. This is outside the scope of this audit.

**Councils that have improved attainment the most have focused on areas such as developing leadership and improving teacher quality**

**67.** As we outlined in [Part 2](#) of the report, 14 councils in Scotland have successfully improved attainment across all of the ten measures of attainment we examined in both the last five and ten years. These councils have focused on some or all of the key factors outlined in [paragraph 65, page 31](#).

**Improving teacher quality**

**68.** *Teaching Scotland's Future* highlighted that improving the quality of teaching and leadership is central to improving attainment.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, a 2007 review by McKinsey & Company found that those pupils placed with the highest-performing teachers progressed three times as fast as those with the lowest-performing teachers.<sup>34</sup> Improving teacher quality depends on:

- being able to attract the best candidates
- providing high-quality teacher training
- offering adequate salaries to retain staff
- having effective career development and support.

**69.** Examples of improvement in this area include:

- Falkirk Council has developed its recruitment process to test the specific competencies of each post and then find candidates who demonstrate the right skills and knowledge. For example, applicants for senior school leaders now take part in an assessment centre and applicants for classroom teachers have their teaching style formally observed and assessed in the classroom.
- Glasgow City Council has improved its approach to supporting and challenging individual schools and teachers. It has strengthened its human resources function and there is a greater focus on addressing poor performance. It offers tailored help and mentoring to teachers who need to improve their classroom practice.
- Fife Council has developed a Teacher Learning Community model. This brings together teachers on a regular basis to improve learning and teaching, and to share good practice. Teachers are encouraged to identify their own development needs and support their colleagues as a group.

**70.** The Scottish Government has established an implementation board to put in place the recommendations from *Teaching Scotland's Future*. These focus on improving the full spectrum of teaching education including an enhanced commitment to career professional learning and development by teachers. Councils must also support all aspiring head teachers in accessing a qualification or professional award in educational leadership. It is too early to determine



whether these changes will realise the intended benefits, but they provide an important framework for councils to deliver improvements.

### Developing leadership

**71.** Effective leadership is crucial to improving attainment. This applies to all central education departments, Head teachers, and individual teachers. Leadership affects a wide variety of other areas, for example teacher development and pupil and parent relationships. Examples of improvement in this area include:

- In 2009, Glasgow City Council reviewed its staff development policy to provide a more systematic approach to planning staff professional development, improving teacher quality and developing leadership. Staff have participated in a range of tailored programmes. Ninety senior managers have completed the Aspiring Heads programme and over 100 teachers have achieved Harvard Leaders of Learning accreditation. These programmes are intended to improve the quality of learning and teaching in classrooms. The council considers that learning and development achieved through these courses has improved classroom practice, with learning widely shared among peers and other colleagues.
- Dumfries and Galloway Council has developed a Transformational Leadership Development Pathway to support succession planning within education. Given its rural context and the challenge of recruitment, the council recognised the need to develop local solutions, build capacity among existing staff in-house and identify at an early stage potential future leaders within schools. The programme is available to all teaching staff from probationer teachers through to Head teachers and focuses on sharing learning and best practice between schools.
- In 2010, South Ayrshire Council set up its own leadership development programme. The council recognised that a number of senior teachers were due to retire in the coming years, and considered that introducing a programme would not only support succession planning but encourage aspiring leaders among teachers to consider a route into headship. The course involves a range of elements including academic study and research, work shadowing in another school, working with peers to learn from each other and sharing best practice. The course allows candidates to learn more about the council's role in delivering education in areas such as budgetary management and strategic planning.

### Developing systems for monitoring and tracking data

**72.** Assessing, monitoring, and measuring performance at school, teacher and pupil level is central to understanding how to improve attainment. Monitoring how pupils are progressing allows teachers and schools to identify:

- if pupils need extra help
- what types of methods the school could offer
- how successful interventions have been in improving the pupil's learning.



**73.** Examples of improvement in this area include:

- Fife Council has developed its tracking and monitoring systems at both primary and secondary levels through standardised testing and better performance management. Detailed analysis of the data gathered takes place centrally and within schools. Annual performance packs are produced for each school that identifies the school's performance compared to other schools so that areas of underachievement can be targeted.
- West Lothian Council has developed a standardised testing programme at all stages. The information available through this has been used at an individual school level to target underachievement and identify the best ways to help pupils improve, with a particular focus on those pupils most in need.

### **Increasing parental involvement**

**74.** The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has found that improving parental involvement in their child's education contributes to raising attainment.<sup>35</sup> This includes involving parents in the school and in their child's learning. For example, Falkirk Council is using Information Technology innovatively to improve parental engagement, through for example Twitter, YouTube, interactive school websites and email. The central education department regularly updates an 'education blog' containing information on raising attainment. These approaches are intended to assist parents in helping their child learn at home.

### **Developing pupil motivation and engagement**

**75.** It is widely acknowledged that a successful education system needs to be based within a culture that values education, and where all members of society have high aspirations for pupils. The OECD identified that high-performing education systems have high expectations of every pupil, not just high achievers.<sup>36</sup> Examples of improvements in this area include:

- West Lothian Council has developed nurture groups for pupils at P6/P7 and S1/S2 who face challenges in learning. These provide additional support in literacy and numeracy to ensure pupils remain engaged with school.
- Glasgow City Council has been focusing on increasing pupils' own aspirations and goals. It has developed a range of employment-related opportunities ([Case study 2, page 30](#)), ensuring the courses and programmes are relevant and suitable to pupils' needs. It also provides tailored mentoring and support for pupils who are considering going to university.
- North Ayrshire Council is committed to tackling youth unemployment and has a programme to support pupils in considering all their available options after leaving school. In particular, vulnerable pupils are targeted at an early stage to ensure that support is in place. A named 16+ coordinator in each secondary school works closely with guidance staff and other partners to ensure that pupils are provided with support to make the transition from school into work and equip them with the necessary skills.

**76.** Overall, improving educational attainment is likely to be achieved by bringing together a number of linked initiatives. As outlined earlier, East Dunbartonshire

and East Renfrewshire have been the top two performing councils in terms of attainment over the last decade. East Renfrewshire Council has continued to improve levels of attainment through having a clear focus on the types of approaches which work best for it ([Case study 3](#)). The council has seven secondary schools and 23 primary schools. In the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), 5.8 per cent of the council's datazones are in the 15 per cent most deprived in Scotland. All seven secondary schools have consistently performed above the national average across the ten attainment measures in recent years.

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### Case study 3

#### Raising attainment

East Renfrewshire Council has used a range of approaches to continue raising attainment.

East Renfrewshire Council has a clear strategy and planning framework within which its education service operates. Activities to improve quality are central to this approach. There is a well-established and understood annual cycle of activities involving the central education department, quality improvement officers and schools.

Leadership at all levels has been developed to promote the council's vision of 'Inclusion, Achievement, Ambition and Progress for All' and to address succession planning in the teaching workforce. Head teachers are empowered to drive forward improvement within their schools, meet regularly with their peers and share best practice between schools.

CPD among teachers is well established. This involves coaching, and sharing and building knowledge across the council. In a recent survey, 88 per cent of teachers identified that they had good opportunities to participate in CPD activities.

The council carries out baseline assessments of pupils in P1, with standardised testing used again in P3, P5 and P7 and S2. Among other things, this enables pupils who are not performing as well as others to be quickly identified so that schools can give tailored support to individual pupils.

Well-established performance management and reporting arrangements are in place. Detailed analysis of all performance information gathered takes places at both council and school level. This information is used to set targets and improve performance.

All secondary schools operate a 33-period week. This was introduced in 2006 and has allowed the council to maximise teaching time and deliver curricular benefits such as more time for physical education for pupils.

Source: Audit Scotland

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## **Some councils lack the key elements that could help schools improve education performance**

**77.** Council education departments play a central role in improving the quality of school education within the schools they manage. This provision is clearly laid out in the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000.<sup>37</sup> Against this background, we examined how effectively councils' education structures and systems are being used to help schools raise attainment and promote wider achievement by reviewing:

- education services' strategic planning
- performance management arrangements
- scrutiny and governance arrangements
- parental engagement
- pupil engagement.

## **Councils' strategic plans for education contain commitments to improve pupil performance but they could be clearer about their most important priorities**

**78.** Effective education strategies should take account of local priorities and set out what councils aim to achieve over the short, medium and longer term. They should also provide clear objectives and targets to measure progress. Councils use a variety of approaches to set out their strategic priorities and commitments for education services, with the majority developing a three or five-year service improvement plan as the basis of their main strategic planning document. In more than a third of councils, education is encompassed as part of an integrated children's and young persons' service plan, or is included in a plan with other services such as leisure or communities. This reflects the move in recent years towards integrated planning of council services.

**79.** All councils' education strategic plans contained some form of commitment or priority centred on raising attainment or improving performance and outcomes for learners, although these differed in how specific they were. The plans also identified a wide range of priorities and objectives that would be used to raise attainment, for example early intervention, developing pupil literacy and numeracy skills and improving teacher quality.

**80.** Improvements that could be made in the plans we reviewed included:

- Scope to provide clearer links between how these plans complement and support wider council priorities and Community Plans. In around a quarter of the plans, it was not clearly articulated how the education actions and activities contribute to the delivery of the council's corporate priorities as outlined in the Single Outcome Agreement and Community Plan.
- Setting out the most important priorities within education. Some plans listed numerous priorities and actions but it was not always clear from these which priorities were the most important and intended to be addressed in the short, medium or long term.

- Providing clear statements about how to develop and support wider achievement activities for all pupils. This could include an overview of the wider achievement areas the council intends to focus on and how these will assist in providing pupils with life skills.

### **Councils are now using pupil tracking and monitoring data more regularly to manage performance**

**81.** Performance management involves gathering, analysing and acting on information to manage and improve services. Education services, both individually and collectively (through the Local Government Benchmarking Framework), have been seeking to improve these arrangements in recent years. All councils across Scotland collect a wide range of information about their education services. Most commonly this includes:

- SQA results
- results from standardised testing of pupils (where this is in place)
- SIMD data for pupils
- attendance and exclusion data
- data on staying-on rates and leaver destinations.

**82.** Councils are starting to seek ways to use performance information more effectively, such as to:

- challenge schools on performance, for example in focused discussions with individual head teachers on SQA results at school and departmental level
- help schools improve, for example by identifying specific schools that require additional support, such as more visits from QIOs
- set targets, for example, for pupil or school performance in exams.

**83.** In recent years, councils and schools have been improving how they track and monitor pupil progress and achievement. Developing better performance information has been part of this process. Tracking and monitoring allows longer-term assessments of performance to take place, taking account of a pupil's individual pace and progress in learning. Tracking is being used to:

- identify groups and individual pupils who are under-achieving
- develop teaching strategies and helping schools target interventions effectively.

Where tracking and monitoring is most developed it takes place at both a school and council level. This allows the council to compare performance between schools, develop interventions and set appropriate targets.

**Councils are using benchmarking to compare their performance against other councils and are starting to share best practice**

**84.** Improving the use of benchmarking data across the public sector can help identify good practice and potential inefficiencies. Use of benchmarking data allows councils to explore opportunities for improvements, reduce costs and change the way they deliver services with the money they have available. All councils report using benchmarking to understand their education performance in relation to other councils. Most commonly, councils generally benchmark themselves with others that are similar in terms of socio-economic and demographic factors.

**85.** In March 2013, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) launched a new benchmarking framework with the Improvement Service and all 32 councils. The new project is based on 55 indicators across major service areas and includes four indicators that relate to education. The new framework provides an opportunity for councils to explore and understand variations in their practice and share learning.

**86.** Councils could do more to systematically share effective practice. Education Scotland is leading a new initiative called the School Improvement Partnership Programme (SIPP). The programme involves linking up schools across councils to tackle educational inequality and raise attainment. It aims to encourage staff within different schools to learn from each other, experiment with their practice and monitor and evaluate change.

**Elected members could have a more active role in scrutinising, challenging and improving education performance**

**87.** Scrutiny and governance play an essential role in ensuring that councils' budgets, strategies and plans are credible and readily understandable, and that elected members challenge service performance to help secure improvement.

**88.** Education committee structures have changed over the past ten years. Most commonly this has been as a result of education services merging with other services such as children and families, housing, social work or leisure. At present, 12 councils have a committee that focuses only on education. The other 20 councils deal with education alongside other service areas. It is for councils to decide what committee structures best meet their needs but in doing this they must ensure that governance arrangements are fit for purpose. Councils also need to ensure that information provided to committees is both concise and relevant so that elected members can scrutinise and challenge council performance.

**89.** A wide range of education performance information is reported to the relevant committees. Most commonly, performance reporting includes:

- analysis of SQA results and leaver destinations
- school inspection reports by Education Scotland
- capital and revenue budget positions
- updates on the condition of school buildings
- school attendance and exclusion rates.

**90.** Our analysis of the agendas and minutes of the main committee that deals with education identified that the level of scrutiny and challenge undertaken by elected members varied. We found examples of committee minutes documenting evidence of elected members challenging performance, seeking additional information and requesting updates on areas of work. However, in around 30 per cent of councils, education performance reports were either approved or noted with limited discussion or scrutiny recorded.

**91.** Committees could play a more active role in raising attainment and developing wider achievement. In particular, elected members could do more to challenge attainment performance to improve consistency between schools and to scrutinise measures to narrow the gap between the lowest and highest-performing pupils. They could also consider the extent to which wider achievement awards and programmes add value and are equipping pupils with the skills for living and working in the wider world. Our review of committee papers in 2013 found that:

- 23 committees received information on specific approaches to raising attainment, for example how strategies and targeted interventions are being used to raise attainment among the lowest performing pupils or to improve levels of literacy and numeracy. The amount and frequency of the information received varied widely among councils.
- 12 committees received information about pupil performance at various stages between P1 and S3, either in the form of standardised test results or the number of pupils meeting expected levels in literacy and numeracy through the CfE framework.
- 18 committees received information about pupil participation in wider achievement that included, for example the type of programmes and activities being offered or the number of pupils achieving a specific award.

**92.** West Dunbartonshire is an example of a council where the education committee has a strong focus on raising attainment. At each quarterly meeting there is an update on progress on the council's 2011 strategy to raise attainment and achievement. This report covers progress on issues such as plans for raising attainment and leadership for learning. The committee also considers individual progress reports from each of the five secondary schools. West Dunbartonshire's attainment has improved across the ten attainment measures we used in the last five years, particularly across S5 and S6.

### **There are increasing opportunities for parents to be involved in education but they still face barriers**

**93.** Parents can play a key role in improving not only their own child's educational performance but also that of the school and council more widely. Parental involvement covers a wide range of activities such as helping with homework, attending school events, volunteering in the school, being part of a parent council, and playing a part in school and council governance. The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 aimed to help parents become more involved in their child's education and placed a number of duties on schools, councils and the Scottish Government to make it easier for parents to become involved.

**94.** There are a variety of opportunities for parents to become involved at school and council level. At a school level, these include participating on the parent council (75 per cent of schools in Scotland now have a parent council), fundraising, and volunteering. At a council level, there are opportunities for parents to be involved in developing education strategies, plans and initiatives. This includes opportunities for parents to be involved in monitoring plans and providing feedback after publication. Councils reported using a variety of ways to involve parents in education decisions including consultations, surveys and parent forums and focus groups. Eighty per cent of councils report having a named staff member with responsibilities for parental engagement. However, in around half of councils this accounted for less than 40 per cent of the post-holder's time.

**95.** Parents face a number of barriers to becoming more involved. Our survey of parents found that 58 per cent of the parents surveyed would like to get more involved with their school.<sup>38</sup> However, lack of time was identified by parents as the key barrier to further involvement. Other barriers included lack of information on the school, a lack of opportunities to get involved, and not knowing how to get involved.

**96.** Parents reported that the vast majority of information they receive about education is information from the school on their child's performance and news about the school, such as school events. Parents felt less informed about how their child's school is performing as a whole and half had not received any information in the last 12 months on the ways in which their school is working to improve performance. Only a quarter of the respondents had received information on what their council is doing to improve education.

**97.** Education Scotland is leading a project to bring together the data in Scottish Schools Online, Parent Zone, inspection reports and a range of other materials into a website. It aims to simplify all the existing information and help parents to make sense of the range of material available.

#### **Pupils' own aspirations can sometimes be a barrier to achievement**

**98.** Nearly all councils reported having pupil councils in their schools, as well as a wide range of other opportunities for pupils to get involved in having a say in their school. Examples include eco committees, pupil representatives on education committees and pupil surveys.

**99.** Pupils' own aspirations of what they can achieve can be a barrier to raising attainment and reflects the findings from our own focus groups, where pupils in lower-performing schools tended to be less ambitious about their future careers. Teachers from these schools also agreed that some pupils have low expectations of themselves and so limit their ambitions. This was thought to result from local culture and expectations. Councils need to seek ways to improve pupil motivation and aspirations, through, for example, the initiatives outlined in [paragraph 75, page 34](#).



**100.** Aberdeenshire Council provides a good example of a council that in recent years has put in place the building blocks required to drive forward improvement and raise attainment ([Case study 4](#)). Its education service has responded to a longer-term situation where, from a period of high attainment levels, SQA results have fallen to around the national average. The council recognised that a refreshed and proactive approach was required to make improvements.

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## Case study 4

### Seeking improvement and raising attainment

Aberdeenshire Council has put in place a range of elements to support improvement.

**Strategic planning:** developing a new strategy to raise attainment and wider achievement. This was developed collaboratively between senior managers and Head teachers, and sets out a clear focus on specific learning and teaching strategies. These include literacy and numeracy, using technology to improve learning, and identifying specific interventions to meet learners' needs. Head teachers have shared and discussed the approaches with staff, pupils and parents to support positive partnership working.

**Performance management:** introducing a more robust approach to improving quality. This ensures that schools are provided with the appropriate level of support and challenge they need to improve. This approach is aimed at providing greater consistency and rigour across schools and is underpinned by a new quality improvement framework.

**Developing pupil tracking and monitoring:** adopting a systematic approach to using standardised assessment evidence at classroom, school and council level. This supports a clear evidenced-based approach for monitoring and tracking progress as well as enabling early interventions. Data is now analysed across every school and used to inform actions plans and self-evaluation of performance.

**Scrutiny and governance:** opportunities for greater elected member involvement by the Education, Learning and Leisure Committee and six Area Committees, who receive regular reports on attainment in each of the secondary schools in their area. This allows greater scrutiny and challenge by elected members of improvement progress in individual schools.

**Raising attainment:** an increasing focus on developing leadership across all sectors. A Primary Leadership for Excellence programme has been introduced to support aspiring primary Head teachers, as well as continuing support for staff pursuing the Flexible Route to Headship programme. A Depute Head teachers' group has been established that meets regularly to share learning and best practice. There has been a review of the Head teacher appointment procedures. There are now clear arrangements for effective succession planning across Aberdeenshire and Head teacher induction, building on the new standards required nationally for school leadership.

Source: Audit Scotland

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## **Councils are starting to target resources to improve attainment but this could be developed further**

**101.** How councils allocate money and resources both centrally and at a school level is a decision for each council. Evidence from our literature review suggests that it is how councils decide to spend their education budget rather than the overall level of spend which has most impact on attainment levels.<sup>39</sup> The literature also suggests the impact of funding on attainment could be more significant if it was targeted at those schools and pupils where the need to improve attainment was greatest.<sup>40</sup>

**102.** Overall, we found no direct correlation between changing levels of educational spending and increasing levels of pupil attainment. For example, there is a group of seven councils whose spending on education has decreased by more than five per cent in the last three years while their percentage of S4 pupils achieving five awards at level five has increased by more than the national average (four per cent). This matches the evidence from our literature review which identified that increased expenditure does not automatically result in increased attainment.

**103.** As part of our work we examined how councils are targeting their resources to support improvement and raise attainment ([Case study 5, page 43](#)). We found examples of QIOs offering targeted support to schools where it is most required and examples of wider achievement activities being targeted towards pupils who would most benefit. Resources are being directed towards those schools with the lowest performing pupils and where a greater focus around raising attainment is required. This approach could be developed further. Although most councils could provide examples of ways they are targeting resources to raise attainment there is scope for them to make better use of performance information (such as pupil tracking and monitoring data) to help support decisions which have a financial impact, such as the provision of more staff to particular schools with low attainment levels.

**104.** Looking ahead, it will be important for councils to ensure that all resources including money and staffing are used as efficiently and effectively as possible. This will be challenging as finances continue to come under pressure and significant resources are tied up in areas such as the school estate and teaching costs.

**105.** In making decisions about how resources are targeted, councils need to fully understand what interventions are the most effective. For example, improving teacher quality and developing leadership are recognised as two important factors in raising attainment. Therefore, it would seem appropriate that resources are targeted towards these. However, as education budgets have been reducing in recent years, many councils have reduced CPD and training budgets for teachers. Councils have reduced the range of courses provided and sought to deliver training in other more cost-effective ways. Councils need to ensure that they fully consider the impact of short-term savings on the long-term impact on attainment and overall pupil learning.

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## Case study 5

### Targeting resources

Aberdeen City Council offers schools three types of support, depending on an assessment of what they need. This assessment covers the school's SQA performance, inspection data, and attendances and exclusions. Those schools that the council considers require the least support receive an annual visit and a keep-in-touch visit. Targeted support involves an annual attainment review meeting and six days' support each year. Intensive support involves an annual review and 12 days of support from the council each year. This ensures QIOs' time is directed towards those schools that need it the most.

To support its raising attainment strategy, West Dunbartonshire Council seconded one secondary school teacher from each of its five secondary schools to become dedicated 'raising attainment teachers'. These teachers work with the lowest-performing pupils, targeting areas for development and supporting improvement. Although the teachers remain in their own schools, they come together as a team to share learning and good practice to try and achieve greater consistency between schools.

West Lothian Council has targeted resources to schools in areas of relative deprivation to set up nurture classes at P6/P7 and S1/S2. Nurture groups have been set up in a range of primary and secondary schools. The aim is to ensure pupils make a successful transition to secondary school and prevent exclusion or low attendance. Staff receive training in a nurturing approach and the young people receive direct support in managing their school experience and further develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

Source: Audit Scotland

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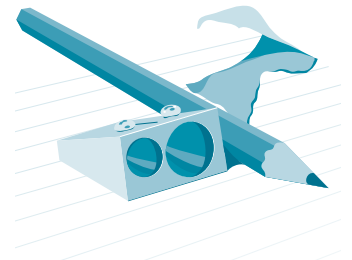
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## Recommendations

### Councils should:

- ensure education strategic documents contain clear priorities and actions that set out what is to be achieved in the short, medium and long term. Performance management arrangements should monitor outcomes and report regularly on delivery against strategic objectives, such as raising attainment among the lowest-performing pupils
  - review the sufficiency of information provided to education committees on attainment at S4-S6, pupil performance between P1-S3 and wider achievement. They should also ensure committees have the time and support to adequately challenge and hold to account education services
  - consistently use the Scottish Local Government Benchmarking Framework to benchmark their performance against other councils, and share good practice to improve educational attainment and wider achievement.
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# Endnotes

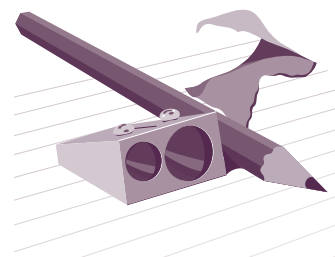


- ◀ 1 The Scottish Government has five strategic outcomes: to make Scotland Wealthier and Fairer, Smarter, Healthier, Safer and Stronger, and Greener.
- ◀ 2 *Pupils in Scotland*, Scottish Government, 2013; *Teachers in Scotland*, Scottish Government, 2013. Teacher numbers are primary, secondary and centrally employed teachers.
- ◀ 3 *A Curriculum for Excellence*, Scottish Executive, 2004.
- ◀ 4 This is revenue expenditure. We did not examine capital expenditure on school education due to the different timescales involved in councils' capital expenditure programmes and the different funding approaches taken by councils.
- ◀ 5 PFI and PPP are financing arrangements used by councils to fund new school builds. Councils pay an annual charge, the unitary charge, to private firms to build and maintain schools over a set period of time, after which the school becomes the property of the council.
- ◀ 6 This is general revenue funding (also known as the General Resource Grant) from the Scottish Government to councils. *Scottish Local Government Finance Statistics 2012/13*, Scottish Government, February 2014.
- ◀ 7 *Scottish Local Government Finance Statistics 2010/11*, Scottish Government, 2012; *Scottish Local Government Finance Statistics 2012/13*, Scottish Government, 2014.
- ◀ 8 Spend per pupil is calculated by dividing a council's gross expenditure (excluding support service costs) by the number of pupils. This is the methodology used by SOLACE and the Improvement Service in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.
- ◀ 9 Chartered Teachers were introduced in 2006 as part of the *Teaching Profession for the 21st Century* agreement. Chartered Teacher status was intended to recognise and reward the excellence of those teachers who wished to remain in the classroom while continuing to encourage professional development. When they complete their qualification, teachers receive a lifelong salary enhancement. The scheme has since been disbanded.
- ◀ 10 Salary conservation occurs when a post is re-graded and the new salary is lower than previously. The post-holder then receives salary protection for a specified length of time.
- ◀ 11 This is primary, secondary, and centrally employed teachers. Education staffing numbers are displayed in calendar years as they are collected in the annual staff census in September of each year.
- ◀ 12 [Scotland's public sector workforce \(PDF\)](#)  Audit Scotland, November 2013.
- ◀ 13 Teaching staff formulas are used by councils to indicate how many teaching staff a school needs. The criteria used in the formulas can include pupil numbers and whether a school is in a deprived area. The criteria varies across the country.
- ◀ 14 *School estates 2012/13*, Scottish Government, 2014.
- ◀ 15 *Interim Report*, Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, 2013.
- ◀ 16 SSLN replaced the Scottish Survey of Achievement in 2011. The survey covers literacy and numeracy in alternate years and consists of a set of written and practical assessments and questionnaires for both pupils and teachers. Approximately 11,000 pupils and 5,000 teachers take part across the country.
- ◀ 17 The OECD is a forum enabling governments to work with each other to promote economic growth, prosperity and sustainable development. The OECD established PISA in 2000 to provide reliable, comparative data on the performance of education systems around the world. PISA assesses the competencies of a sample of 15-year-olds in both state-run and private schools in 65 countries and economies in reading, maths, and science. The most recent assessment was in 2012.

- ◀ 18 The assessment methodology used by the OECD changed in 2003 for maths and in 2006 for science. It is therefore not possible to compare performance prior to this.
- ◀ 19 It is not possible to compare UK countries before 2006 due to unreliable data.
- ◀ 20 To assess comparative performance among councils in 2004, we ranked each council (from 1 to 32) on each of the ten key attainment measures. We then identified how many of their rankings were in the highest-performing third of councils, middle-performing third, and lowest-performing third. Based on this, we then grouped councils into high-performing, middle-performing, and lowest-performing groups.
- ◀ 21 Pupil-level attainment data is from 2012 as 2013 results were not available at the time of reporting.
- ◀ 22 *Summary statistics for attainment, leaver destinations and healthy living, No.3: 2012 Edition*, Scottish Government, 2013; Data provided by Scottish Government Educational Analytical Services.
- ◀ 23 Pupils who are looked after by a council may be 'looked after away from home' (living in foster homes, with relatives, friends or in other community placements, in residential units or schools) or 'looked after at home' which means living at home under a supervision requirement from a Children's Hearing.
- ◀ 24 2010 is the earliest comparable year for ethnicity due to changes in census categories. 2010 is the first year of data available on looked after pupils.
- ◀ 25 *Review of Scotland's education system*, OECD, 2007.
- ◀ 26 A wide range of academic and other research, such as the Commission for School Reform, 2013 and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2012, shows that deprivation is a common factor affecting levels of attainment in many countries' education systems.
- ◀ 27 These are deciles 1 to 3 in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Each SIMD decile contains ten per cent of Scotland's data zones. So, for example, decile 1 is made up of the 651 of the most deprived data zones in Scotland. The least deprived areas are deciles 8 to 10 in the SIMD.
- ◀ 28 *Thrive at Five*, Save the Children, 2012.
- ◀ 29 Growing up in Scotland is a Scottish Government-funded longitudinal research project aimed at tracking the lives of several cohorts of Scottish children from their early years, through childhood and beyond.
- ◀ 30 Positive destinations are classified by the Scottish Government as higher education; further education; training; employment; voluntary work; and activity agreements.
- ◀ 31 The most recent national destinations data available at the time of reporting was the 2012 cohort of pupils.
- ◀ 32 Deprived areas are the 15 per cent most deprived in Scotland.
- ◀ 33 *Teaching Scotland's Future; A report of a Review of Teacher Education in Scotland*, Donaldson G, 2010.
- ◀ 34 *How the world's most improved school systems came out on top*, McKinsey & Company, 2007.
- ◀ 35 *The role of aspirations, attitudes and behaviour in closing the educational attainment gap*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2012.
- ◀ 36 *PISA Results in Focus 2012*, OECD, 2013.
- ◀ 37 Section 3 (2) of the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 states that 'the role of the local authority is to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education which is provided in the schools managed by them; and they shall exercise their function in relation to such provision with a view to raising standards of education'.
- ◀ 38 We conducted an online survey of parents of school-age children in February 2014. Four hundred responses were received from 25 council areas.
- ◀ 39 *Does money buy strong performance in PISA? Results in focus 2012*; OECD, 2013; *What makes a school successful? Resources, policies and practice Vol.IV*, OECD, 2010.
- ◀ 40 *Does money buy strong performance in PISA? Results in Focus*, OECD, 2013; *Visible learning: a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*, Hattie, J, 2008; *How the world's best performing school systems come out on top*, McKinsey & Company, 2007.

# Appendix 1

## The ten measures of school-level attainment used in the report



Attainment measure	Equivalent to	Overall % of pupils achieving this level or better, 2013	Range in performance between lowest and highest-performing councils
English and maths at level 3 in S4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English and maths at Standard Grade Foundation level</li> <li>English and maths at National level 3</li> <li>English and maths at Access level 3</li> </ul>	95	86 - 99
5 awards at level 3 in S4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 Standard Grades at Foundation level</li> <li>5 awards at National level 3</li> <li>5 awards at Access level 3</li> </ul>	95	92 - 99
5 awards at level 5 in S4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 Standard Grades at Credit level</li> <li>5 awards at National level 5</li> <li>5 awards at Intermediate level 2</li> </ul>	39	28 - 71
5 awards at level 5 in S5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 Standard Grades at Credit level</li> <li>5 awards at National level 5</li> <li>5 awards at Intermediate level 2</li> </ul>	54	44 - 80
1 award at level 6 in S5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Higher</li> </ul>	49	41 - 77
3 awards at level 6 in S5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 Highers</li> </ul>	29	21 - 60
1 award at level 6 in S6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Higher</li> </ul>	54	45 - 77
3 awards at level 6 in S6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 Highers</li> </ul>	38	29 - 63
5 awards at level 6 in S6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 Highers</li> </ul>	27	18 - 48
1 award at level 7 in S6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Advanced Higher</li> <li>Scottish Baccalaureate</li> </ul>	17	10 - 32

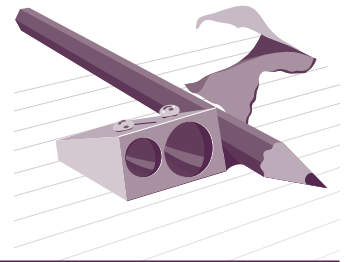
Note: Scottish Government calculates attainment by the end of S5 as a percentage of the S4 year group from the previous year. S6 attainment is calculated as a percentage of the S4 year group from two years previously.

Source: Audit Scotland, using data from Scottish Government Education Analytical Services Division



# Appendix 2

## Membership of advisory group



Audit Scotland would like to thank members of the advisory group for their input and advice throughout the audit.

Member	Organisation
Donna Bell	Scottish Government
Jackie Brock	Children in Scotland
Greg Dempster	Association of Head Teachers and Deputes in Scotland
Sarah Else and Gordon Wardrope	Fife Council
Phil Jackson	Educational Institute for Scotland
Joan McKay	Education Scotland
Maureen McKenna	Glasgow City Council
Moira Niven	West Lothian Council
Eileen Prior	Scottish Parent Teacher Council
Ronnie Summers	School Leaders Scotland
Hayley Wotherspoon	COSLA

Note: Members of the advisory group sat in an advisory capacity only. The content and conclusions of this report are the sole responsibility of Audit Scotland.

# School education

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T: 0131 625 1500 E: [info@audit-scotland.gov.uk](mailto:info@audit-scotland.gov.uk)  
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**Local Government and Regeneration Committee**

**22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting, 2014 (Session 4), Wednesday 20 August 2014**

**Public Petition PE1469**

**Paper from the Clerk**

**Introduction**

1. This paper sets out the progress to date on Public Petition PE 1469, which was referred to the Local Government and Regeneration Committee by the Public Petitions Committee at its meeting on 10 December 2013.
2. [The petition](#), by Aileen Jackson, calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to consider a change in planning regulations to enable an increase in the current neighbour notification distance of 20 metres in relation to wind turbine planning applications.

**Committee Consideration**

3. In January 2014 the Committee agreed to consider PE1469 as part of its consideration of the draft Third National Planning Framework (“NPF3”) and review of Scottish Planning Policy (“SPP”).
4. The Committee took both written and oral evidence on PE1469 as part of its consideration of the draft NPF3 and revised SPP. A summary of this consideration is set out in Annex A to this paper, for information.
5. During evidence taking Scottish Government ruled out making any amendment to the statutory minimums in place for neighbour notifications on wind turbine developments, Minister Mackay stated “guidance on public engagement beyond the statutory minimum” is, in the Government’s view, an appropriate way to address the issues raised by the petition.
6. The Minister undertook to write to the Committee, setting out a timetable for the drawing up of, and consultation on, this guidance. A letter setting out the details of this work is attached at Annex B, for information.

**For decision**

7. The Scottish Government has committed to drawing up, consulting on and publishing guidance of public engagement on neighbour notification for applications for the development of on shore wind farm development by the Spring of 2015.
8. **This being the case, the Committee is invited to consider and agree to the following—**
  - **to write to the Scottish Government acknowledging the actions taken on PE1469 in drawing up the aforementioned guidance;**



- to request that the Scottish Government ensures that the Petitioner is specifically consulted on the proposed draft guidance, and that any views she expresses are taken into account by the Government before it finalises such guidance;
- to ask that a copy of the finalised guidance be provided directly to the Petitioner, and that the Committee be notified of this by the Government, when the guidance is published in the Spring 2015;
- to request that the Scottish Government ensures that the finalised guidance is properly publicised and brought to the attention of all planning authorities in Scotland, as well as all those making applications for the development of onshore wind farms, and any other relevant persons or organisations whom the Scottish Government considers it appropriate to notify.

9. If the Committee is content to agree to the actions proposed in paragraph 8, and in light of the Scottish Government's decision to issue guidance on neighbour notification as a result of PE1469, there would appear to be no further reasonable action the Committee can take in relation to the Petition.

10. Therefore, the Committee is invited to agree to close Petition PE1469 with immediate effect, and agree that the clerks write to the Petitioner, and the Public Petitions Committee, to notify them of this decision.

Seán Wixted  
Assistant Clerk to the Committee  
15 August 2014

## SUMMARY OF CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE1469 BY THE COMMITTEE

11. Following the Committee's consideration of its approach to Petition PE1469 in December 2013, it was agreed to take advantage of the Committee's scrutiny of the draft NPF3 and review of SPP to examine the issues raised by the petition.

12. The Committee wrote to the Minister for Local Government and Planning, Derek Mackay MSP, ("the Minister") on 13 December 2013 seeking his views on the petition. The Minister responded in writing on 21 January 2014, setting out his views<sup>1</sup>. An extract from the Minister's response, relating to the petition, is set out in paragraphs 18 and 19 below.

13. The Minister stated that it was not the intention of the Scottish Government to amend the statutory minimums in place for neighbour notifications on wind turbine developments as sought by the petitioner. However, the Minister stated that "guidance on public engagement beyond the statutory minimum" is, in the Government's view, an appropriate way to address the issues raised by the petition.

14. Apart from the Local Government and Regeneration Committee, three other parliamentary committees considered the draft NPF3 in January and February 2014. All four committees published their reports on the draft NPF3 and SPP on 14 March 2014.

15. These reports were debated by the Scottish Parliament on 18 March 2014 as part of the debate on National Planning Framework 3 and Scottish Planning Policy. The issue of wind farm development featured in this debate.<sup>2</sup>

16. Two of these committees, the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee ("EET Committee")<sup>3</sup> and the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee ("RACCE Committee")<sup>4</sup> made recommendations to the Scottish Government on wind farm developments as part of their reports on the draft NPF3 and SPP.

17. The Scottish Government responded in writing to these recommendations on 9 May 2014.<sup>5</sup> The relevant extracts from that response are set out in paragraphs 21 to 23 below.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from the Minister for Local Government and Planning 21 January 2014 (see Annex C of letter, page 16). Available at (pdf): [http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4\\_LocalGovernmentandRegenerationCommittee/Inquiries/3-Minister\\_LGP.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_LocalGovernmentandRegenerationCommittee/Inquiries/3-Minister_LGP.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Official Report: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=9049>

<sup>3</sup> EET Committee Report on draft NPF3:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/74380.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> RACCE Committee Report on the Draft NPF3:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/74382.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> Scottish Government joint response to committee reports on draft Third National Planning Framework (9 May 2014).

Available at (pdf):

[http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4\\_LocalGovernmentandRegenerationCommittee/Inquiries/20140512\\_Scottish\\_Government\\_response\\_to\\_draft\\_NPF3\\_report.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_LocalGovernmentandRegenerationCommittee/Inquiries/20140512_Scottish_Government_response_to_draft_NPF3_report.pdf)

**Response from Minister for Local Government and Planning to Petition PE1469**

18. In its correspondence to the Minister on the draft NPF3 and SPP, the Local Government and Regeneration sought his views on Petition PE1469.

19. In his response to the Committee, the Minister stated—

“While we appreciate the concerns of people living near proposals for wind turbines, our overall aim is to provide opportunities for interested parties to comment on applications while not placing disproportionate burdens on planning authorities and applicants. We believe in the round the current statutory requirements do that.

Neighbour notification is intended for those living next to a proposal site, not everyone who might be affected by or have an interest in an application. Other publicity requirements also apply. Where developments are likely to have wider impacts on amenity because of their size (e.g. structures over 20 metres in height) or noise or in that they significantly alter an area of established amenity, then a notice must be published in a local newspaper. Information on all planning applications is required to be published on an online list by the planning authority for the area and available in the planning office, local libraries and weekly lists of new applications sent to all community councils in the planning authority’s area.

We recognise, however, that guidance on public engagement beyond the statutory minimum can encourage a more tailored approach to individual circumstances and consider this a proportionate response to the particular concerns about wind turbines. We have advised the Public Petitions Committee previously that we will issue such guidance for wind turbine proposals, and we will advise both Committees shortly on the timetable for its production.”<sup>6</sup>

***Scrutiny of onshore wind farm development by other committees***

20. Both the EEC Committee and the RACCE Committee considered the issue of onshore wind development as part of their consideration of the draft NPF3. Extract from the Scottish Government’s written response to the recommendations of those committees is set out below, for information.

21. In its report to the Parliament on the draft NPF3 the EET Committee stated—

“It is clear from the evidence we took that there are different interpretations of the term ‘community’ and uncertainty over how the term ‘wind farm’ will be interpreted. For example, how many dwellings are required to form a community and how large does a development have to be before it constitutes a wind farm? Consequently,

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<sup>6</sup> Written evidence to the LGR Committee by the Scottish Government, 21 January 2014

the Committee recommends that the final NPF3 and SPP documents provide much greater clarity on these two issues.”<sup>7</sup>

“The Committee welcomes the Minister’s commitment to reconsider the evidence received before making a final decision on the original proposal to increase the separation distance from 2km to 2.5km between wind farms and local communities. The Committee recommends that the Minister includes guidance in the final SPP on whether the separation distance is to be applied as a fixed boundary or whether flexibility can be applied by local planning authorities depending on the scale, size and number of wind turbines, the impact on topography and the levels of community support.”<sup>8</sup>

22. The RACCE Committee also commented onshore wind farm development in its report to the Parliament on the draft NPF3 and review of SPP—

“The Committee notes that there could be unintended consequences of the proposal, contained in the Scottish Planning Policy consultation document, to increase the separation distance between communities defined in local development plans and wind farms, from 2km to 2.5km. The Committee notes that further research is being undertaken in relation to this proposal and the definition of settlements and it supports an approach which will be sensitive to the circumstances of local communities. The Committee understands the outcome of this research will inform the final Scottish Planning Policy.”<sup>9</sup>

23. In his response to those committees, Minister Mackay stated that—

“I agree with the EET Committee that there can be confusion about the terms ‘community’ and ‘wind farm’. With regard to the former, the draft SPP refers to cities, towns and villages rather than communities, and specifically those identified in local development plans. I maintain that this is an appropriate position for the SPP to take, but would note that we are also currently giving careful consideration to the way we address the separation distance in the finalised SPP in the light of the evidence provided by the research.

Several Members expressed concern in the final debate that the research report was not available. The Committees may find it helpful to note that it was published in September 2013 and is available at—

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<sup>7</sup> Recommendation 6 of the EET Committee Report to the Parliament on the draft third National Planning Framework:  
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/74380.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> Recommendation 7 of the EET Committee Report to the Parliament on the draft third National Planning Framework:  
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/74380.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> Recommendation 11 of the RACCE Committee Report to the Parliament on the third National Planning Framework:  
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/74382.aspx>

<http://www.climatexchange.org.uk/reducing-emissions/review-separation-distances-onshore-wind-farms/>

There are many different definitions of a wind farm. However, I maintain that planning authorities should themselves define the scale to which their spatial frameworks for wind energy developments relate. This has been achieved, for example, in the two National Parks. The finalised SPP will maintain a flexible approach to allow local circumstances to be applied as appropriate.

In reporting these recommendations to inform the final debate, Murdo Fraser MSP [Convener of the EET Committee] asked for greater clarity on the extent to which community views can be taken into account. Each planning application is considered on its merits, taking into account responses made to the planning authority's consultation on the application.

The debate also highlighted support from several Members for community owned renewable energy projects. As set out in the NPF3 and reflected in energy policy, the Scottish Government is committed to realising its target of 500MW of community and locally owned renewables. Recent figures show that we are making excellent progress towards achieving this target. As recently announced by the Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism, at the end of June 2013 an estimated 285MW was operational in Scotland. This is a 40% increase from last year's figures."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Scottish Government's written response to reports to the Parliament by the LGR Committee, the EET Committee the RACCE Committee and the ICI Committee on the draft NPF3 and review of SPP, 9 May 2014: [http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4\\_LocalGovernmentandRegenerationCommittee/Inquiries/20140512\\_Scottish\\_Government\\_response\\_to\\_draft\\_NPF3\\_report.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_LocalGovernmentandRegenerationCommittee/Inquiries/20140512_Scottish_Government_response_to_draft_NPF3_report.pdf)

**LETTER TO THE CLERK OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGENERATION  
COMMITTEE FROM THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT ON PE1469**

**Local Government and Communities Directorate**

Planning and Architecture Division

T: 0131-244 5906 F: 0131-244 7083

E: michael.westwater@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Mr David Cullum  
Clerk  
Local Government and Regeneration Committee  
Scottish Parliament  
EDINBURGH  
EH99 1SP

In 2014 Scotland Welcomes the World



Our ref: PE1469/MW1

1 August 2014

Dear Mr Cullum

**PUBLIC PETITION PE1469: NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION AND WIND TURBINES**

I refer to the above Public Petition, which was referred to the Local Government and Regeneration (LGR) Committee by the Public Petitions Committee on 10 December 2013. The subject of the Petition was also discussed during the LGR Committee's consideration of the then forthcoming Scottish Planning Policy and National Planning Framework 3 and in the subsequent Committee report in this regard. I include a link to the Parliament's web page on this petition for ease of reference.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/turbineneighbournotification> -

In response to the petition the Scottish Government will produce good practice guidance in relation to public engagement on proposals for wind turbines. We have begun gathering information on existing practices in this regard and the drafting of the guidance has now commenced. A public consultation exercise will be carried out on the draft guidance as part of the stakeholder engagement.

We had also undertaken to advise the Public Petitions Committee early in 2014 of the proposed timescales for this work. I apologise for the delay in updating the Parliament in this regard. Resources are now in place to carry the work forward.

The estimated timescales for this project are as follows—

1. Research and guidance drafting stages – Summer 2014
2. Draft document- Ministerial clearance followed by consultation –Autumn 2014
3. Analysis of responses and finalising of guidance – early 2015
4. Ministerial clearance and publication –Spring 2015

We will inform you of progress at key stages of the project, including publication of the consultation on the draft guidance. Similarly we will advise the Clerk of the Public Petitions Committee, to whom this letter is copied.

I hope this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

**MICHAEL WESTWATER**  
SENIOR PLANNER  
Planning & Architecture Division