



Conclusions and Next Steps

This last year has seen councils across Scotland continue to strive to improve the quality and performance of key services while continuing to manage pressures to reduce costs. The data presented shows the scale of the budgetary pressures facing councils, the policy choices being made locally to meet the needs of local communities, and the impact of these choices on performance, satisfaction and costs.

This report highlights the significant variation in both cost and performance which exists between councils. It is these variations which provide the opportunities for learning. They provide 'can openers' which support collaboration and sharing between councils to better understand the differences and the approaches which may deliver improvements. The core purpose of the LGBF is to support councils to target their resources to areas of greatest impact and to ask important questions of key council services. The framework provides councils with insight into their own performance and provides a strengthened evidence base to help drive improvement, promote collaboration and learning, and strengthen public accountability.

The Local Government Benchmarking Board endorsed a 3-year Strategic Plan to support the continuous improvement and evolution of the LGBF. This plan, which has been welcomed by the Accounts Commission, sets out the following priorities to strengthen the LGBF across the next period:

1. To ensure the framework has relevance, credibility and timeousness

Progress has already been made in improving the timeousness of the data, and in strengthening the framework in relation to children and young people, and economic development measures. The next year will see work with Health and Social Care Chief Officers to strengthen the suite of measures on adult social care to take account of innovative preventative programmes and spending, and to better reflect the integration and personalisation landscape. The board will also consider how the framework might capture the totality of capital expenditure to better understand the impact local government has in this area. This will pose a wider set of questions in relation to benchmarking and data cleansing.

2. To better align the LGBF and outcomes

An online interactive tool³⁵ has been developed to link the LGBF with outcomes data presented in the Community Planning Outcomes Profile³⁶ (a resource which provides trend data on outcomes, both at a local authority level, and at a locality level). This helps to strengthen the narrative around the contribution council services play in improving outcomes, and support more strategic use of the LGBF in decision making and greater visibility within Public Performance Reporting.

The first of a series of LGBF thematic reports has been produced, focussing on Children and Young People. The report offers a more holistic view of services for Children and Young People and explores the link with outcomes. The report also provides an opportunity to include data not available at the time of the February publication of the LGBF overview report, particularly that relating to children and young people who are looked after. It is hoped the report will provide a useful supplement to the National Overview report and support the more strategic use of LGBF. Future reports are planned on health and wellbeing, economic development, and community safety. These developments will link with the Community Planning Improvement Board (CPIB) and support their work to improve the availability of performance evidence that can demonstrate improvement in outcomes.

³⁵ <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/outcomes-tool.html>

³⁶ www.improvementservice.org.uk/community-planning-outcomes-profile.html



3. To demonstrate how the framework is being used to inform decision making, drive improvement, and strengthen public accountability.

A supplement highlighting examples of the ways the framework is being used across local government will be published shortly on the LGBF website. This will help local government demonstrate their ongoing commitment to this improvement approach.