



Introduction

Trends and key issues

This section of the LGBF report highlights key national trends across Scotland's councils. The focal points this year are:

- i. Broad spending and performance trends across Scotland in the light of the Accounts Commission concerns about income and demand pressures.
- ii. Education performance and spending across Scotland given the high local and national priority attached to this.
- iii. Social care spending and performance given the expectation of very sharp increases in demand from the growing older population.
- iv. Spending and performance trends on corporate services given the key aims of protecting frontline services and reducing corporate overheads.

1. Spending and performance trends across Scotland

Total current spending by councils across Scotland fell very marginally in real terms in 2017/18 and at a much lower rate than average across the period from 2010/11. Most frontline services experienced stability and marginal growth in real terms in 2017/18. Table 1 gives the breakdown of spending by service since 2010, and the change across the last two years.

Table 1: Change in Expenditure Since 2010-11 (£000s)

	Scotland 2010/11	Scotland 2017/18	Change 2016-17 to 2017-18	Change 2010-11 to 2017-18	Range Among Local Authorities % Change from 2010/11 to 2017/18
Education	£4,465,224	£4,352,982	1.3%	-2.5%	-22% to 9%
Looked After Children	£414,992	£500,711	1.3%	20.7%	-26% to 89%
Adult Social Care	£2,858,249	£3,151,080	2.2%	10.2%	-7% to 33%
Culture and Leisure	£572,368	£446,672	-5.6%	-22.0%	-58% to 7%
Environmental Services	£773,279	£698,990	-0.3%	-9.6%	-33% to 8%
Roads	£654,285	£558,695	0.1%	-14.6%	-7.1% to 102%
Planning	£189,355	£125,269	0.7%	-33.8%	-7.1% to 68%
Economic Development and Tourism*	£493,031	£498,030	11.7%	1.0%	-66% to 972%
Central Support Services	£877,306	£675,338	-11.4%	-23.0%	-66% to 35%

Note: Table 1 includes expenditure covered by the LGBF measures. While the LGBF measures reflect the significant areas of local government expenditure, there are some minor areas of spend excluded, which accounts for differences with Scottish Government published expenditure data. All trends represent gross expenditure, except Culture and Leisure and Residential Social Care which are based on net expenditure.

*Economic development and tourism: these figures include both capital and revenue expenditure. Across the period, capital expenditure has grown by 105.5% while revenue expenditure has reduced by 29%.

Total current revenue funding for councils fell by 2.3% between 2016/17 and 2017/18 but cumulatively



has fallen by 8.3% in real terms since 2010/11.¹ Within council budgets, education and children's services, social care, roads, environmental services, economic development and planning have all had real terms growth or remained stable in the last year. Culture and leisure and corporate services had reductions in real terms of 5.6% and 11.4% respectively across that period.

The column on change in spending between 2010/11 and 2017/18 shows that spending on education and care has been relatively protected over this period but most other service areas have experienced substantial real reductions in spending: 22% reduction in culture and leisure spending; 34% reduction in planning; almost 15% reduction in roads spending; and almost 10% reduction in environmental services spending.

Across that period, service performance has been maintained remarkably well with improving trends in measurable performance across services. However, the Accounts Commission highlighted the challenges councils face in meeting the increasing demand for services against tightening budgets in its Local Government in Scotland Financial Overview 2017/18. One of the key messages was that "The financial outlook is for reductions in Scottish Government revenue funding to councils. This will mean continued and increasing financial pressures on council services, especially those that are not protected".

In 2017/18 there is indicative evidence across some services covered by the benchmarking framework that performance improvement is slowing down for the first time since 2010/11. Uptake of leisure services, swimming pools, libraries and museums has fallen since 2016/17, albeit there is still a very significant increase in uptake and use in comparison to 2010/11. Average total tariff scores (the summary measure of academic attainment at the point of leaving school) for children from the most deprived areas in Scotland fell marginally for the first time since 2010/11. However, the trend across the period since 2010/11 remains very positive: an improvement in average in tariff score of almost 30% (see below).

These may be 'stress' indicators and a sign that, after almost 10 years, austerity is catching up with local service performance. However, presently these are one year 'blips', not trends, and the trend data remains positive. These year on year changes need explored, however, and there is substantial local variation (up and down) around these 'national' averages. More concerning, as it is a trend, is declining public satisfaction year on year, and long term, with local services. Table 2 provides the data on change since 2010/11, and year on year.

Table 2: Public satisfaction with services (%)

	2010-11	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Change 2016-17 to 2017-18	Change 2010-11 to 2017-18
Local Schools	83	83	81	79	74	73	70	-3.0	-13.1
Libraries	84	83	81	77	74	73	72	-1.0	-11.5
Parks and Open Spaces	83	86	86	86	85	87	85	-2.0	1.9
Museums and Galleries	76	78	76	75	71	70	69	-1.0	-6.5
Leisure Facilities	75	80	78	76	73	73	72	-1.0	-2.6
Refuse Collection	81	83	83	84	82	79	75	-4.0	-5.9
Street Cleaning	73	75	74	74	73	70	66	-4.0	-7.3

Source: Scottish Household Survey

¹ <https://digitalpublications.parliament.scot/ResearchBriefings/Report/2017/6/21/Local-Government-Finance--facts-and-figures-2010-11-to-2017-18#Executive-Summary>



As can be seen, across all service areas for which data is available, both the long-term trend and the year on year change is a reduction in stated satisfaction. Three points need made about this data.

First, the data is not based on people who have used services: it is the total population whether they have used services or not. Second, it does not establish what it is about services people are satisfied with or not. They may be dissatisfied with cuts to funding for local services, for example, rather than service quality. Finally, across the period since 2010/11, public satisfaction has not reflected other measures of service quality, performance or impact which have consistently improved.

All of that said, even if much of the data is based on perception not experience, this needs addressed. If people believe that services are not available, or accessible, or of good quality, it may affect their uptake of services they would benefit from.

In summary, council spending across Scotland did stabilise against trends in 2017/18 but not sufficiently to offset any of the major reduction experienced since 2010/11. The improvement trends in performance slowed down in 2017/18 in several service areas but the trend since 2010/11 has been for substantial improvement. Reported public satisfaction has declined consistently since 2010/11 and did so between 2016/17 and 2017/18 and this needs addressed in dialogue with the public. Detailed local analysis of service user experience and satisfaction is important but needs linked to wider public perceptions. The impact that future demographic challenges and worsening poverty will have on councils' ability to achieve improvement, particularly in relation to non-protected elements of services, will need to be considered as part of this dialogue.

2. Education spending and performance

Education is the largest spending area for local government and because of the local and national priority attached to education, spending is subject to recurrent political scrutiny. Different measures of spending show different patterns in cash and real terms and for where spending is calculated per pupil. Tables 3a and 3b give total spending on primary, secondary, and preschool provision in cash and real terms, and expenditure per pupil or place.

Table 3a: Total education spending

		2010-11	2017-18	Change 2016-17 to 2017-18	Change 2010-11 to 2017-18
Primary education - Gross expenditure (£000s)	Real	£1,974,153	£1,989,013	2.6%	0.8%
	Cash	£1,763,866	£1,989,013	4.6%	12.8%
Secondary education - Gross expenditure (£000s)	Real	£2,146,600	£1,935,923	-0.4%	-9.8%
	Cash	£1,917,944	£1,935,923	1.4%	0.9%
Pre-Primary education - Gross expenditure (£000s)	Real	£344,471	£427,996	3.1%	24.2%
	Cash	£307,778	£427,996	5.1%	39.1%



Table 3b: Expenditure per pupil or place

		2010-11	2017-18	Change 2016-17 to 2017-18	Change 2010-11 to 2017-18
Cost per Primary School Pupil	Real	£5411	£4974	1.7%	-8.1%
	Cash	£4834	£4974	3.6%	2.9%
Cost per Secondary School Pupil	Real	£7145	£6880	-0.8%	-3.7%
	Cash	£6384	£6880	1.1%	7.8%
Cost per Pre-School Education Registration	Real	£3742	£4463	4.3%	19.3%
	Cash	£3344	£4463	6.3%	33.5%

Source: Council supplied expenditure figures

As can be seen, total spending on primary and secondary education has grown in cash terms but real spending is static for primary education and has fallen by 9.8% for secondary. However, real spending per pupil has fallen by over 8% since 2010/11 for primary pupils and by almost 4% for secondary pupils. Between 2016/17 and 2017/18, real spending per primary pupil rose by 1.7% and spending per secondary pupil fell by under 1%. Spending on pre-school provision rose substantially in cash and real terms, and real spending per place has risen by 20% since 2010/11, and by over 4% between 2016/17 and 2017/18.

Whether spending on education is seen to have been maintained over time, or not, therefore depends on the spending measure adopted. Real spending per pupil is probably the most reliable measure as it standardises for inflation and demand. It should be noted that the national average trends noted here are quite dependant on 'ring fenced' grants from Scottish Government ('Pupil Equity' & 'Attainment Challenge' funds) that are targeted and not equally allocated to all councils. National averages, therefore, contain substantial local variation.

Pupil performance in education has continually improved since 2011/12 on the measures used in LGBF. There is an aggregate measure of formal attainment at the point of leaving school, the 'tariff' score, which is based on points allocated for different levels and grades of qualification achieved. This measure is weighted towards academic attainment.

There are two further measures of attainment: percentage of pupils achieving 5+ passes at level 5 (standard grade equivalent) and at level 6 (Highers). Again, these are almost entirely focused on academic attainment. These measures can be broken down by deprivation to look at the pattern for pupils from more or less disadvantaged backgrounds.

Table 4 below gives a breakdown of the tariff score data, and the change from 2011/12 and 2017/18. This is provided for each deprivation quintile from most to least deprived.

Table 4: Overall average total tariff and by SIMD quintile

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	% Change 2016-17 to 2017-18	% Change 2011-12 to 2017-18
Average Total Tariff	770	798	827	860	877	888	891	0.4%	15.8%
SIMD Q1	478	510	551	581	603	625	618	-1.1%	29.3%
SIMD Q2	618	644	685	716	741	751	750	-0.1%	21.4%
SIMD Q3	759	788	816	851	864	882	896	1.6%	18.1%
SIMD Q4	909	929	962	984	998	1001	1016	1.5%	11.8%
SIMD Q5	1101	1134	1149	1185	1197	1210	1221	0.9%	10.9%

Source: Breakdown of average total tariff by SIMD quintile provided by Scottish Government and overall average total tariff calculated from this by the Improvement Service.



As can be seen, the average tariff score for all pupils improved by almost 16% across the period from 2011/12. In line with key priorities in education, the average tariff score for the most deprived quintiles improved most rapidly across the period since 2011/12 (the average tariff for the most deprived group improving by almost 30%).

These changes reflect a significant improvement in the educational outcomes and life chances of Scotland's young people. To put these numbers in context: since 2011-12, the improvements seen in the total tariff measure of school leavers from SIMD quintile 1 are equivalent to the average leaver converting 1.5 passes at National 5 into Highers. This scale of change makes a significant and positive impact on post-school opportunities.

By comparison, there was no significant change in the total tariff measure for leavers in 2017/18 compared with the year before, with a change of a few tariff points for each measure (equivalent to a change of a grade or less for one award).

The lack of further progress in closing the attainment gap in 2017/18 was disappointing. However, it is important to recognise the significant improvements achieved by Scotland's schools since the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, particularly given the context of continuing change within the school system over recent years. Reducing the attainment gap further remains a key priority for local authorities and will require allowing the Regional Improvement Collaboratives to develop their full potential as a means of adding value to local authorities in their work supporting school improvement.

The '5+ at level 5 and level 6' measure shows a different picture in terms of long term trend, and year on year change. Table 5 provides the data for the whole pupil population, and for pupils from the most deprived areas.

Table 5: Percentage gaining level 5 and level 6 awards and by SIMD

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Improvement Rate 2016-17 to 2017-18	Improvement Rate 2011-12 to 2017-18
% Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5	51	53	55	57	59	61	62	1.6%	21.6%
% Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 6	26	27	29	31	33	34	34	0.0%	30.8%
% Pupils from Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5	29	32	34	37	40	41	42	2.4%	44.8%
% Pupils from Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 6	10	11	14	14	15	16	16	0.0%	60.0%

Source: Figures supplied by Scottish Government

As can be seen, for all pupils, the improvement is strong since 2011/12: 21% at level 5, and over 30% at level 6. For pupils from deprived areas, it is stronger still: 45% improvement rate for 5+ at level 5, and 60% at level 6. The year on year data from 2016/17 shows a relatively static picture for all pupils and pupils from deprived areas: very marginal improvement at level 5, and static at level 6 in both cases.

The picture is therefore of substantial long-term improvement since 2011/12 in the attainment of all pupils, and for those from deprived areas. However, the rate of improvement has slowed across the last two years for all groups and a significant 'attainment gap' exists on these measures.



Average total tariff points and achievement at Levels 5 and 6 provide two summary measures of the overall attainment of a cohort of school leavers. A range of other measures are available that give a more outcomes-focussed view of attainment or a more focussed view of the attainment of particular groups of school leavers. These also, generally, show a picture of sustained improvement in attainment over recent years and significant progress in closing the attainment gap.

Not all of the improvements arising from the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence can be measured through improved attainment. Scottish schools have a strong focus on employability, supported by national policies like Developing the Young Workforce. This includes the use of personal achievement awards and the development of personal skills in addition to accredited attainment. The continued improvements in positive destinations from school reflect the positive impact that this approach is having, particularly for young people living in Scotland's most deprived areas. Post-school destinations have seen a general improvement over recent years and further analysis of the data shows a measurable closing in the "destinations gap" for those living in Scotland's most disadvantaged areas. Similarly, the 'participation' measure that captures the participation of 16-19-year olds in further education, higher education, apprenticeships, training and employment has improved year on year to an overall participation rate of almost 92%. Full time participation in higher education has also grown consistently since the base year.

3. Social care spending and performance

Due to demand and cost pressures, spending on social care has grown across the period since 2010/11. Table 6 gives data on total social care spending on adults, home care spending on older people (65+) and residential care spending on older people in real terms, it also gives cost per hour for home care and cost per week for residential care. All figures are presented in real terms.

Table 6: Expenditure on total social care and home and residential care for older people

	2010-11	2017-18	Change 2016-17 to 2017-18	Change 2010-11 to 2017-18
Gross Social Work spend on over 18s (£000s)	£2,858,249	£3,151,080	2.2%	10.2%
Total Homecare Expenditure (£000)	£486,906	£563,471	3.1%	15.7%
Older Persons (65+) Home Care Costs per Hour	£22.50	£23.80	3.0%	5.4%
Net Expenditure on Care Homes for Older People (£000s)	£701,565	£612,398	1.2%	-12.7%
Older persons (over 65's) Residential Care Costs per week per resident	£435	£386	1.8%	-11.2%

Several points follow: total social care spending on adults has grown across the period but spending on home care and residential care for older people has fallen as a percentage of that total. Spending on home care has risen by 15% over and above inflation, but the number of hours of homecare provided has been relatively static across the last few years (23,650 hours in 2014/15 to 23,712 hours in 2017/18). Spending on residential care has fallen across the period by over 12% but largely because the net cost of residential care has come down rather than because the number of residents has fallen (-11.2% and -1.7% respectively).

There are two positive points from those figures. First, shifting the balance of spend between residential and home care and that has happened. A record proportion of older people assessed to have long-term care needs are being supported at home. Second, that hours of care at home are not growing, and the number of residents in residential care is declining, suggests that demand is not



expanding at the rate expected. Modelling has typically assumed growth of around 3% per annum in demand for care:² the effective rate has been less than 50% of that.

There may be a few reasons for this. Older people may be living healthier lives, innovative preventative initiatives may be diminishing the need for long term care, or care may be more tightly rationed and targeted on the highest dependency cases with families and communities doing more for others. It may be a combination of all these factors. This needs explored at local level but the LGBF suite of measures also needs updated to take account of innovative preventative programmes and spending. The LGBF care data also needs to be linked to hours of personal care delivered through community nursing. Given the integration agenda, a focus solely on council provided social care will not accurately reflect the changing landscape. That will be explored with Health and Social Care Chief Officers across the next year.

A final point to note is that measures of care user satisfaction and the impact of care provided on their lives, have both declined across the last three years (by around 5%). That said, care still gets an 80% positive rating from users in terms of satisfaction and impact.

The care story is relatively positive across the period in terms of improving the proportion of older people supported in a home environment, albeit the pace is variable across local authorities. However, the available data reveals a more complex picture in relation to reducing the proportion of older people in need of care. This is highlighted in Audit Scotland's 2018 update report on health and social care integration³ which identified significant barriers that must be overcome to speed up change and presented evidence that spending reductions and increasing demand are impacting on some services. The factors that shape the conversion of demographic change into effective demand need more fully explored and the role of rationing and cost control explicitly discussed. It is noticeable that the major area of expenditure reduction in the last eight years has been in residential care, largely provided by the independent sector. This may raise longer term issues about sustainable supply. Social care is the single largest area of procurement for local authorities across Scotland and recent research reveals that in some areas, particularly rural, there are few suppliers and no active market alternative suppliers.⁴

4. Corporate services spending and performance

As noted in the broad overview, corporate services spend has fallen by 23% in real terms since 2010/11, and corporate services now account for only 4.5% of total spending. This is the lowest corporate overhead ratio yet recorded and in part reflects the maturation of councils' digital strategies. It also reflects councils' commitment to reducing 'back office' costs to target resources on front line priorities.

This reduction has gone along with continuing improvement in key areas of performance. Council tax collection within year is at an all-time high of 96% and the cost of collection has reduced by over 50% in real terms since 2010/11. The gender pay gap has reduced at a rate of 12.5% across the last three years and by 6.6% in the last year, and the proportion of the 5% highest earning staff who are female has risen to almost 55%. The percentage of all invoices paid within 30 days has increased to over 93%, again the highest rate yet recorded.

The overall corporate services picture is positive: substantially reduced costs and improved performance. There is a key area of concern, however, and that is council-wide sickness absence rates. Table 7 gives data on overall days lost, and days lost per employee, for teaching and non-teaching staff within councils. The percentage change from 2010/11 and 2016/17 are given.

2 <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/documents/research/projected-cost-pressures-for-scottish-local-government.pdf>

3 <http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/report/health-and-social-care-integration-update-on-progress>

4 Economic Outcomes Programme Overview Report, <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/documents/econdev/eop-overview-report-aug18.pdf>



Table 7: Absence levels for teaching and non-teaching staff

	2010-11	2017-18	Change 2016-17 to 2017-18	Change 2010-11 to 2017-18
Sickness Absence Days per Teacher	6.6	5.9	-2.1%	-10.2%
Overall Days Lost - Teachers	349,345	313,918	1.0%	-10.1%
FTE - Teachers	52,900	52,906	3.2%	0.0%
Sickness Absence Days per non-teaching staff member	10.8	11.4	4.5%	5.7%
Overall Days Lost – Non-Teaching staff	1,731,251	1,641,333	4.9%	-5.2%
FTE – Non-teachers	160,403	143,890	0.4%	-10.3%

Source: Council supplied figures⁵

As can be seen, overall days lost for teaching staff fell over 10%, and days lost per member of teaching staff also fell, by 10%. Overall days lost for non-teaching staff also fell by 5%, but days lost per non-teaching staff member rose by almost 6%. One possible explanation of the apparent discrepancy here is that overall non-teaching staff numbers have fallen by over 10% since 2010/11 but teaching staff numbers have been static across the period.

The number of lost days for non-teaching staff is first and foremost an issue of workplace health and wellbeing: 1.6 million days lost in 2017/18 at a rate of over 11 days per member of staff. Two key points need taken into account in interpreting these trends:

- i. There appears to be a direct relationship between the level of workforce reductions and the differential trends in sickness absence between teaching and non-teaching staff. Reductions in non-teaching staff posts is likely to have increased the pressure on staff who remain and stress related absence is growing.
- ii. Due to reduction in posts and low recruitment levels, the council workforce is an ageing workforce. Almost 40% of staff are over 50 and this is increasing year on year.⁶ It is likely that the health issues affecting this demographic in Scotland will impact on council absence rates.

This combination of a reducing workforce and an ageing workforce facing increased workload pressures is not likely to go away in the foreseeable future. Indeed, it is likely to become more acute. Councils current strategies focussing on employee wellbeing as well as health, in particular supporting good mental health, are working to the extent that the situation has not significantly worsened but improvement is needed. High absence rates simply increase the pressure on remaining staff.

The LGBF 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. All councils continue to participate in these collective efforts towards self-improvement.

⁵ FTE calculations used within council supplied figures for LGBF differ slightly from the PSE guidelines (<https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Labour-Market/PublicSectorEmployment/PSEGuidance>)

⁶ <http://www.unison-scotland.org/library/Bargaining-Briefing-87-ageing-workforce.pdf>



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.

The purpose 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 indicators 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.

Councils continue to work together to ‘drill-down’ into the benchmarking data across service areas. This process has been organised around ‘family groups’ of councils so that we are comparing councils that are similar in terms of the type of population that they serve (e.g. relative deprivation and affluence) and the type of area in which they serve them (e.g. urban, semi-rural, rural). The point of comparing like with like is that this is more likely to lead to useful learning and improvement. Examples of best practice emerging from this collaboration are being shared across all local authorities and are being used to inform local improvement activity within self-evaluation, service review and service planning processes. Further information, briefing notes and case studies are available on the [LGBF website](#).⁷

The benchmarking data should not be considered in isolation. To support this, there is a growing focus to better align the benchmarking data with outcomes. A new [online interactive tool](#)⁸ links the LGBF with outcomes data presented in the [Community Planning Outcomes Profile](#)⁹ (a resource which provides trend data on outcomes, both at a local authority level, and at a locality level). This will help 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 introduction of thematic reporting in 2018/19 provides a ‘drill down’ into key policy areas to re-emphasise the ‘can opener’ nature of the LGBF information and strengthen the link between performance information and outcomes. The first of these reports focuses on children and young people’s services and is available on the [LGBF website](#). This will encourage a more diagnostic use of the data, particularly within family groups. These developments will link with the [Community Planning Improvement Board](#) (CPIB)¹⁰ and support their work to improve the availability of performance evidence that can illuminate improvement in outcomes.

There is a continued commitment to make benchmarking information available to all citizens and

⁷ <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/>

⁸ <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/outcomes-tool.html>

⁹ <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/community-planning-outcomes-profile.html>

¹⁰ <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/oepb.html>



users of council services. To further this end an online benchmarking public reporting tool has been designed called ‘[My Local Council](#)’¹¹ and is incorporated within councils own local approaches to public performance reporting. All of the information generated by the LGBF is presented in this online benchmarking tool which contains “dashboards” for each council showing movement on indicators across the eight years covered, and a comparison with the Scottish and family group average for all indicators.

LGBF framework indicators

The framework is based on seven overall service groupings which cover the major public-facing services provided to local communities and the support services necessary to do that. This includes children’s services (education and child care), adult social care, environmental services, culture and leisure, housing, corporate support services and economic development and planning.

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: pre-school education; primary education; secondary education; and child care and protection. For each category, standard indicators of spend and performance have been applied.

This year, the suite of measures for economic development has been expanded. The majority of council plans and Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs) assign a high level of strategic priority to local economic growth, job creation and tackling unemployment. As drivers of community planning and regional growth partnerships, councils recognise the importance of delivering better economic outcomes for their communities and understand the impact that local economic prosperity has on wider local government spend and income. The suite of measures in this area now includes:

- Total economic development revenue and capital investment per 1000 population
- Percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from council operated/funded employability programmes
- Cost per planning application
- Average time per business and industry planning application (weeks)
- Percentage of total procurement spent on local enterprises
- Number of Business Gateway start-ups per 10,000 population
- Immediately available employment land as a percentage of total land allocated for employment purposes in the local development plan
- Town centre vacancy rates
- Proportion of people earning less than the living wage
- Proportion of premises unable to access superfast broadband

A full list of service categories and indicators is attached (Appendix 1) and full technical specifications for all 80 indicators, including source details are available on the local government benchmarking website.

The sources used to populate the measures include statistical returns to the Scottish Government,

¹¹ <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/explore-the-data.html>



Scottish Qualifications Authority, the Scottish Housing Regulator, and SEPA, among others. Where data is not currently collected/published by another body or where it is published too late to allow inclusion within the benchmarking framework, councils provide data directly to the Improvement Service. The Scottish Household Surveys and the Health and Care Experience Surveys are used to provide customer satisfaction measures.

This framework is iterative and councils continue to collaborate to strengthen indicators and address framework gaps. A Directors' of Finance subgroup leads a programme of work to improve consistency in the recording of Local Financial Returns. We welcome public views in relation to how to improve this benchmarking framework and particularly if there are other measures which might usefully be included. You can provide feedback and suggestions by visiting our website (<http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking>).

The purpose of this report

This report is an overview report and does not seek to replicate the local context or interpretation provided by each council via their Public Performance Reporting or the depth and detail of the '[My Local Council](#)' tool.¹²

The focus of this report is on three important areas:

1. Trends across Scotland for the key framework indicators covering the period 2010/11 to 2017/18 inclusive. For consistency all data is presented as financial years though some data may be for calendar years or academic years. For each unit cost indicator, we have presented the change over the period in **real terms**, that is taking account of the impact of inflation over time.
2. The level of variation across councils and factors shaping these trends including physical geography, population distribution, size of council and the impact of deprivation.¹³ Graphs are presented showing the level of variation across councils for each area benchmarking measure. To improve interpretation, these graphs include only the base year and two most recent years.
3. Identification of areas where unexplained variation exists, providing opportunities where councils may wish to target improvements and/or efficiencies.

Before examining each section in turn, Table 8 below presents an overview of the trends across all LGBF indicators.

¹² <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/explore-the-data.html>

¹³ Correlation analysis and Mann-Whitney/Wilcoxon Two-Sample Tests were carried out to establish where statistically significant relationships exist between framework indicators and levels of deprivation, rurality, population distribution and size of council.

Table 8: Overview of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework Indicators 2017-18

Indicator Description	Scotland										%value change base* to 17/18	
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	%value change 16/17 to 17/18			
Children's Services												
Cost per primary school pupil	£5,411	£5,271	£5,126	£5,014	£4,875	£4,902	£4,891	£4,974	1.7%	-8.1%		
Cost per secondary school pupil	£7,145	£6,948	£6,930	£6,920	£6,890	£6,968	£6,935	£6,879	-0.8%	-3.7%		
Cost per pre-school education registration	£3,742	£3,405	£3,354	£3,191	£3,468	£4,001	£4,280	£4,463	4.3%	19.3%		
% of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 5		51	53	55	57	59	61	62	1.0%	11.0%		
% of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 6		2	27	29	31	33	34	34	0.0%	8.0%		
% of pupils from deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at level 5 (SIMD)		2	32	34	37	40	41	42	1.0%	13.0%		
% of pupils from deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at level 6 (SIMD)		10	11	14	14	15	16	16	0.0%	6.0%		
The gross cost of "children looked after" in residential based services per child per week	£3,146	£3,330	£3,173	£3,301	£3,329	£3,547	£3,469	dna		10.3%		
The gross cost of "children looked after" in a community setting per child per week	£229	£244	£271	£281	£292	£304	£319	dna		39.0%		
Balance of care for looked after children: % of children being looked after in the community	91.0	91.2	90.9	90.6	90.1	90.4	89.9	dna		-1.1%		
% of adults satisfied with local schools	83.1		83.0	81.0	79.0	74.0	73.0	70.0	-3.0%	-13.1%		
Proportion of pupils entering positive destinations		90.1	91.7	92.5	93.0	93.3	93.7	dna		3.6%		
Overall average total tariff		770	798	827	860	877	888	891	0.4%	15.8%		
Average total tariff SIMD quintile 1		478	510	551	581	603	625	618	-1.1%	29.3%		
Average total tariff SIMD quintile 2		618	644	685	716	741	751	750	-0.1%	21.4%		
Average total tariff SIMD quintile 3		759	788	816	851	864	882	896	1.6%	18.1%		
Average total tariff SIMD quintile 4		909	929	962	984	998	1001	1016	1.5%	11.8%		
Average total tariff SIMD quintile 5		1101	1134	1149	1185	1197	1210	1221	0.9%	10.9%		
% of children meeting developmental milestones (27-30 months)	87.1	90.6	91.3	92.6	93.5	91.9	91.7	91.0	-0.7%	-4.8%		
% Funded early years provision rated good/better										3.9%		
School attendance rates	93.1		93.6		93.7		93.3			0.2%		
School attendance rates (looked after children)	88.6		88.6		91.6		91.0			2.4%		
School exclusion rates	40.0		32.8		27.2		26.8			-32.9%		
School exclusion rates (looked after children)	165.6		184.5		94.3		80.0			-51.7%		

Indicator Description		Scotland										%value change 16/17 to 17/18	%value change base* to 17/18
		2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18				
Corporate Services	Participation rates for 16-19 year olds							90.4	91.1	91.8	0.7%	1.4%	
	Child protection re-registrations within 18 months							6.5	6.7	dna		-0.0%	
	% Of looked after children with more than 1 placement in the last year	211	214	212	219	214	207	21.2	21.2	dna		0.1%	
	Support services as a % of total gross expenditure	4.9	5.3	5.2	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.0	5.0	4.5	-0.5%	-0.4%	
	% Of the highest paid 5% of employees who are women	46.3	48.5	48.7	50.7	51.7	51.9	52.9	52.9	54.6	1.7%	8.3%	
	The gender pay gap							4.5	4.2	3.9	-0.3%	-0.6%	
	The cost per dwelling of collecting council tax	£15.46	£14.57	£14.40	£12.89	£11.50	£10.77	£9.14	£9.14	£7.35	-19.5%	-52.4%	
	Sickness absence days per teacher	6.6	6.2	6.6	6.1	6.3	6.1	6.1	6.1	5.9	-2.1%	-10.2%	
	Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher)	10.8	10.4	10.9	10.3	10.8	10.6	10.9	10.9	11.4	4.5%	5.7%	
	% Of income due from council tax received by the end of the year	94.7	95.1	95.2	95.2	95.5	95.7	95.8	95.8	96.0	0.2%	1.3%	
% Of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days	89.5	90.2	90.5	91.9	92.5	92.8	93.1	93.1	93.2	0.1%	3.7%		
Adult Social Care	Older persons (over65) home care costs per hour	£22.54	£21.84	£22.16	£21.54	£21.25	£22.07	£23.06	£23.76	£23.76	3.0%	5.4%	
	Direct payment & personalised budget spend as a % of total social work spend on adults 18+	1.6	2.9	6.0	6.4	6.9	6.7	6.5	6.5	6.7	0.2%	5.1%	
	% Of people 65+ with long-term needs receiving care at home	58.9	59.2	59.8	59.8	60.0	60.7	60.1	60.1	61.7	1.6%	2.8%	
	% Of adults receiving any care or support who rate it as excellent or good.					84.0	81.0			80.2	-0.8%	-3.8%	
	% Of adults supported at home who agree that their services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life					85.0	84.0			80.0	-4.0%	-5.0%	
	Older persons (over 65's) residential care costs per week per resident	£435	£440	£400	£385	£390	£380	£379	£379	£386	1.8%	-11.2%	
	Cost per attendance at sports facilities	£3.97	£3.56	£3.40	£3.39	£3.11	£3.04	£2.96	£2.96	£2.71	-8.4%	-31.9%	
	Cost per library visit	£3.81	£3.60	£3.41	£2.74	£2.58	£2.55	£2.02	£2.02	£2.08	3.1%	-45.4%	
	Cost of museums per visit	£4.70	£3.84	£3.88	£3.56	£3.50	£3.17	£3.38	£3.38	£3.49	3.2%	-25.9%	
	Cost of parks& open spaces per 1,000 population	£29,022	£26,823	£25,624	£24,773	£24,574	£22,700	£21,229	£21,229	£19,814	-6.7%	-31.7%	
Culture & Leisure Services	% Of adults satisfied with libraries	83.5		83.0	81.0	77.0	74.0	73.0	73.0	72.0	-1.0%	-11.5%	
	% Of adults satisfied with parks and open spaces	831		86.0	86.0	86.0	85.0	87.0	85.0	-2.0%	1.9%		
	% Of adults satisfied with museums and galleries	75.5		78.0	76.0	75.0	71.0	70.0	69.0	-1.0%	-6.5%		
	% Of adults satisfied with leisure facilities	74.6		80.0	78.0	76.0	73.0	73.0	72.0	-1.0%	-2.6%		

Indicator Description		Scotland										%value change 16/17 to 17/18	%value change base* to 17/18
		2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18				
Environmental Services	Net cost per waste collection per premises	£64.02	£65.20	£68.07	£66.91	£65.77	£65.98	0.3%	3.1%				
	Net cost per waste disposal per premises	£99.94	£98.01	£95.76	£101.49	£100.64	£98.42	-2.2%	-1.5%				
	Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population	£22,218	£21,409	£18,988	£17,271	£16,606	£15,551	5.3%	-30.0%				
	Cleanliness score (%age acceptable)	95.4	96.1	95.8	96.1	93.4	92.2	-1.7%	-3.2%				
	Cost of roads per kilometre	£12,556	£11,490	£10,935	£10,648	£10,392	£10,547	0.1%	-16.0%				
	% of A class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	30.3	30.5	29.4	28.7	29.0	29.5	0.7%	-0.1%				
	% of B class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	35.8	36.3	35.0	35.2	36.1	34.8	1.1%	0.1%				
	% of C class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	35.0	36.0	34.8	36.6	37.4	34.6	1.6%	1.2%				
	% of unclassified roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	41.9	38.3	40.1	39.4	39.3	39.5	-0.5%	-2.9%				
	Cost of trading standards and environmental health per 1,000 population	£27,237	£24,204	£23,128	£24,335	£23,383	£21,783	-1.8%	-21.5%				
	Cost of trading standards per 1,000 population			£5,544	£5,960	£5,872	£5,974	£5,599	5.2%	6.2%			
	Cost of environmental health per 1,000 population			£17,584	£18,374	£17,511	£17,296	£16,185	-4.3%	-11.9%			
	% of total household waste arising that is recycled	38.7	40.1	41.1	42.2	42.8	44.2	45.2	0.4%	6.9%			
	% of adults satisfied with refuse collection	80.9		83.0	83.0	84.0	82.0	79.0	-4.0%	-5.9%			
% of adults satisfied with street cleaning	73.3		75.0	74.0	74.0	73.0	70.0	-4.0%	-7.3%				
Housing Services	Gross rent arrears as a % of rent due for the reporting year				5.6	5.9	6.2	6.5	6.7	0.2%	1.1%		
	% of rent due in the year that was lost due to voids	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.1	0.9	0.9	0.0%	-0.4%		
	% of dwellings meeting SHQS	53.6	66.1	76.6	83.7	90.4	92.5	93.6	93.9	0.3%	40.3%		
Average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs				10.2	9.9	9.4	8.7	7.5	7.5	-14.0%	-26.2%		
% of council dwellings that are energy efficient	74.9	81.2	88.8	93.0	96.6	96.2	96.6	97.2	0.6%	22.3%			
Corp. Asset	Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use	73.7	74.8	75.9	78.2	79.0	79.6	79.8	81.0	1.2%	7.3%		
	Proportion of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition	81.3	82.7	82.6	80.9	83.0	81.5	84.5	86.3	1.8%	5.0%		

Indicator Description		Scotland										%value change 16/17 to 17/18	%value change base* to 17/18		
		2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18						
Economic Development															
% of unemployed people assisted into work from council funded/operated employability programmes		91	12.5	14.1	14.2	14.0	14.4							0.4%	5.3%
Cost per planning application		£5,470	£5,284	£6,701	£4,719	£4,463	£4,652	£4,819						3.6%	-11.9%
Average time per business and industry planning application		27.2	26.2	27.2	14.0	10.6	9.6	9.3						-2.6%	-33.3%
% of procurement spent on local enterprises					26.9	27.5	25.4	27.4						0.9%	0.2%
No of Business Gateway start-ups per 10,000 population					19.0	18.9	16.9	16.8						1.2%	-11.6%
Investment in economic development & tourism per 1,000		£94,412	£83,926	£79,169	£78,194	£73,557	£82,471	£91,806						11.3%	-2.8%
Proportion of people earning less than the living wage				18.8	18.6	19.3	20.1	18.4						-1.7%	-0.4%
Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband					56.1	67.5	78.6	85.9						5.2%	35.0%
Town vacancy rates						10.1	11.9	10.2						1.3%	1.4%
Immediately available employment land as a % of total land allocated for employment purposes in the local development plan						12.9	27.2	38.4						2.4%	27.9%