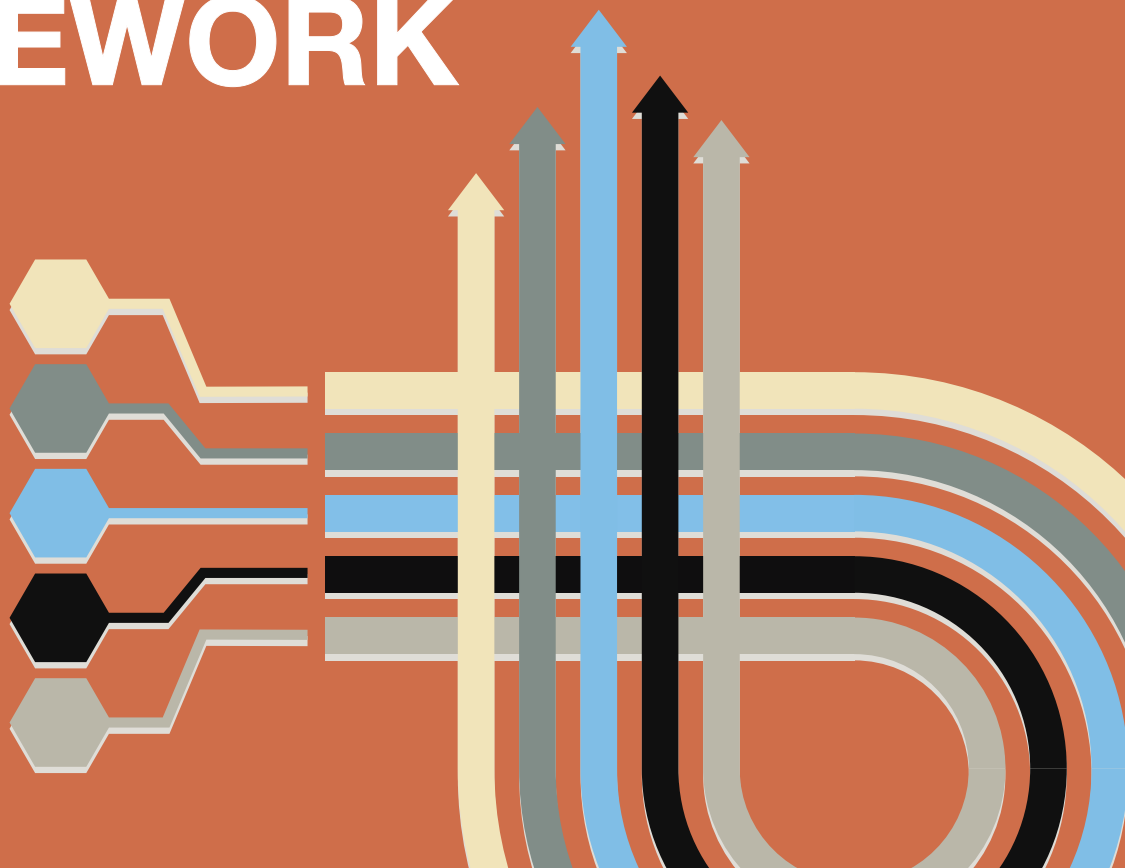


HOW COUNCILS ARE USING THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK

2018





In 2018, the LGBF Board asked Chief Executives to share examples of how they are using the LGBF within their councils. This report is a collation of the responses provided.



INFORMING
STRATEGIC
DECISIONS AND
REPORTING
PROGRESS AGAINST
PRIORITY OUTCOMES

Highland

The LGBF was used to inform the council redesign process. Peer reviews were used to challenge whether the council had the best service delivery model in place and provide an options appraisal for 10 service delivery options. The LGBF and family group analysis was used as part of the evidence gathering stage for this activity. This is proving valuable contextual information for members, trade unions and officers to better understand the impact of change and improvement for the organisation, and for people using our services. The overall approach to peer review is available at: http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/18528/peer_review_framework_2017. For other redesign objectives (including being more commercially minded and more community minded) we use different methods, including Lean reviews, and we are developing new community reviews. All will rely on using data to understand our current position and to identify where improvement is needed.



North Ayrshire

In 2016 all executive directors identified key LGBF indicators that were priorities for their directorates. These priorities have been in place since then and have been the focus for reporting to our elected members. The priority indicators are highlighted along with notes to provide details of the progress being made against these and future plans for benchmarking and improving performance in these areas.



Argyll & Bute

We are using a selection of indicators from the LGBF in a wider suite of 'impact measures' that have been put together to show progress against the council's outcomes. This suite of measures is designed to complement the success measures that are also being monitored so that we can gauge whether our activities are having the overall impact that we intend.



Dundee

Several of the LGBF indicators are used in the Dundee Partnership's City Plan (our Local Outcome Improvement Plan) and Dundee City Council's Council Plan (our corporate plan). The trend data supplied by LGBF and family group comparisons informed the targets set on the one-year, three-year, and ten-year model.



The indicators have also been used as results data when conducting our Public Service Improvement Framework self-assessment consensus meeting with senior management. For example, a corporate PSIF session resulted in agreeing to set an even more ambitious target for closing the attainment gap, as LGBF data on this was provided at the start of the session.

The LGBF Indicators have been used to select areas for review for the council's transformation programme e.g. cost of parks & open spaces per 1,000 population. The service has reduced its costs significantly whilst still comparing favourably against other cities and our family group in satisfaction ratings, as well as being innovative in how the service has evolved.

West Dunbartonshire



A core suite of LGBF indicators has been prioritised by the council, linked to the strategic priorities of the organisation as detailed in the Strategic Plan. The performance framework for the Strategic Plan includes a performance indicator on the percentage of these prioritised PIs improving over time. LGBF data is used in the annual delivery plans of each strategic service area, along with a wider suite of performance data. This ensures that LGBF is used as intended to generate a discussion within the wider context of understanding the service performance in each area.

South Lanarkshire



The council plan Connect 2017-22 sets out our vision, values and ambitions, and what we aim to achieve in the five-year period. This plan is the starting point for the resource planning process and the annual resource plans show, in detail, how services will contribute to the council's objectives in the coming year. Included within these resource plans is the suite of LGBF indicators. The current format for performance reporting has been established for several years and is used for executive director's report to the chief executive, resource committees and resource management teams. The key focus has been reporting progress on council objectives, statutory performance indicators, other key performance measures and high-level resource priorities.

West Lothian



West Lothian Council set strategic priorities for West Lothian in consultation with the local community. There are eight priorities that we believe will help our community to grow and succeed, and as a result, will be a focus for council resources in the years ahead as we strive to deliver positive change in each one. Each priority has an identified scorecard with performance measures for tracking progress and improvement. This scorecard is reported to elected members and to the public. A number of these priorities and associated measures are consistent with the focus areas of the LGBF. For example:

- Improving attainment and positive destinations – LGBF Children's Services
- Delivering positive outcomes and early interventions for early years – LGBF Children's Services
- Minimising poverty, the cycle of deprivation and promoting equality – LGBF Economic Development & Housing Services
- Improving the quality of life for older people – LGBF Adult Social Care
- Improving the employment position in West Lothian – LGBF Economic Development
- Delivering positive outcomes on health – LGBF Adult Social Care
- Protecting the built and natural environment – LGBF Environmental Services

The LGBF data is being used to help understand the council's performance and progress in each priority in the context of national trends. It is also used as part of targets setting for measures and as a means of identifying and learning from sector leading performance. The council has been able to demonstrate improved performance and outcomes in priority areas.

Fife

Key performance indicators (KPI) and benchmarking information are used to determine resource priorities to enable us to meet our outcomes. LGBF indicators are built into service performance scorecards; these are aligned to outcomes and are reviewed on a quarterly basis.



Stirling

LGBF data helps us to inform strategic decision-making and reporting against outcomes. This is done annually using our Schools Learning and Education Improvement Plan. Reference is made to the Local Government Benchmarking Framework in relation to, for example, performance of pupils in the senior phase (tariff points) taking into consideration SIMD data. This information is used to inform curriculum planning and targeting of provision for learners from particular SIMD areas in order to close the poverty related attainment gap. In terms of areas of good practice, a new programme designed to provide an alternative model of learning aimed at S4 pupils at risk of disengaging has been developed and is set to commence in session 18/19. This programme was developed to specifically target those young people that would typically come from SIMD 1–2 in order to provide high quality learning experiences that lead to relevant accreditation and positive destinations. This programme will contribute to our ambition of closing the poverty related attainment gap.



Renfrewshire

The data gathered through the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) is embedded within our Council Plan and departmental level service improvement plans, which are updated on an annual basis, and is used to contribute to the allocation of resources in line with local need.



Aberdeenshire



The LGBF data is used to inform heads of service (via service specific detailed reporting to Directorate Management Team), Strategic Leadership Team (high level reporting) and elected members (high level reporting) on the council's performance within the parameters of the LGBF reporting platform each year. From 2015/16 a number of indicators were selected by each service for further monitoring/review. These indicators were selected on the basis of requiring further scrutiny due to low performance and/or their relevance to service priorities. This process is ongoing and reviewed annually.

North Ayrshire



The LGBF data is scrutinised by the Executive Leadership Team when the data is released. The data is reviewed and discussed and acts as a starting point to wider discussions. Our reporting includes detailed narrative on all indicators which provides context and aspirations. These reports are presented to and discussed by our cabinet and our audit and scrutiny committee. More detailed reports on our performance and comparison with our family group are provided to elected members. Six monthly performance review meetings take place with each of our executive directors and their leadership teams. The performance review reports contain a section on the LGBF indicators and summary of performance.

Renfrewshire



The data gathered through the LGBF is used to support scrutiny by our elected members and by the corporate and senior management teams as part of an overall suite of performance indicators. The data allows us to identify areas where improvements are required, and in some cases impacts upon decision-making, improvement and transparency. Indicators are monitored by our corporate management team (CMT) as well as service senior management teams (SMT) on a quarterly basis. In addition to this, out-turn reports which contain LGBF indicators are reported to elected members on a six-monthly basis. At the point when the Improvement Service releases the LGBF data, an overall report on the council's performance and an accompanying presentation detailing trend and contextual information is reported to and discussed by our corporate management team. A further report is coordinated for our elected members, which is presented to Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board on an annual basis.

Areas which are identified as requiring further analysis are selected by our CMT for a 'deep dive' and service directors and their SMTs attend CMT to take a closer look at the indicators and provide explanations of performance. Here, the CMT takes a closer look at how the data has been compiled, where we differ from other local authorities, as well as considering some examples of case studies of how specific services are working in practice and any remedial actions which are being planned.

Fife

KPI and benchmarking data is used to report performance to senior officers and members.

We take annual reports on LGBF benchmarking to the council executive team and to members Scrutiny Committee which show our performance compared with other councils and, more crucially, the improvement activity being undertaken within those areas. Last year's report, [Scrutiny Committee of 26 September 2017](#), shows how LGBF was reported to scrutiny committee. Services are encouraged to report performance regularly to members, and to include performance data when bringing proposals and reviews to members.



East Ayrshire

The Local Government Benchmarking Framework

is reported annually to the council's executive management team and the council's governance and scrutiny committee, following review and analysis of the LGBF data sets and the National Overview Report published by the Improvement Service.

The report details East Ayrshire's position in respect of the LGBF indicators against all the other Scottish councils. The report provides an opportunity for the council to identify areas for improvement and compare our performance against all other Scottish councils. In particular, improvement actions are identified against quartile 4 performance indicators to facilitate improved performance as we go forward. This report is available to services across the council to allow them to explore 'best in class' and is publicly available on the council's website.



East Renfrewshire

Following publication of the LGBF data, a comprehensive report is presented to cabinet outlining the LGBF results and providing analysis and response from services across the council, HSCP and our independent culture and leisure trust. The report presents the latest LGBF results against the previous two years' data, rankings and quartile positions (covering the three-year period) and also gives a comparison of ERC performance against the Scottish average for each indicator. The report includes coloured graphs showing trends over time. To ensure consistency of reporting, all LGBF data is presented in line with our own performance management framework meaning that all indicators are reported under our corresponding strategic priorities. And LGBF indicators are embedded in our six-monthly performance reporting framework.

Service areas contribute directly to the report. Each area sets out its strategic policy intention in relation to the LGBF indicators being discussed. They provided a detailed commentary on their performance over the 12-month period and set out future activity and any planned improvement actions as a result of the LGBF data. The report is considered by our corporate management team and is scrutinised by elected members at cabinet. Cabinet discussions usually result in requests for further information on performance and priority areas.

Our LGBF reporting has been recognised as good practice nationally and was commended in our recent Best Value Assurance Report. The most recent performance report is available here: <http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=22269&p=0>



Argyll & Bute



Historically, the scrutiny of the LGBF has involved providing reports on the data to the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee. In 2018-19, we have:

- Held a session with chief officers group to discuss use of the LGBF and its indicators
- Produced a report that shows performance and trends as suggested by the LGBF indicators, with responsible heads of service providing commentary. The report also includes commentary about 'looking forward', wherein heads of service have indicated how they see services developing in the future and where they can make improvements. Although improvements are not necessarily being driven by the LGBF, the LGBF is being used as a way to communicate and showcase wider activity and drive improvement. This report has gone to SMT and will be going to the council's Audit and Scrutiny Committee
- Identified a suite of notable indicators, chosen to highlight things that are either particularly good or where there may be concerns.
- Looked at rankings compared to other councils.

In addition to looking at how our performance compares with other councils, we have also looked at how our performance has changed over time so that we can identify areas where improvement has taken place even where this is not immediately apparent from the rankings.

South Lanarkshire



Education: The current LGBF measures cover a range of issues including attainment, attendance and leaver destinations, that are part of a suite of measures used in discussions with head teachers around improvement planning and in standards and quality reporting. The LGBF measures are part of our annual performance reporting and are included in the Education Resource Action Programme that is published as part of the Education Resource Plan each year. A progress report on all actions within the action programme is reported to Education Resources Committee twice a year and helps to inform decision-making as part of this cycle of performance improvement. Using evidence-based performance data on attainment to close the poverty related attainment gap is a core feature of the school improvement process on a school by school basis. This is also subject to on-going review and challenge in order to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Finance and corporate: LGBF results are reported to the Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum, the report earning praise from elected members for the breadth of coverage and important insight offered into council performance across key areas of spend. Providing this report has enabled scrutiny and wider understanding to be developed, including: clarification of the meaning and definition of specific measures (e.g. 'tariff scores', 'SIMD quintiles'); debate around whether movement up or down is good or bad in the context of policy decisions made by the council; and requests for selected LGBF measures, if possible, to be made available at ward level.

West Lothian



Benchmarking is a key component of West Lothian Council's performance management system. It is embedded in both the council's performance management approach and the self-assessment model that are used to scrutinise and challenge service performance. In these systems, services are continually challenged on the quality and depth of the comparative data that is used to benchmark their performance.

The LGBF dataset is key benchmarking information for West Lothian Council as it extends over a range of services and key activities delivered by local authorities in Scotland and provides validated data. Comparative analysis of the whole LGBF dataset is undertaken with the publication of the national report and the data refresh. This analysis is reported to the council's Executive Management Team and to the Performance Committee.

LGBF data is also be provided to council committees as part of new financial monitoring and reporting arrangements, providing elected members with meaningful comparisons on the quality and cost of council services.

The council has developed a strong understanding of our strengths and areas for improvement – relative to the national average, best in class performers and our family group comparator authorities – through effective analysis and application of the LGBF dataset. Comparative performance is highlighted as part of performance management and reporting arrangements so that staff, elected members, our stakeholders and the public share a common understanding of how the council compares across the different categories and performance measures contained in the LGBF.

The LGBF dataset has also been used as evidence in external inspection and assessment activity to highlight the organisation's areas of strength but also, to explain how the council is using benchmarking to improve the efficiency, effectiveness of our services.

West Dunbartonshire



Our LGBF data is scrutinised following publication at the monthly performance monitoring and review group, chaired by the chief executive, attended by the council senior management team. This scrutiny allows for a strategic discussion about priority areas for attention.

Dundee



The council management team, Policy and Resources Committee and Scrutiny Committee receive the full report on all the LGBF indicators that identifies areas where we have performed well in comparison to others, particularly our peer councils, along with areas for improvement and a description of what the council is doing to improve.

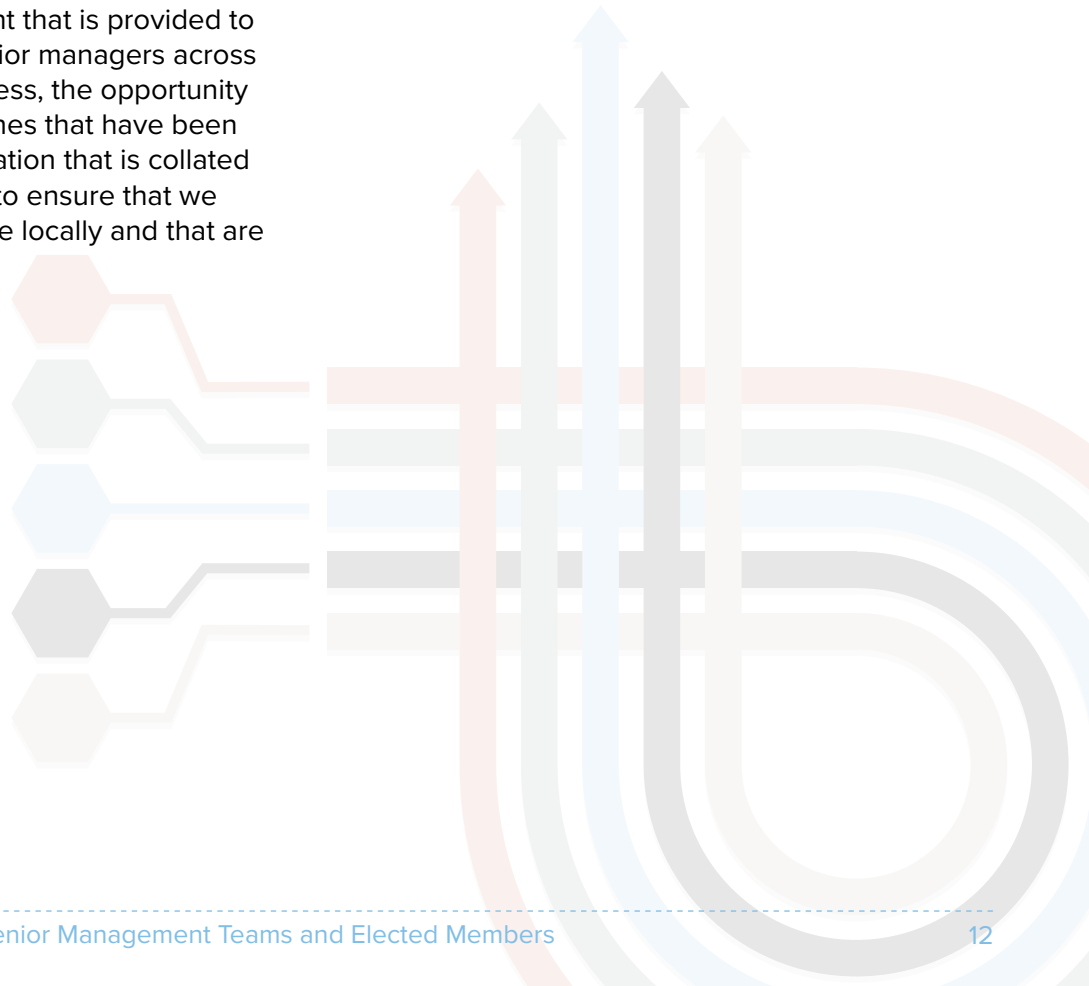
The LGBF indicators have all been included in digital scorecards for the relevant services on the council's corporate performance management system (Pentana). Service management teams are being trained in how to use the digital scorecards to monitor performance and drive improvement.

Stirling



The LGBF annual report is reported to the corporate management team, to enable it to assess comparative performance, and will help inform the council's preparation for its forthcoming Best Value Assurance Review. The annual report will also be reported to the council's Audit Committee in August for scrutiny by elected members.

We have recently revised the performance management approach for committee and corporate reporting. This has provided us with the opportunity to streamline and automate, which has improved the quality of information and insight that is provided to both elected members and senior managers across the council. As part of this process, the opportunity was taken to consider approaches that have been taken nationally and the information that is collated through LGBF. This allowed us to ensure that we have measures that are valuable locally and that are comparable more widely.



TARGETING AND SHOWCASING IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY

North Ayrshire

We are reviewing and improving residential-based care for children and young people, drawing on the LGBF data to inform this work. We will create more person-centred environments where each young person has a holistic positive care experience, while achieving best value. Review of length of stay within residential units and progression of child plans is underway as part of residential review.

A comprehensive review of costs included in 'cost of parks & open spaces per 1,000 population' has been carried out together with benchmarking with East Ayrshire Council to compare performance.

There has been an improvement in the percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from council funded/operated employability programmes. This was achieved through the continued to roll out our network of employability hubs, meaning more people were engaged and supported.

The implementation of the new repairs policy has seen an excellent improvement in the average days to complete non-emergency repairs.

Our innovative library service often shares its good practice within the family group and also at wider LGBF events. It continues to maintain strong performance during a time of reducing budgets. Please see case study at www.improvementservice.org.uk/documents/case-studies/CS-NAC-Libraries-RedesigningSvcs.pdf.



Fife

The LGBF data is used to identify performance issues and develop action plans to address them. For example, for economic development, recent examples include performance in relation to Business Gateway start-up rates, and time taken to process major planning applications. Following analysis of the data, [detailed reports](#) were taken to our Scrutiny Committee providing a drill-down into the factors influencing current performance levels and outlining interventions to improve performance.

Participation in the benchmarking family groups has enabled the sharing of good practice/ improvements and networking to good effect. Even in areas such as recycling and cost of council tax collection where we are in the top quartile, and have been so for a number of years, we are able to learn from others and to implement new practises which make us leaner, improve efficiencies, and bring financial savings too. Sharing best practice across councils allows for implementation of new ideas such as “move to digital”, “promoting direct debits”, online customer accounts etc. within our council tax collection and revenues teams.



East Renfrewshire

LGBF benchmarking data was the catalyst for ERC working to improve our performance and relationships with external contractors. The LGBF highlighted declining (and comparatively poor) performance on the timely payment of invoices. This resulted in targeted action to improve performance



in this area. In 2017 we centralised all invoice payments and set up a 'production line' approach for invoice processing. In addition, we have set up processes to more closely monitor our performance with daily dashboards producing 'real time' information on invoice processing. This targeted approach has resulted in sustained performance improvements since the last quarter of 2016/17, maintained throughout 2017/18.

The successes we are starting to see in relation to invoice processing is making our relationship with local contractors easier and helping their businesses run more smoothly. This was an area of potential reputational risk for the council – having been highlighted through LGBF benchmarking data we have been able to turn performance around.

Argyll & Bute



The council has used the sickness absence data to engage with other councils through SPDS in the attendance and well-being portfolio group, and to implement improvement activities and best practice. There has been an improvement in teachers' absence levels, but not yet in LGE absence levels.

The children and families benchmarking family group has made it possible for Argyll and Bute to share its good practice regarding how looked after children are maintained in community settings.

Read the case study at www.improvementservice.org.uk/documents/case-studies/CS-A&B-LAC-UsingBankStaff.pdf

Inverclyde



We have contacted councils who have made significant improvements in performance e.g. attendance levels, and enquired what strategies they have employed. We would then consider implementation here, learning from their experiences.

The LGBF indicators encourage review by both corporate management team and directorate management team especially where we are outliers or our standing moves markedly. We have done some work around the "amount spent per km" for roads and had a review of how we account for this, and the indicators were also looked at during the budget process when trying to identify potential savings areas.

We have used LGBF to look deeper at street cleansing costs and ground maintenance. i.e. where our costs seem high. The corporate director has also looked at waste recycling/waste collection costs to predict where we will be with service changes.

We use some of the measures in the Health and Social Care Partnership Quarterly Performance Report, have used some of the data for their CI self-evaluation and used some for their strategic needs analysis. The benchmark element is most useful.

Dundee

The data on cost of parks and open spaces per 1,000 population triggered a review of how services were being delivered in Dundee and whilst the costs associated with these services reduced, we have also seen new initiatives being successfully implemented as follows:



- **Pride in Your City campaign** - Neighbourhood Services have teamed up with Zero Waste Scotland, key stakeholders including voluntary groups who both organise and deliver clean up in the community and develop litter action plans for the city. The Pride in Your City Campaign is also focused on themes such as trying to promote responsible citizenship in respect of dog fouling, litter etc. including fly tipping.
- **Environmental improvements** – Over the course of the last two years a number of environmental improvements have been carried out. The improvements have been well received by the public and have involved wide consultation with the community through the local Community Planning Partnership. Projects such as the establishment of the wild flower meadows have enhanced the visual amenity, contributed to biodiversity and created a more efficient landscape to manage
- In terms of additional initiatives designed to further sustain environmental quality, a **year-long trial as part of the SMART Cities programme** is ongoing. A number of outcomes will be evaluated including the use of smart compactor litter bins, bin sensors which will communicate when litter bins require to be emptied and specialist pedestrian operated sweeper machine.

The council management team receive a report that specifically highlights indicators where we appear more expensive than the family group median, with monetary ranges of how much could potentially be saved if we matched the median and/or the best in class. This has led to some cost-based review activity to balance cost and quality. Examples include reviews of our approach to street cleaning and open space maintenance.

Briefing notes have been provided to senior managers using the LGBF data. For example, information on costs and service levels relating to looked after children in Dundee contributed to a strategic action being included in the Council Plan to re-model provision. This will be supported within our next phase of our transformation programme.

Our council actively participates in the family group meetings to learn from others, as well as sharing information via the KHub. Officers across a range of professional and technical areas also make use of their networks so further support benchmarking and help to inform in particular improvement and service redesign.

South Lanarkshire



Housing – non-emergency repairs:

Although the council had been attending non-emergency repairs within a shorter timescale (under 9 days), there were issues in relation to completion at first time visits as well as customer satisfaction and complaints. The existing process was therefore identified as an area for improvement to ensure the highest standard of service provision for customers. A review of the repair category was undertaken at the beginning of 2014 and improvements identified. Consultation with tenants was also carried out at the Tenant Participation Co-ordination Repairs Sub Group and agreement to implement the proposed changes was achieved. Since amending the process for undertaking non-emergency repairs, the results for this repair type are well within our 30-day target as agreed by the tenants. 97.6% of our repairs are completed first time, reducing the need for follow up visits and disruption to our customers. Overall, satisfaction with the repairs service has been showing an improving trend, with complaints reducing. Over the course of the past two years and as part of our performance improvement arrangements, the service has continued to focus on reducing the timescale to complete this repair type reducing from 13.74 days in 2015-16 to 11.78 days in 2017-18.

Community and enterprise - grounds maintenance services:

With regards to the cost of the parks and open spaces per 1,000 residents and the satisfaction level (both below Scottish average), we recognise that our grounds maintenance specification is higher than other councils, although costs are declining. Based on visits to adjoining council areas, we believe our higher grounds maintenance specification is evident. We

therefore wish to further explore the satisfaction level reported via the Scottish Household Survey (SHS). In order to improve or at least explain the SHS satisfaction results, we are sourcing further background information and investigating the possibility of developing and issuing our own localised surveys of actual users of the parks and open spaces (since previous surveys run by SLC show better performance).

Street cleanliness – Our record of results for street cleanliness is consistently good, ranking first in Scotland for the last three years. The Grounds Manager was invited to make a presentation to the family group on our 'good practice' - how these improvements to our cleanliness score were achieved by changes and improvements to our operations. Very positive feedback was received from the participants of the family group.

Renfrewshire



Our corporate management team have looked in depth at self-directed support and sickness absence within the last couple of years as a consequence of what the data trends were telling us from LGBF. They have led to us looking at the internal policies and processes behind these indicators, as well as prompting contact with other local authorities to effectively compare what they are doing differently (and perhaps more efficiently/effectively) than us. In the case of sickness absence, we are currently reconfiguring our policy and performance framework around this.

Extensive analysis of the LGBF dataset is undertaken each year to understand the council's performance in line with both the national average and best in class performance. The information is used to develop challenging targets and the learning from family groups and networks is used to improve service quality and reduce costs. For example:

- Council officers, particularly the responsible officers and finance officers, analyse the cost information included within LGBF to monitor and compare variation in the costs of services. This is also used to understand the relative value of services, in conjunction with the measures tracking performance in the key priorities/ outcomes, process measures and satisfaction levels with services.
- Council officers have extensively used benchmarking (LGBF and education networks) to learn from the practice of others and to develop strategies and stretch targets to improve the number one corporate priority area – improving attainment and positive destinations. This has resulted in the council achieving year-on-year improvement in key measures of attainment.
- The council has used benchmarking data and LGBF fora to address specific performance issues by undertaking a more in-depth analysis of the policy, procedural and practices adopted by other authorities and its impact on performance. Most recently this was used to target an improvement in sickness absence performance and supporting employees in the workplace. Learning has subsequently helped inform and shape proposals to review the council's policies and procedures.

Benchmarking within the family groups has positively impacted on efforts to improve processes and review cost information, increasing our understanding of how similar councils have achieved performance and/or improvements. For example:

- LGBF performance is analysed to ensure the variation and causal impact in relation to local priorities and policy choices are understood. This is facilitated by councils working as part of 'family groups' to interrogate the data. These family groups also serve as a forum for learning and knowledge share amongst relevant comparators.
- Benchmarking in family groups has improved the in-year collection rates, specifically around implementation of water direct, ongoing promotion of direct debit take up, earlier recovery intervention, targeted sequestration action and timely reviews of single person discounts.
- Benchmarking in family groups has helped councils highlight measures that are not as effective and make recommendations to enhance or improve the LGBF dataset.
- Benchmarking in a family group has offered an insight into a leading authority's approach to increased investment in employability provision alongside other councils in their region, which subsequently had a rapid fall in unemployment and particularly youth unemployment.

East Ayrshire



The LGBF data is used to inform service planning and review, the development of the council's service improvement plans and the chief executive's performance review sessions with each head of service on an annual basis. This activity provides further and specific opportunities to focus on service planning and efficiency, and performance improvement.

East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership utilises the LGBF 'family group 4' as a benchmarking comparator in all statistical benchmarking activity, regardless of whether this refers to LGBF data or other well-being statistics. This is used to inform baseline, benchmarks and improvement trajectories in relation to quartile analysis and local trends.

In addition, the benchmarking framework is used on a regional basis, outwith 'family group 4' to better understand processes and outcomes in the transition from children and family to adult services. This benchmarking involved west of Scotland partnerships in collecting quantitative and qualitative data to share and compare practice, processes and performance, and enabling partners to identify areas for improvement and share best practice.

East Ayrshire Council uses the LGBF as well as a wide range of other benchmarking data, including APSE, SCOTS, the Scottish Housing Charter, SLAED, etc., to identify and learn from those councils which are achieving the best performance in relation to service delivery.

East Ayrshire Council has previously expanded council tax payment options and used a targeted and pro-active approach, including cold calling, to improve contact with hard to reach customers and

reduce administration costs. This resulted in the council reducing the cost of collection of council tax with no detrimental impact. Building on this work, the focus on current activity is on recovering historical debt and encouraging payment via direct debit, which will further reduce administration costs. In addition, Summary Warrants for council tax recovery are now passed directly to Sheriff Officers for processing, rather than by being sent out to customers by the council tax team, which speeds up the recovery process by 7-14 days as well as providing savings in relation to printing and postage costs



Stirling



Children & Families have undertaken a 10-year analysis of our data in relation to looked after children to understand trends more fully and undertake predictive analysis. This has informed our strategic approach to service improvements and LGBF data has provided important contextual information for how our performance has compared nationally and within family groups. This information has been included within reporting and scrutiny for the council's corporate management team and elected members. Individual school attendance and exclusion information is routinely recorded and monitored within schools and the council both in general and for looked after children. The LGBF data has allowed us to compare this nationally which has in turn enhanced the quality and context of this reporting.

This work has been a key input into our five year strategy for improving outcomes and service delivery in relation to this. We are currently in the process of producing our "year one" update to show how we have improved and how this compares with the national and family group picture.

- targeting improvement activity and supporting financial planning
- supporting learning and sharing within family groups of similar councils
- showcasing particular areas of good practice and/or improvement

LGBF data and the data benchmarking workshops have provided excellent opportunities to feed into the development of our strategic approach to meeting the needs of our vulnerable young people. Specific examples of this has been in relation to how we have tailored our approach to recruiting foster carers, identifying good approaches for developing our

strategy documentation, our approach to excluding children and young people with a clearer focus on negative impact exclusion has on our most vulnerable learners, and confirms the very positive work going on in partnership between our school and social services staff and also informs of where we may learn about further areas of good practice.

Data in the LGBF supports education to monitor and scrutinise the spend for early years provision over time, both within Stirling Council and to compare this across the country. It has supported us to identify areas where spend is different and to enter into discussions regarding service/operating models to share, and learn about, good practice. This has in turn, supported financial planning. Data also helps us to compare the quality of early years provision across the country with Stirling Council and to network with colleagues across the country to share and learn about good practice. The analysis of data over time is very helpful to support monitoring that we continue to improve the service provided. The data is also helpful when reporting to elected members. Evidence that the quality of service is improving has validated that our approach to improvement is having an impact.

Stirling's Accounting Operations team undertook an exercise to review the specific support service costs that comprised the council's calculated figure to ensure that this fully complied with the LGBF recommended approach. This was a major factor in the significant improvement shown in Stirling's ranking for 2016/17. The Accounting Operations team continues to work with the Improvement Service and other local authorities to drive out inconsistent practices and ensure meaningful comparability in the reporting of this indicator.

STRENGTHENING
LOCAL PUBLIC
PERFORMANCE
REPORTING

Highland

Following the last external audit of PPR, the council sought to improve the information in the public domain by making it more accessible to the public in terms of the format. We have developed a set of infographics for the LGBF and these are used in an annual newsletter to the public covering our performance which is both printed and published online. This has been shared with our external auditors with positive feedback in our annual audit report. The most recent newsletter can be found at: www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/19099/high_points_issue_10_-_spring_2018 and a LGBF summary only is available at: http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/18955/highlights_-_scottish_local_government_benchmarking_2016-2017

Our 'How we Compare' pages in the performance section of our website links to the published LGBF data and also provides access to relevant committee report and the infographics summary at: www.highland.gov.uk/info/20009/performance/608/how_we_compare_to_other_councils



West Dunbartonshire

As part of Council PPR each year we publish a short narrative report detailing performance against LGBF, showing those PIs improving or deteriorating over time and also the relative ranking. This ensures a more rounded understand of the data suite



Fife

Fife Direct website contains a section on performance and the aim of this area is to provide the public with information on how the council plans and manages its performance. Managing our performance and reporting our results is a necessary and important requirement. Telling our customers and stakeholders about how well we are doing, what quality of service is being delivered and what they can expect in the future, demonstrates our ability to be transparent and accountable. It also demonstrates our commitment to seeking continuous improvement. [Fife Council performance - How We Compare](#)



Argyll & Bute

In addition to links from the council's performance web pages to the LGBF, this year, for the first time, we also intend to publish a report that shows performance and trends as suggested by the LGBF indicators, with responsible heads of service providing commentary. The report also includes commentary about 'looking forward', wherein heads of service have indicated how they see services developing in the future and where they can make improvements. Although improvements are not necessarily being driven by the LGBF, the LGBF is being used as a way communicate and showcase wider activity and drive improvement. This report has gone to SMT and will be going to the council's Audit and Scrutiny Committee. Additionally, the report will go to our communications team, who will extract bits of information to use in social media.



Dundee

The LGBF My Council website is embedded in our Dundee Performs webpage, along with a link to the latest reports. The individual LGBF indicators are also being included in Dundee's list of performance indicators. These are listed in alignment with our own strategic service areas as another way for the public to see our performance on an ongoing basis. Additionally, we are now using this data and other performance data more proactively via our own 'newsroom' and in social media. This is being led by our communications team



South Lanarkshire

In South Lanarkshire, our public performance reporting consists of our annual performance report (APR), which is published within six months of the end of the financial year, and also our public performance reports (PPR), which are published on our website by the statutory deadline of 31 March (12 months after the financial year end). The LGBF results feature in our PPR reports, where a selection of indicators is included and analysed to show a balanced view of performance.



Inverclyde

Inverclyde Council include the LGBF as part of its local public performance reporting, integrating indicators into the wider framework.



North Ayrshire

We have dedicated benchmarking webpages on our public website that contain a wide-range of information. Each year these are reviewed and updated. There are clear links to the national LGBF My Local Council website. A proactive press release was produced this year to coincide with the launch of the LGBF data. This highlighted the areas in which the council had seen year-on-year improvement in its performance. It also highlighted to the public the proactive approach we take to monitoring and improving performance in key areas. Below is an extract from our local press release statement that highlighted the LGBF and our performance to our residents.



Chief Executive Elma Murray, OBE said: "The Framework allows us to identify and target key areas of our work where we can continue to improve and enhance the quality services we are already delivering.

"We are constantly aiming to better ourselves and to do this, we need to look at ways to improve the services we provide to the people of North Ayrshire. It's very encouraging that we continue to perform well.

"We are extremely encouraged by this latest report and our wonderful teams and staff deserve credit for their innovation, dedication and commitment to communities across North Ayrshire.

"We are working tirelessly to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap and, while this will take time, we are clearly making inroads in this area.

"Growing our economy is another priority and it's good to see that we are helping more people back into work. The network of employability

hubs continues to roll out, meaning more people were engaged and supported and it's great to see that Business Gateway are helping more start-up businesses.

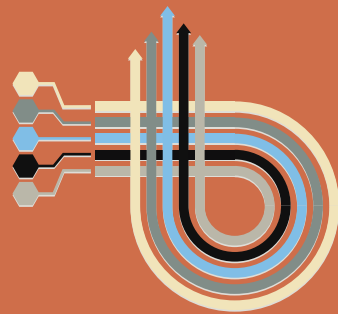
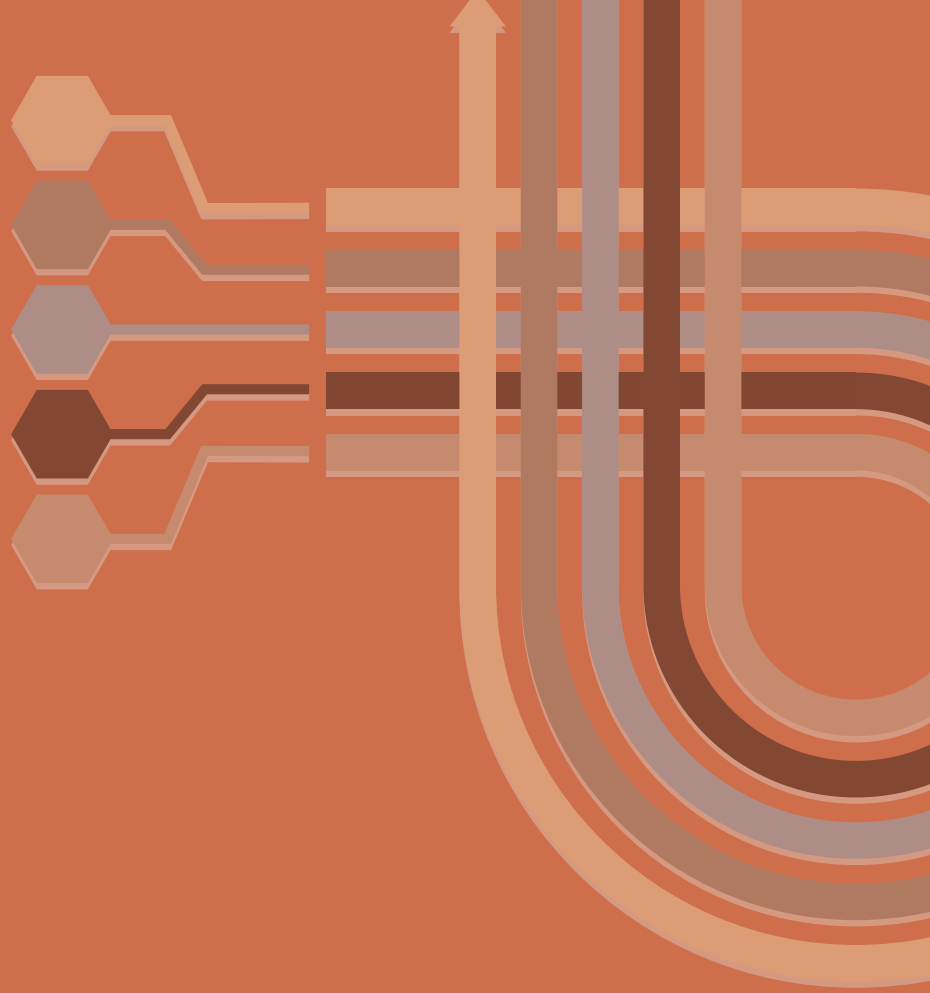
“We will continue to push ourselves to achieve even better. For example, we have one of the best recycling rates of any council in Scotland but we have plans to introduce an enhanced recycling and waste collection service from April 2019 as part of our overall ‘Zero Waste Strategy 2018-2022’. The strategy aims to increase recycling to over 60% by 2020.”

In other areas, the implementation of the new housing repairs policy shows improvements in the average days to complete non-emergency repairs. Improvements are continuing to be made in this area and above the Scottish average.

East Ayrshire



In East Ayrshire, the LGBF indicators are used to inform the council's annual public performance report, with specific reference and a hyperlink to the benchmarking tools provided by the Improvement Service. The council's public website provides a link to the interactive mylocalcouncil.info site which allows council employees and the public to access data and benchmarking information on all Scottish councils as required.



Local
Government
Benchmarking
Framework

WWW.IMPROVEMENTSERVICE.ORG.UK/BENCHMARKING/