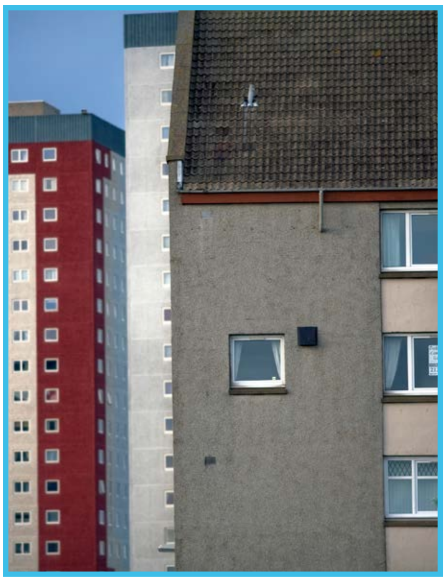
Local
Government
Benchmarking
Framework

National Benchmarking Overview Report 2014



Contents

Preface

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

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

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

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

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

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

David O'Neil
Chairman, Improvement Service
and COSLA President

George Black
Chair of SOLACE (Scotland)

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

Our Approach

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

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

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

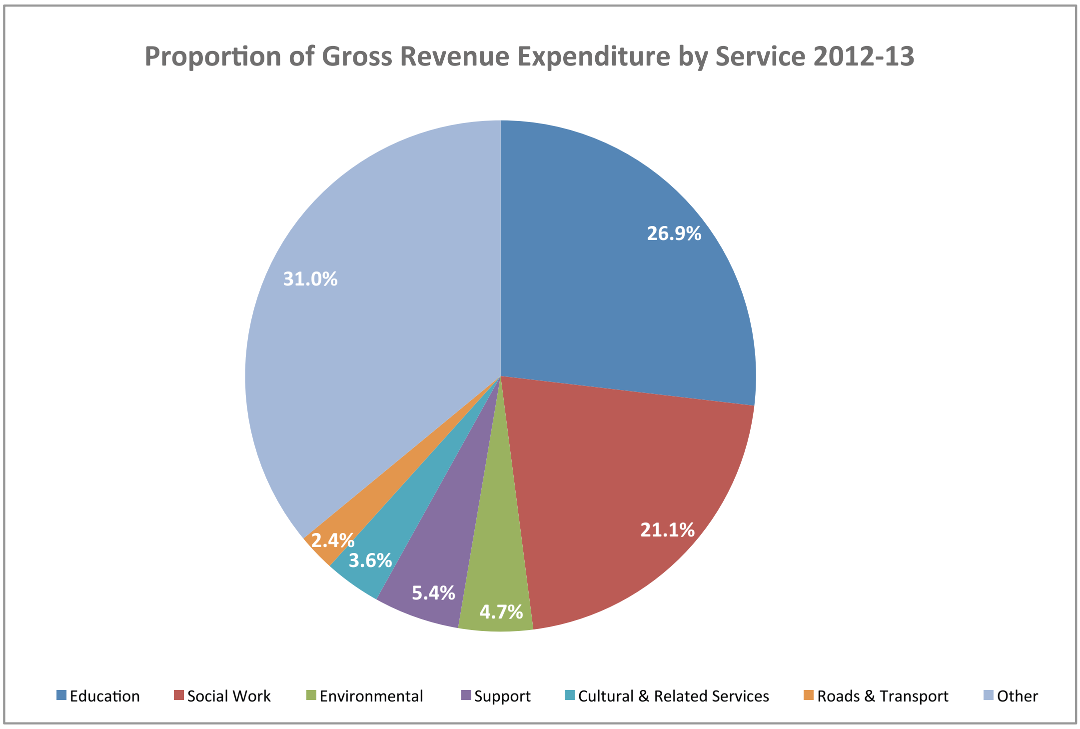
The benchmarking framework reported here lends itself to any type of comparison councils, or citizens, wish to make. What is does not support is a crude “league table” assessment: it would be as misleading to assess the performance of councils with high levels of deprivation without taking account of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

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

The Local Government Benchmarking Framework

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

The Purpose of this Report

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

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

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

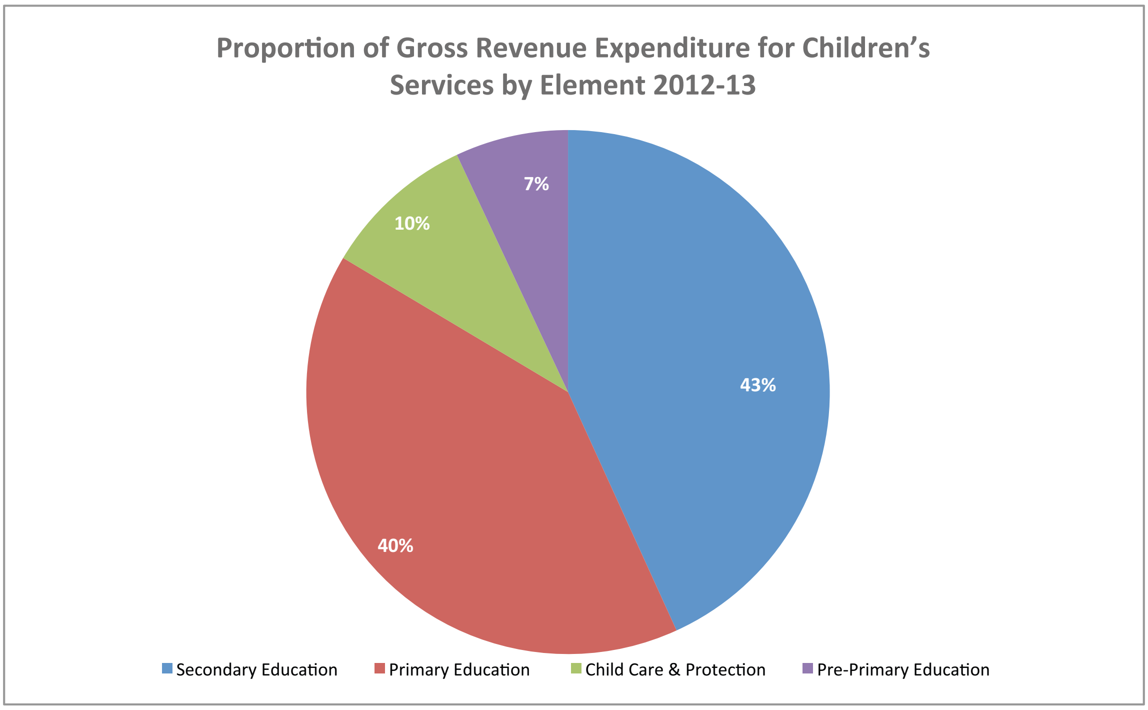
Executive Summary

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

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

Children's Services

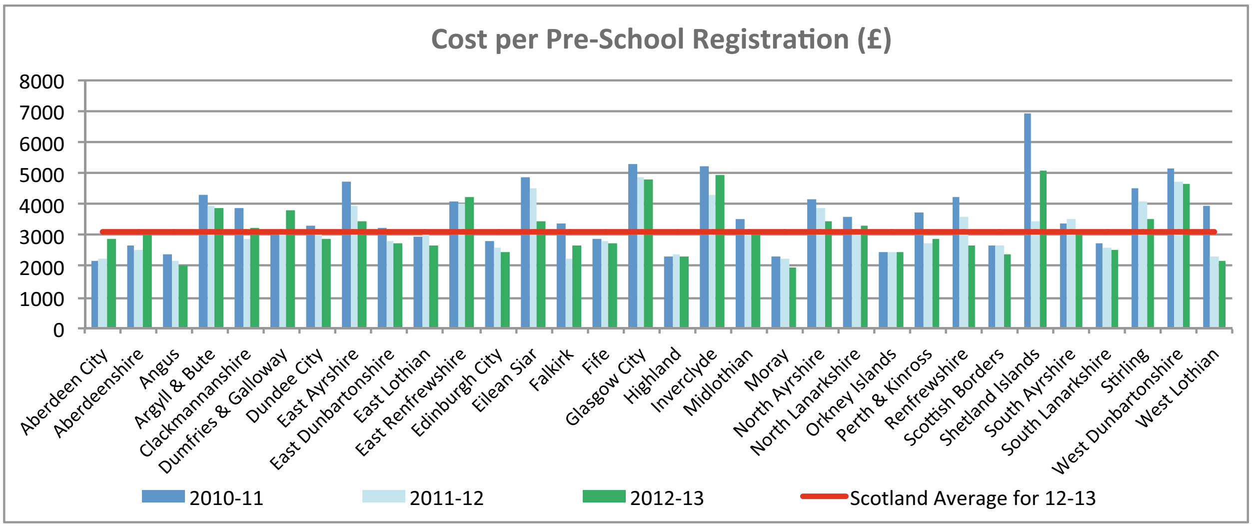
The major elements of children's services, and the percentage of total children's services spend on each one, are given in Table 2 below.



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

Pre-school Provision for Children

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



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

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

Pre-School Provision Changes

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

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

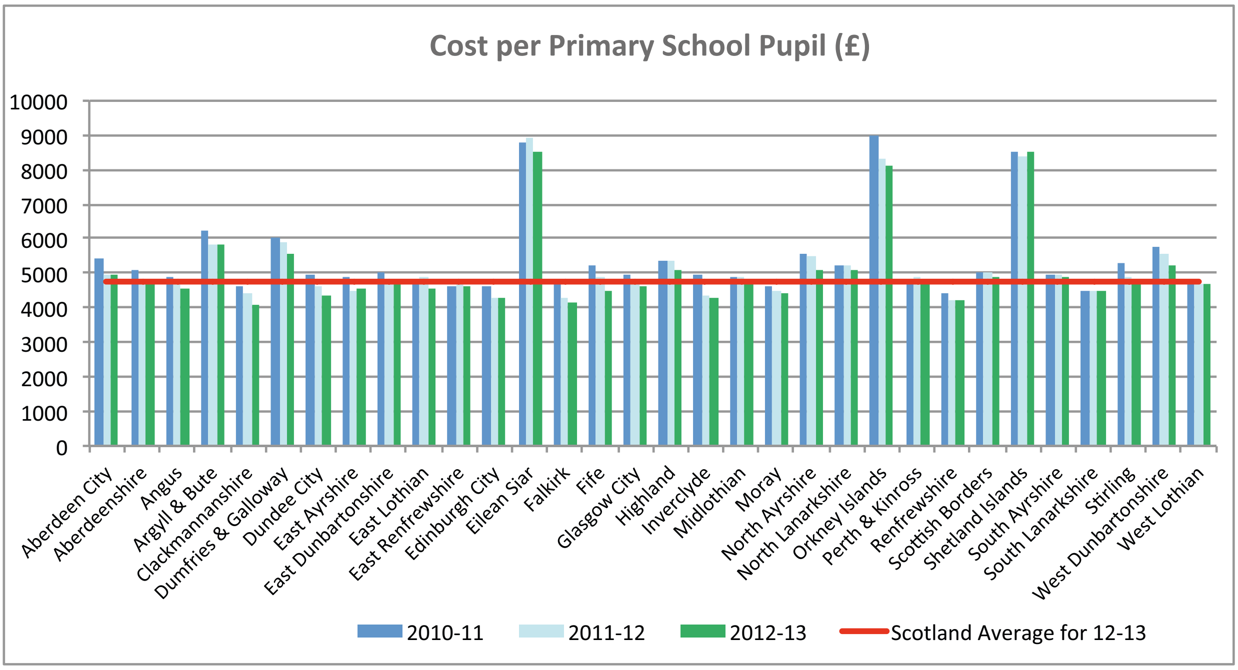
Currently there are no systematic and consistent measures deployed by all 32 councils for understanding children's development as they progress through the pre-school setting. In conjunction with the Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES) we are exploring how such measures will be developed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

Primary and Secondary School Spending

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

Cost Per Primary Pupil

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

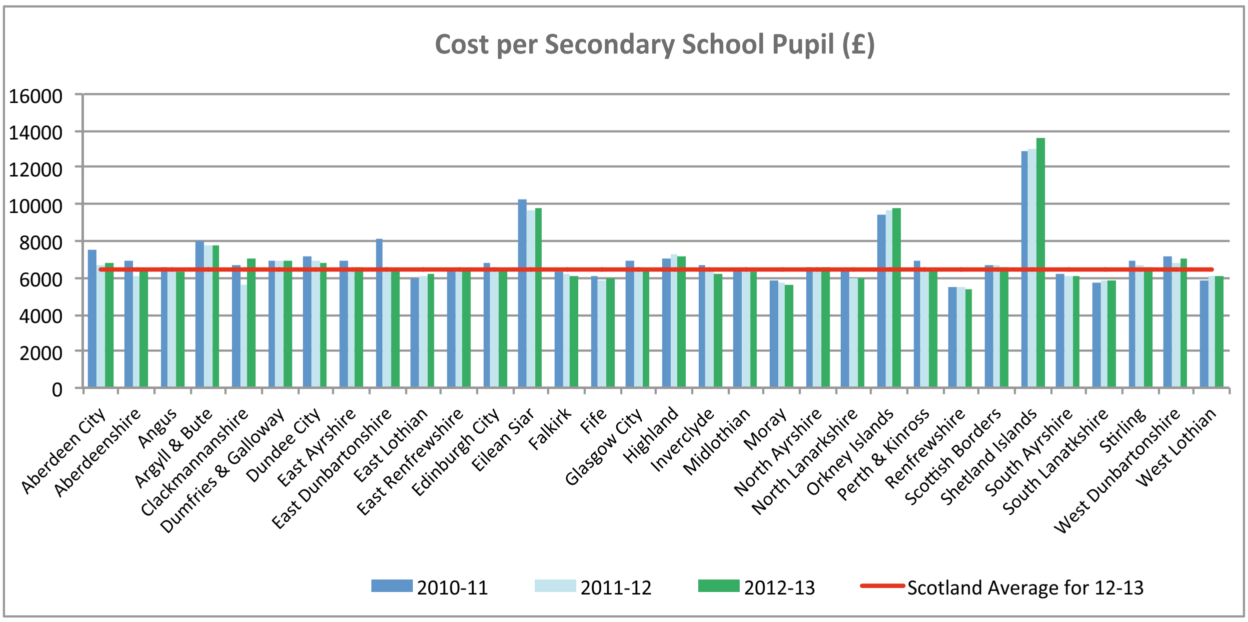


Cost Per Primary School Pupil

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

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

Cost Per Secondary Pupil



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

Cost Per Secondary School Pupil

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

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

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

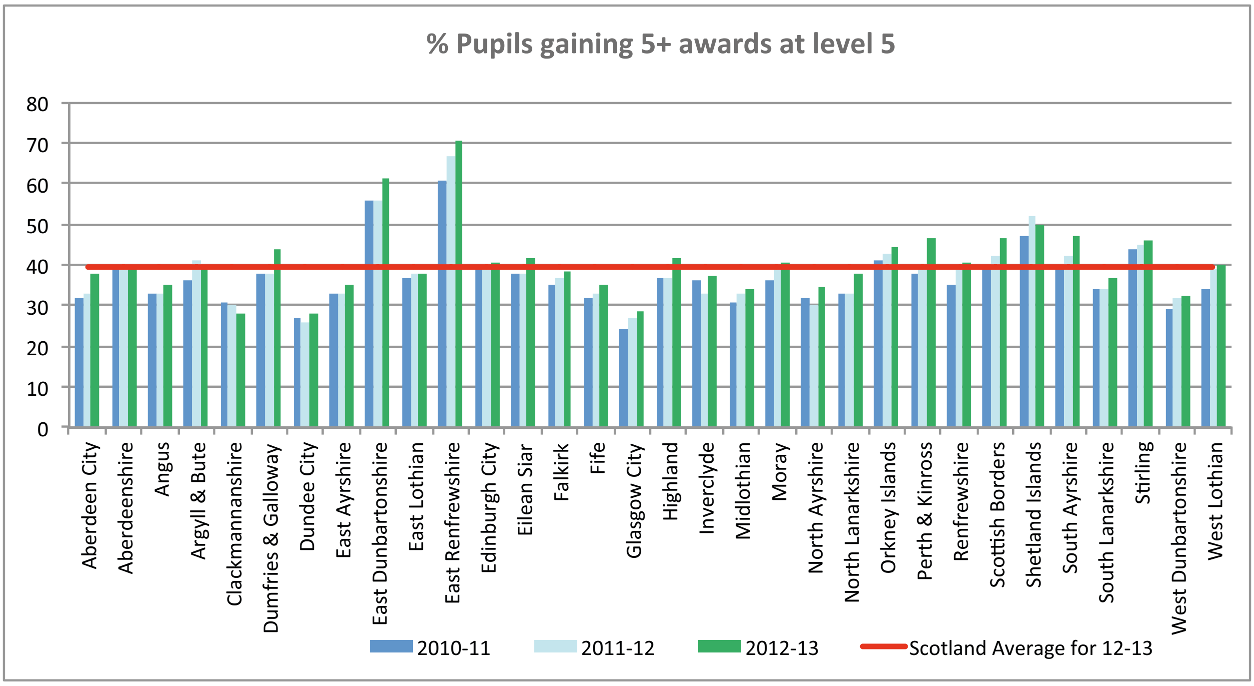
As the charts and analysis above indicate, despite the common factors that structure substantial areas of performance e.g. class sizes, there are still substantial variations between councils, particularly for secondary education. These variations have been examined in terms of scale of council, population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

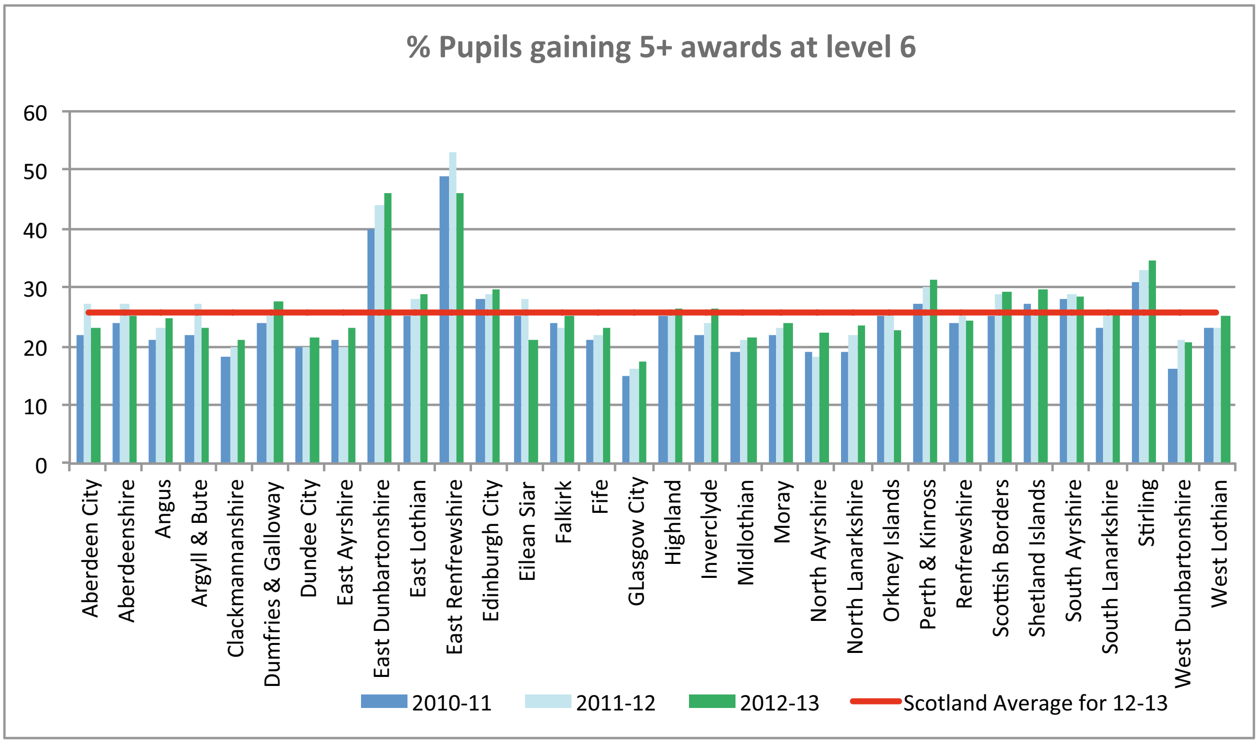
Secondary School Performance

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

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

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



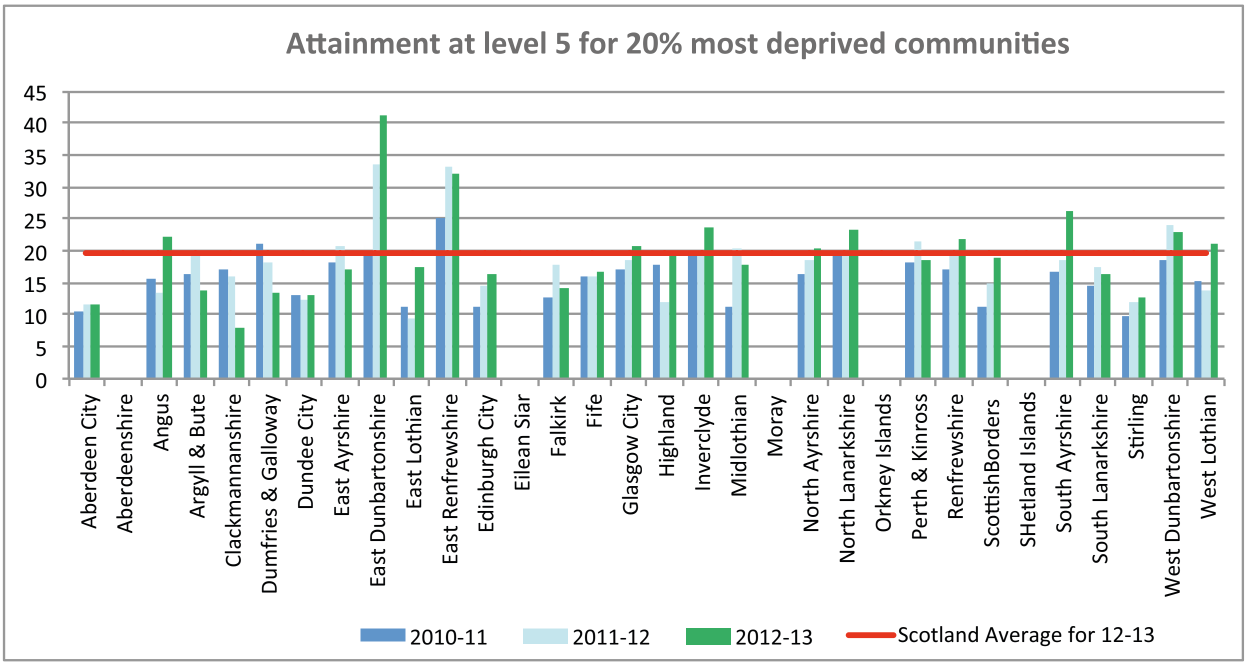


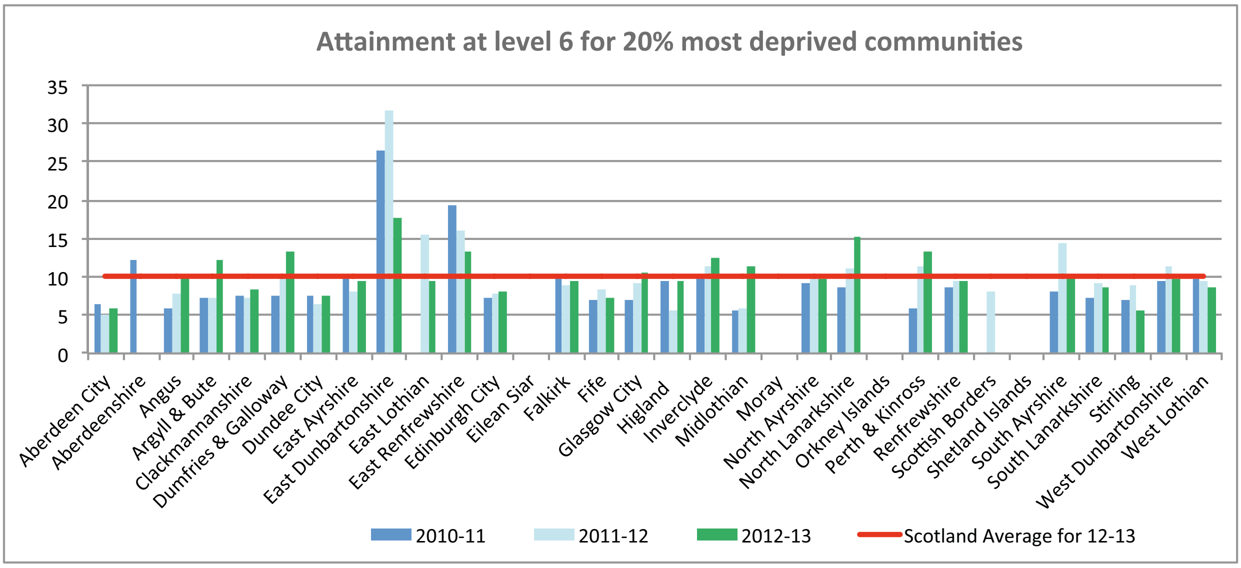
A clear relationship exists between multiple deprivation and educational attainment within and between councils. Within councils, the average performance of pupils from the 20% most deprived areas is well below the average for other pupils. Between councils, achievement on SCQF levels 5 and 6 varies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

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

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

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





Family group variation in attainment

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

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

Percentage of Pupils Achieving SCQF Level 5 and Level 6 Awards

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

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

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

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

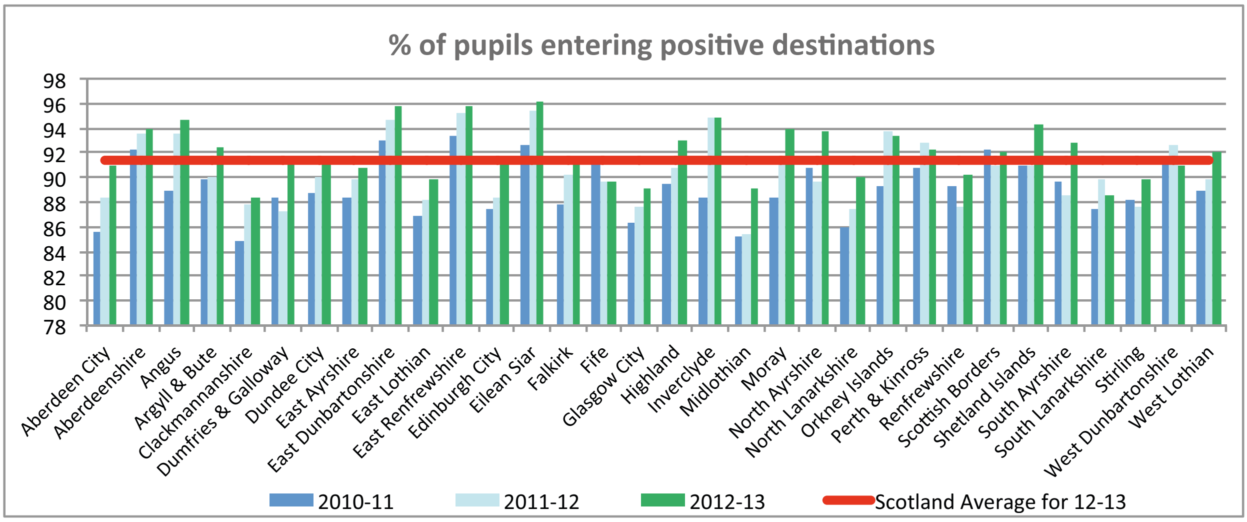
Between 2010/11 and 2012/13 this represents a rate of improvement of 22% for ‘pupils living in the 20% most deprived communities achieving 5 or more awards at level 5’ and a rate of improvement of 26% at level 6.

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

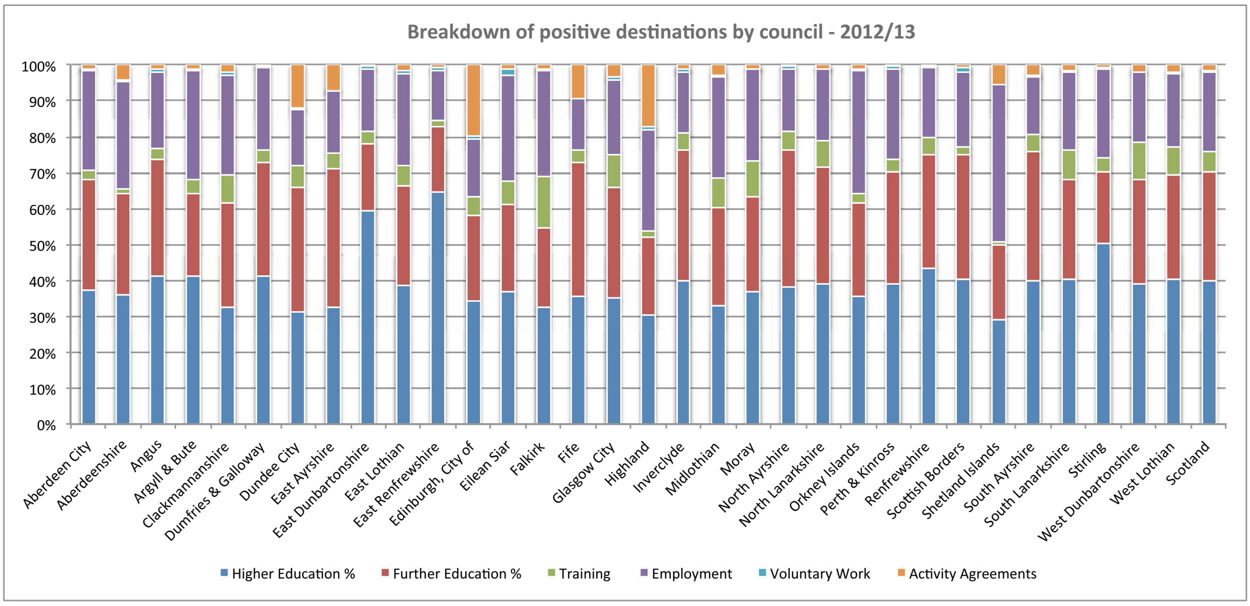
Positive Destinations

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

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



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



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

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

Percentage of Adults Satisfied with Education Services

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

Percentage of Adults Satisfied with Local Schools

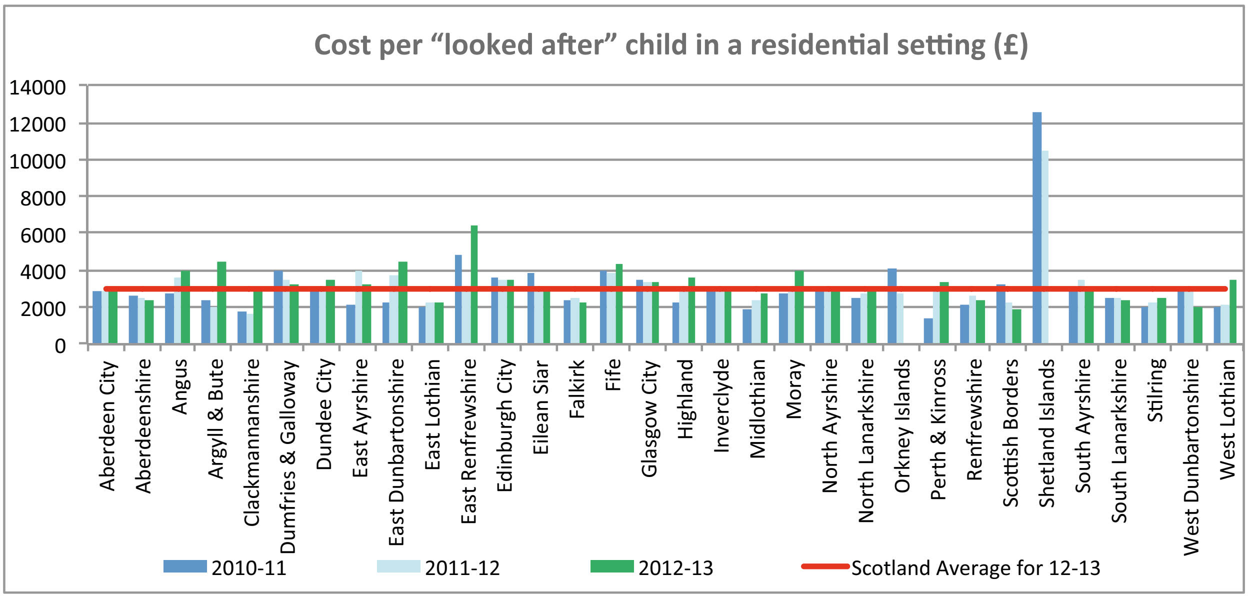
Year	% Satisfied
2010/11	83
2012/13	83

Looked After Children

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

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

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



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

Cost Per Looked After Child in a Residential Setting

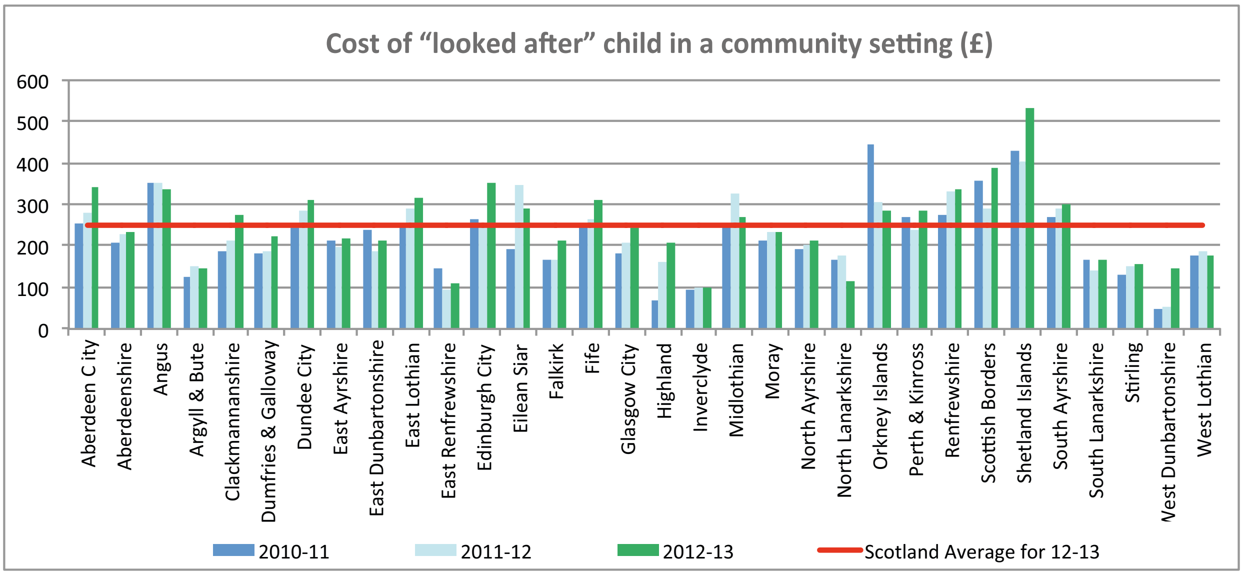
% Change	Cash	Real
2010/11 - 2012/13	2.3	-1.8
2010/11 - 2011/12	5.3	2.9
2011/12 - 2012/13	-2.9	-4.5

Weekly Cost Per "Looked After" Child in a Community Setting

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

Cost Per Looked After Child in a Community Setting

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

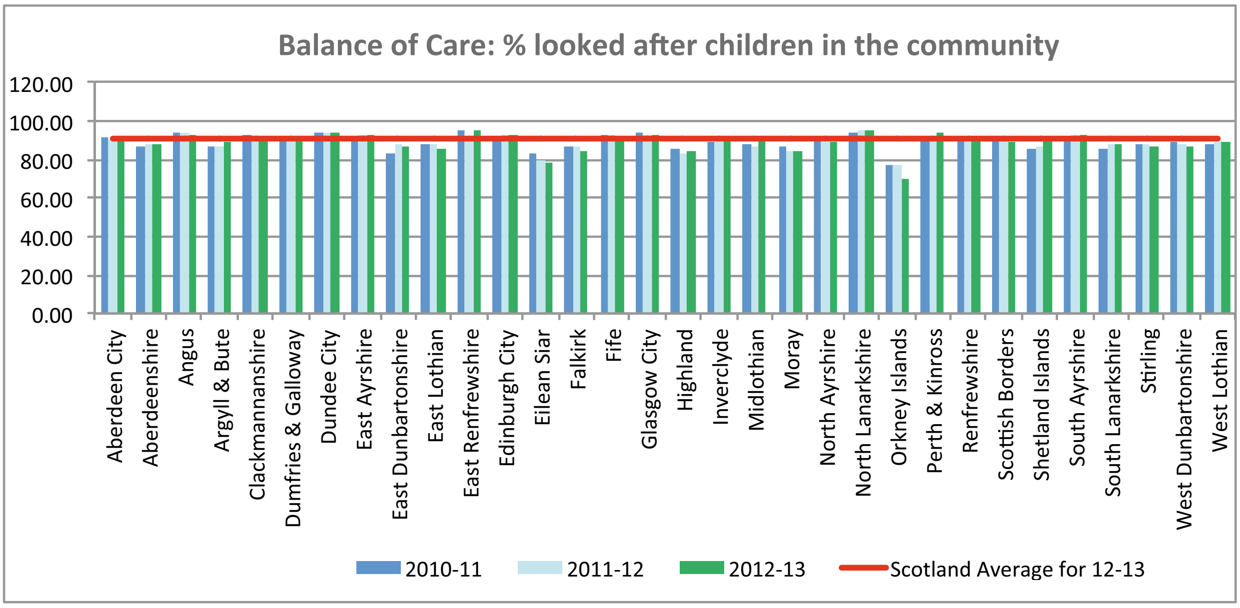


The average gross weekly cost per child of community and residential placements shows very wide variation. The range is from £99 to £529 for community placements and £1846 to £6455 for residential placements.

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

The Balance of Care

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

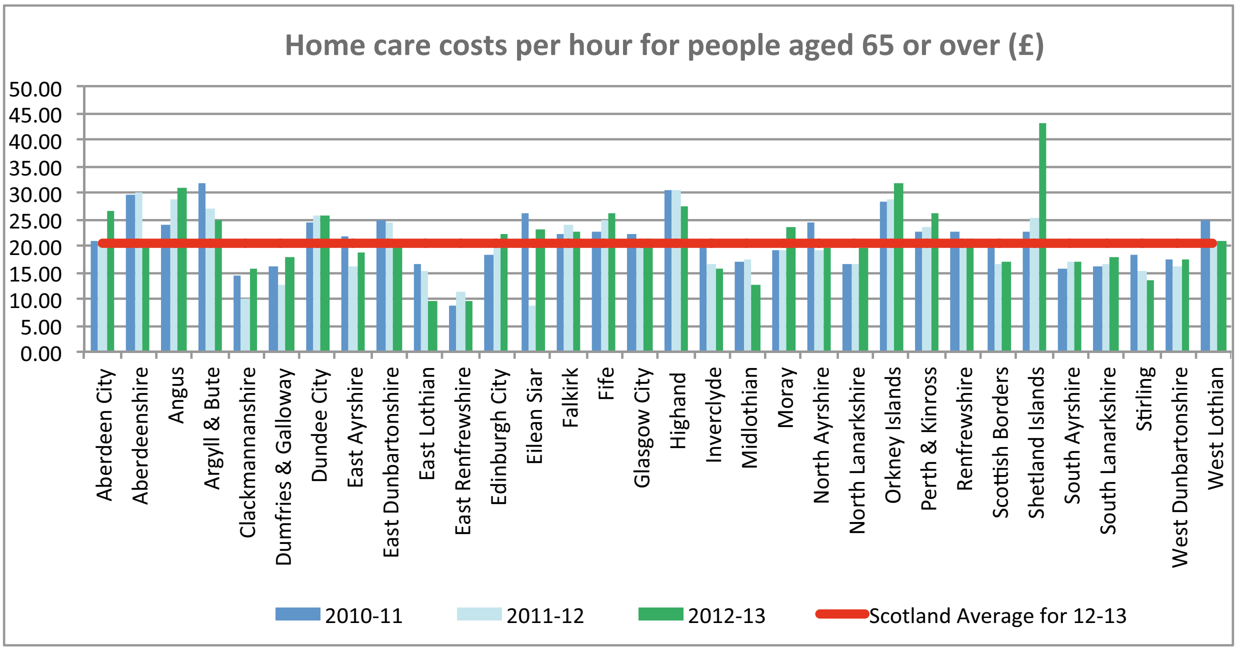


Adult Social Care

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

Home Care Services

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



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

Home Care Costs Per Hour for People Aged 65 or Over

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

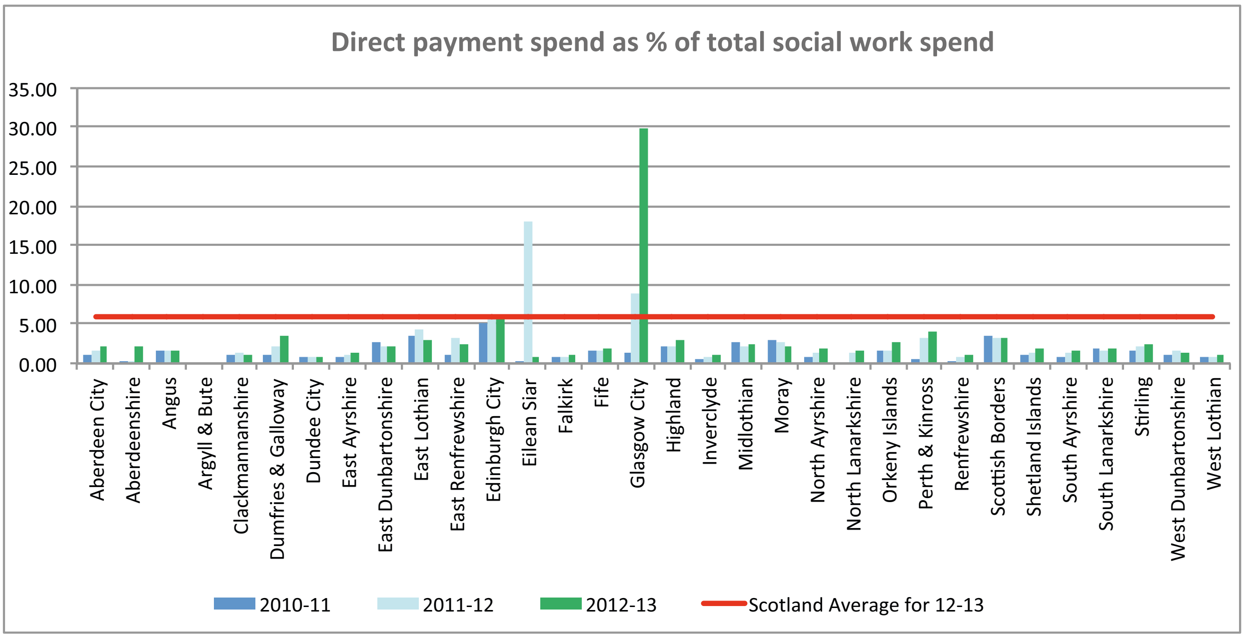
When the data is examined, there is no strong connection between costs per hour and sparsity, deprivation levels or size of the council. It is important to note that the age structure of the local population does not drive cost in this area. It is often assumed that the older a population group is, the higher the costs for service providers. This is not borne out by the data, where the relationship between the cost per hour of home care services and the demographic structure of the local population is weak. Of more significance is the needs profile of the local population which is not simply determined by its age structure. The level of vulnerability across the population is a key factor in driving demand pressures and we will explore with councils how those demands are being met in innovative ways by different councils and share that innovation across all authorities and their respective local partnerships.

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

Direct Payments

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

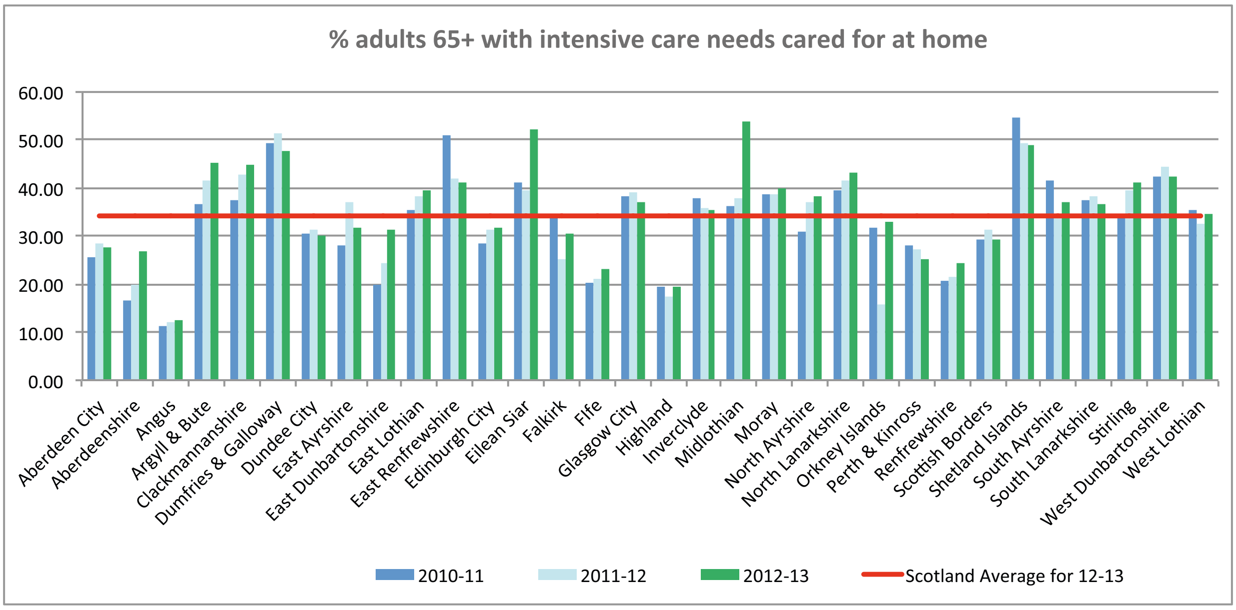
In 2012/13 the range in the percentage of social work spend on adults (18+) via direct payments as a percentage of total social work spend on adults 18+ was 0.8% to 29.8%. The Scottish average in 2012/13 was 5.9%. Between 2010/11 and 2012/13 there was an increase in the number of clients making use of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



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

Adult 65+ Intensive Home Care

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



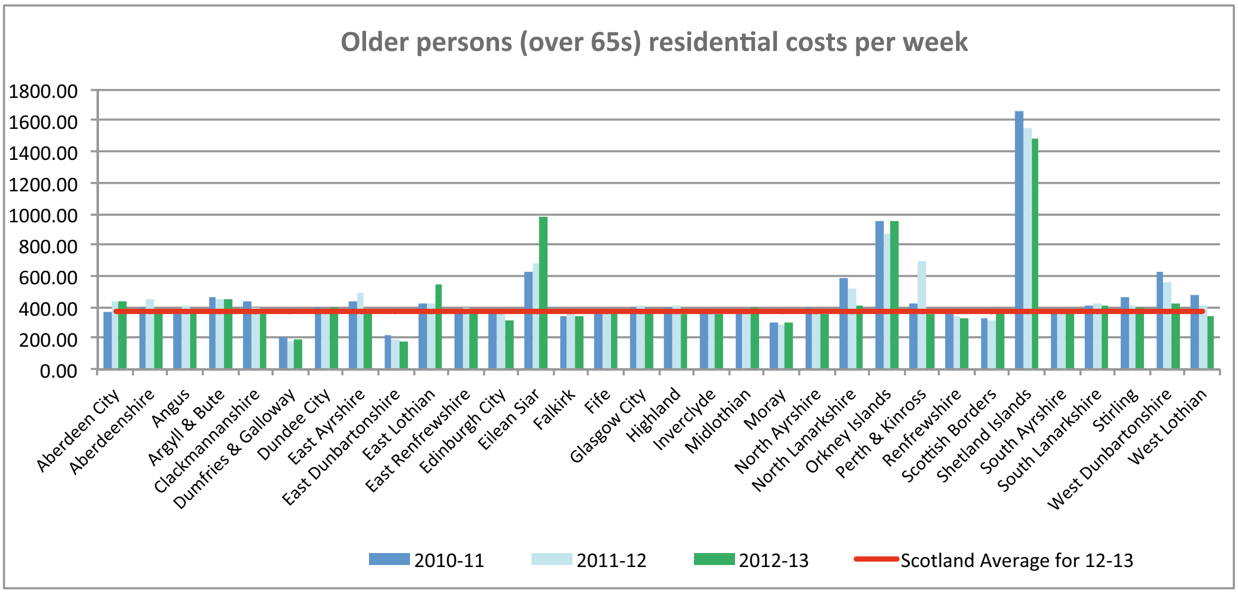
The range of figures appears to be related to council size with smaller councils on average achieving higher levels of intensive home care provision. However, there are no systematic connections between balance of care levels and population sparsity or deprivation.

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

Residential Care

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

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



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

Residential Care Costs Per Week for People over 65

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

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

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

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

Percentage of Adults Satisfied with Social Care or Social Work Services

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

Percentage of Adults Satisifed with Social Care or Social Work Services

Year	% Satisfied
2010/11	62
2012/13	57

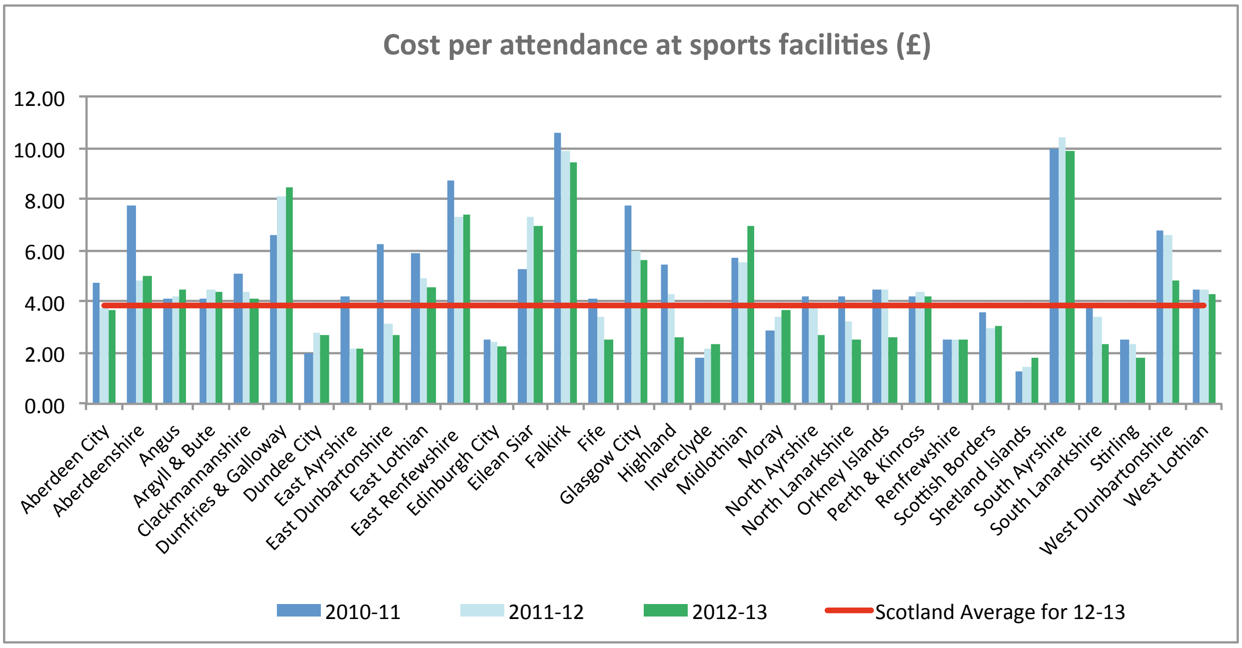
Developing the section of the benchmarking framework relating to adult social care measures has been agreed as a key priority for development in the coming year. In conjunction with the Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW), we will link into current work being undertaken to agree outcome measures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

Culture and Leisure

Sports Facilities

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

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



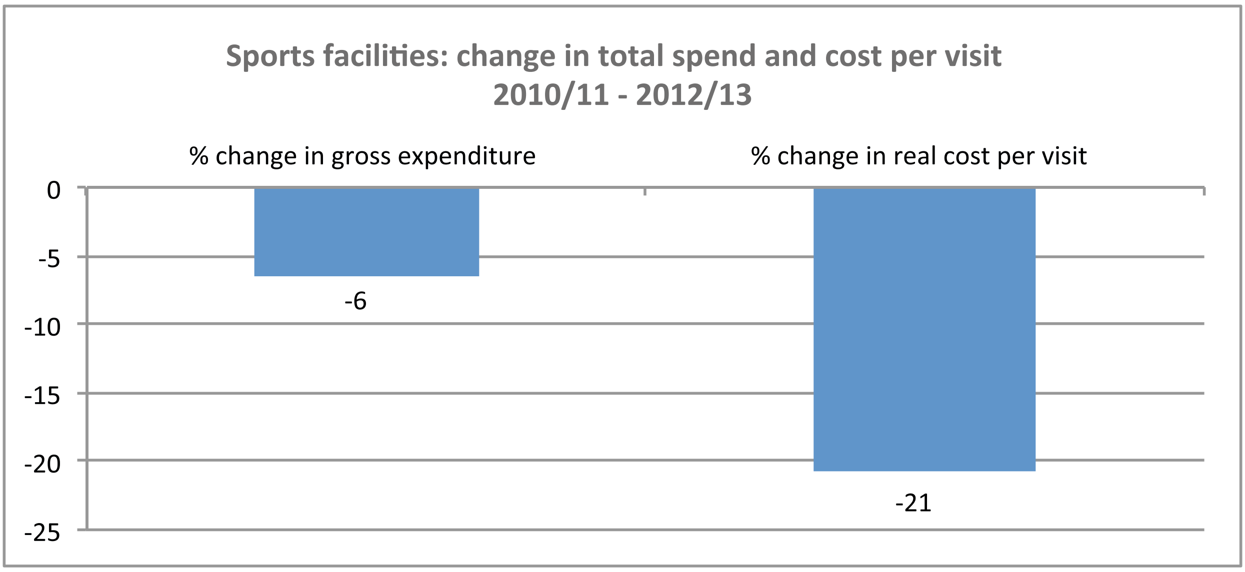
With respect to the cost to each council of an attendance at a sports facility, in 2012/13 the range in cost per visit was £1.82 to £9.92. The average cost per visit across Scotland was £3.82. Over the three year period from 2010/11 to 2012/13 the average cost fell from £4.82 to £3.82 in real terms.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

Cost Per Attendance at Sports Facilities

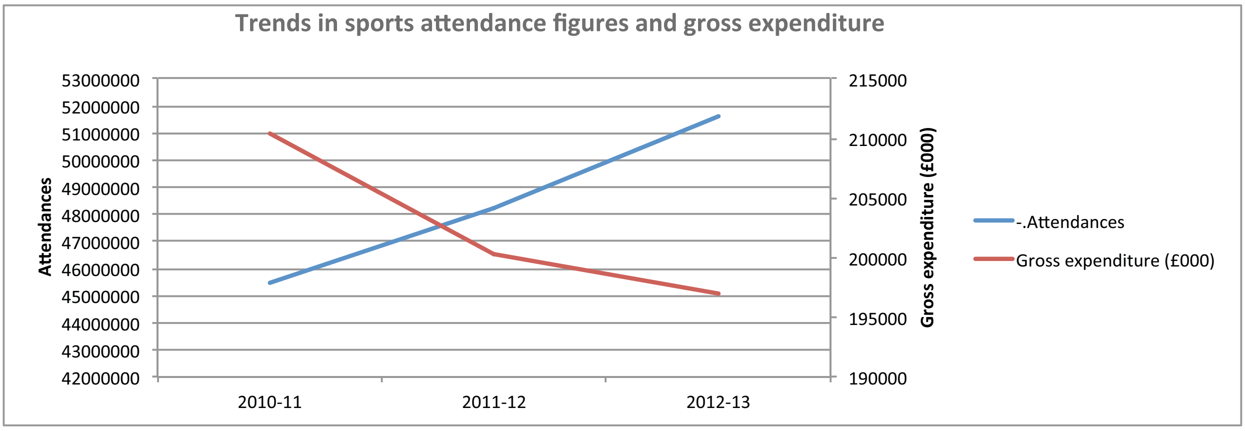
% Change	Cash	Real
2010/11 - 2012/13	-17.6	-20.8
2010/11 - 2011/12	-10.3	-12.3
2011/12 - 2012/13	-8.2	-9.8

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

this has fallen by -6.4% .



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

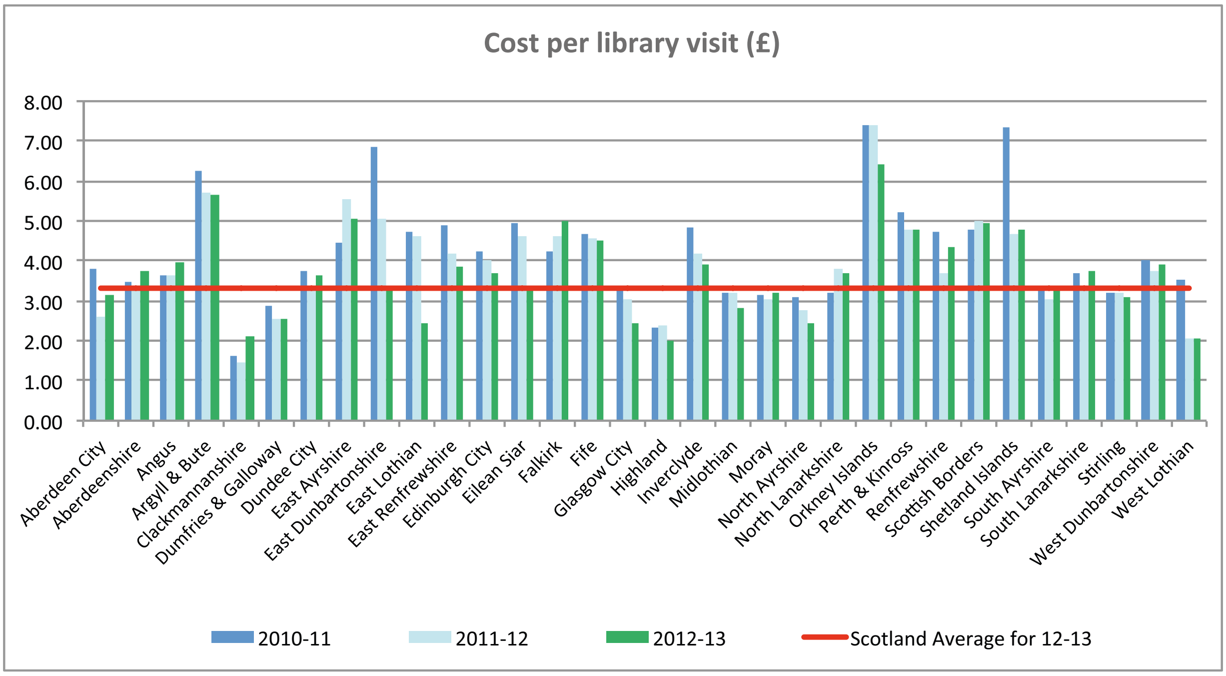


While variation between councils exists against this general trend we will capture the good practices of those councils performing well and share that with all councils.

Library Services

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

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

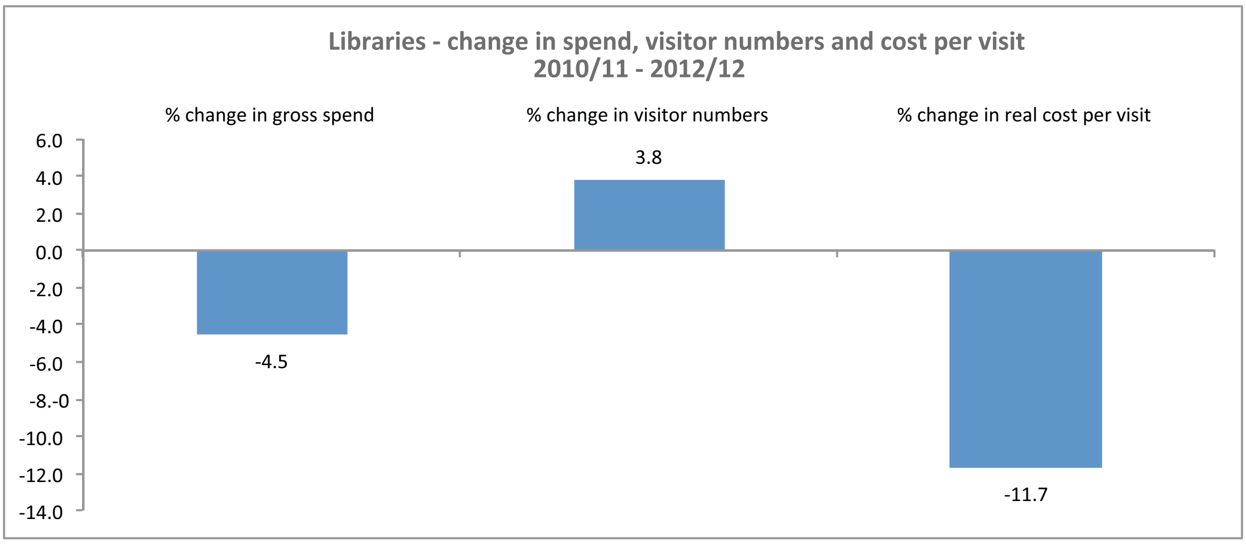


Cost Per Library Visit

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

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

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



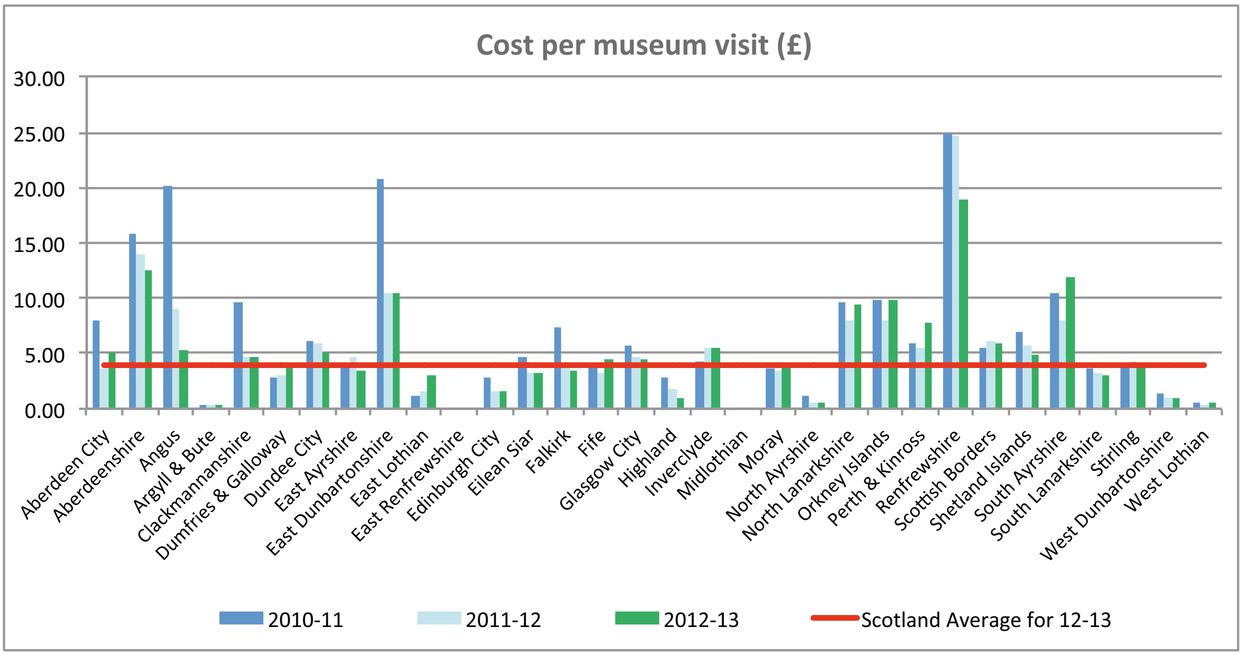
Museum Services

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

Cost Per Museum Visit

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

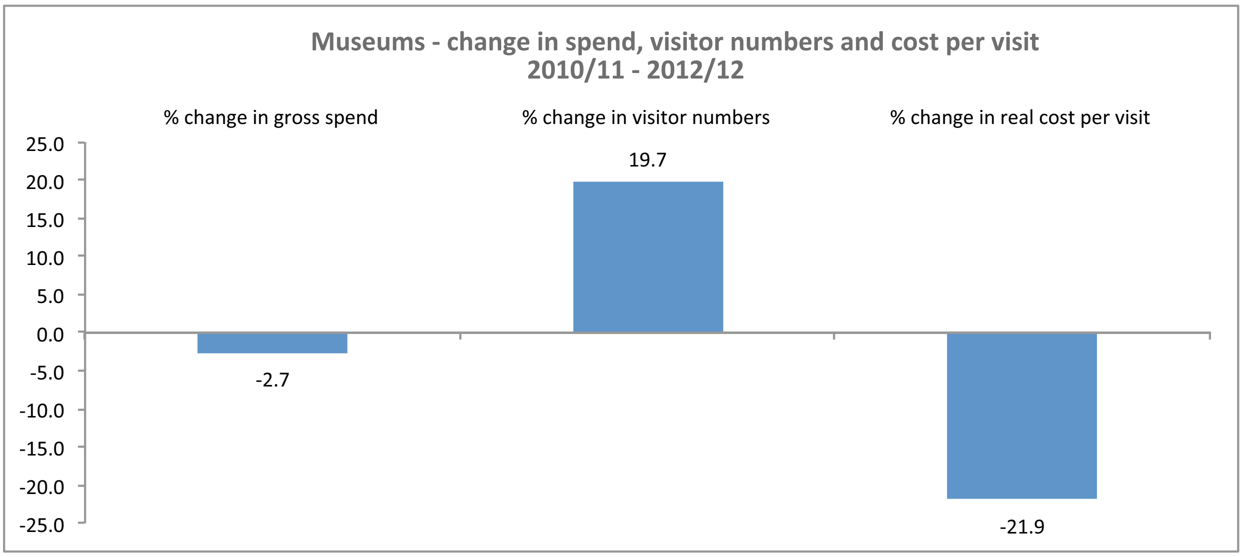
The data reveals no systematic cost per visit patterns in relation to sparsity, size of council or deprivation.



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

Parks and Open Spaces

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

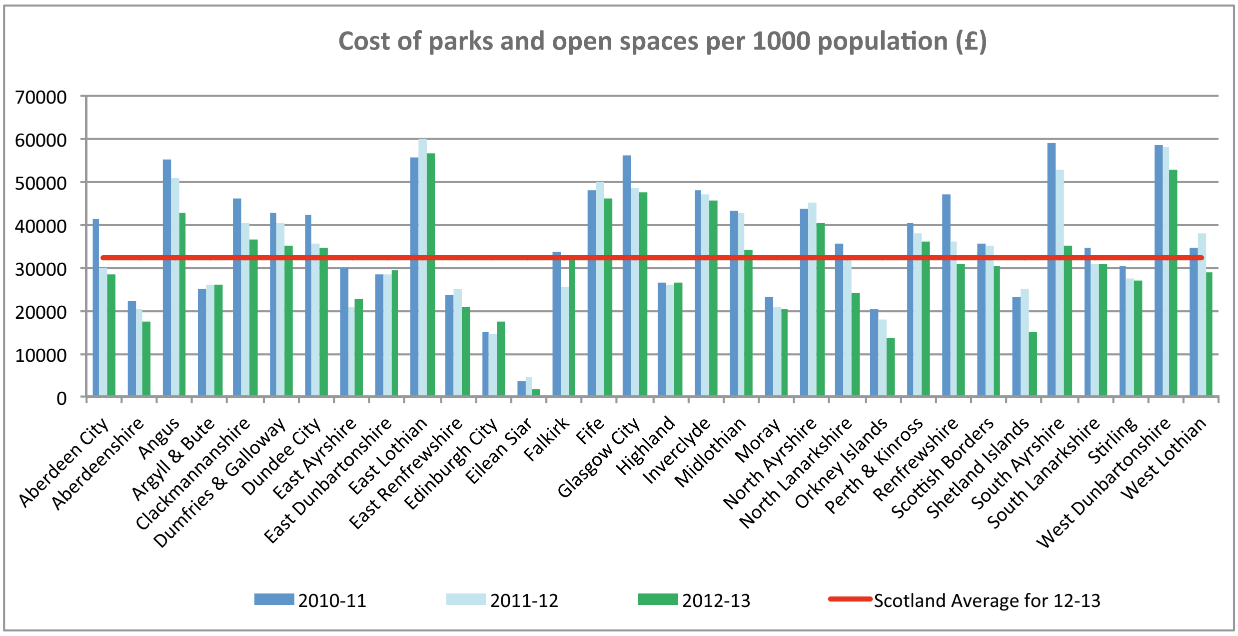


£32,256, the range in cost was from £1851 to £56,440. Over the three year period from 2010/11 to 2012/13 the change in real terms was -15%. The rate of change has remained consistent across the 3 year period, with a -8.2% real terms reduction in 2010/11 to 2011/12 and a 7.4% reduction between 2011/12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

Cost of Parks and Open Spaces Per 1000 Population

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

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



Percentage of Adults Satisfied with Culture & Leisure Services

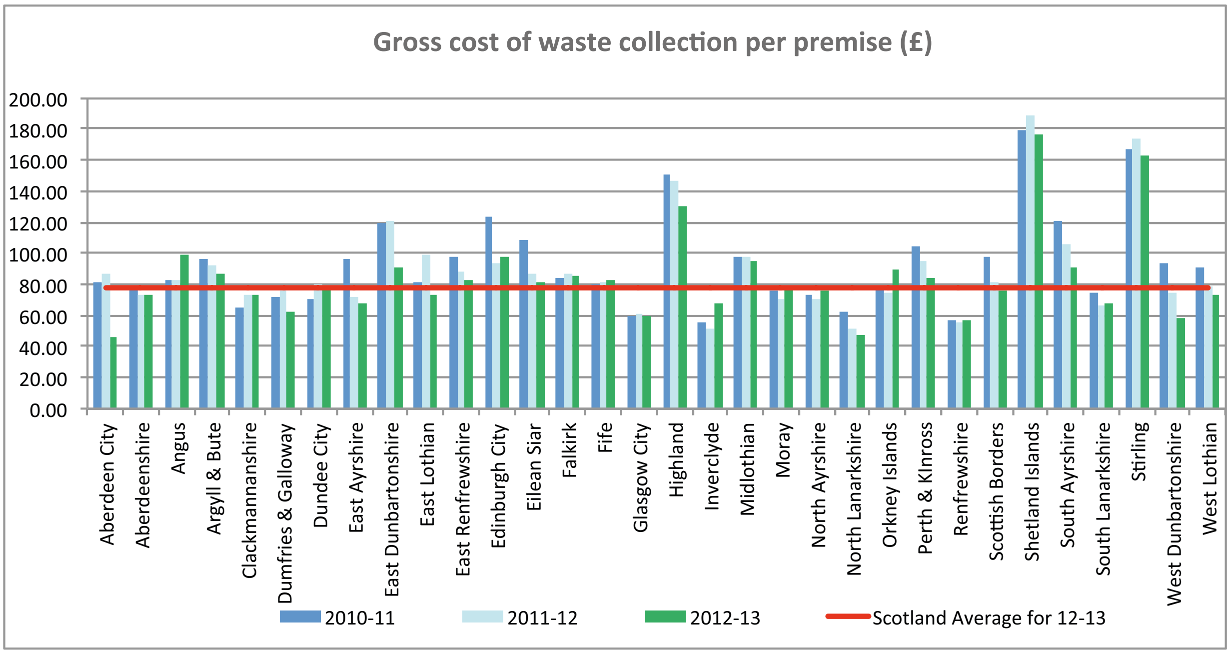
Year	Leisure % Satisfied	Libraries % Satisfied	Museums % Satisfied	Parks % Satisfied
2010/11	74.6	83.5	75.5	83.1
2012/13	80.0	83.0	78.0	86.0

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

Environmental Services

Waste Collection

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



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

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

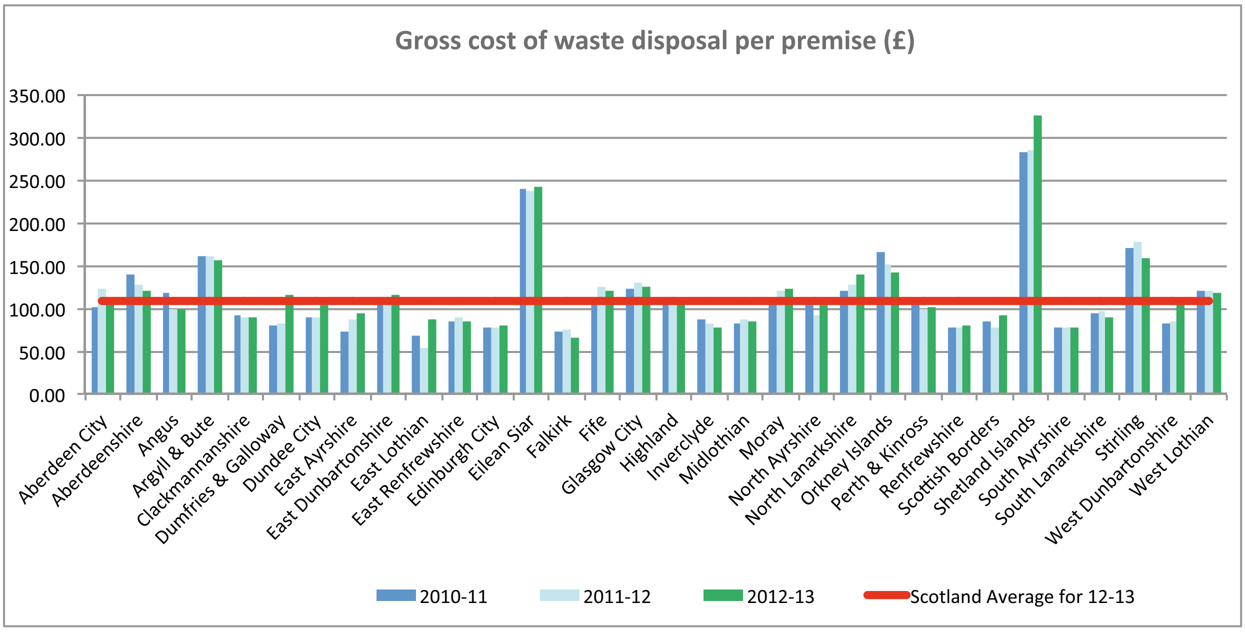
Over the three year period from 2010/11 to 2012/13, the Scottish average cost per premise for waste collection (on a gross basis only) reduced by -11.4% in real terms. The rate of annual improvement in cost has been relatively steady over the three period at around -6% per annum in real terms.

Gross Cost of Waste Collection Per Premise

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

Waste Disposal

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



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

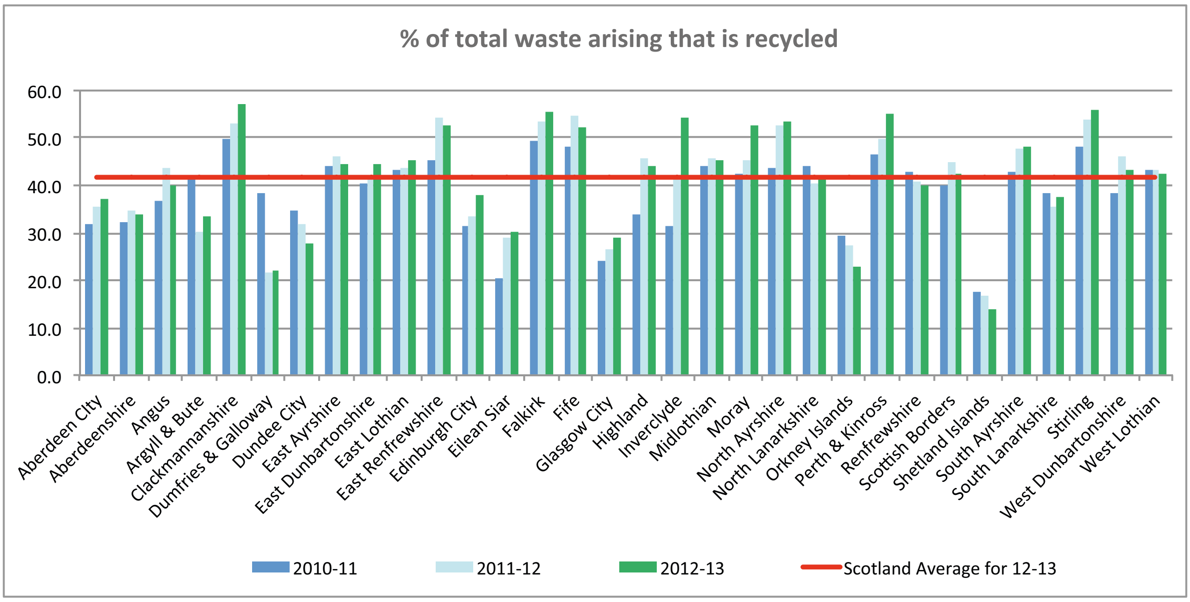
Over the three year period from 2010/11 to 2012/13, the Scottish average gross cost of waste disposal has increased in real terms by 3.7%, from £104.80 in 2010/11 to £108.65 in 2012/13. The rate of increase has slowed in recent years from a 2.3% increase in real terms from 2010/11 to 2011/12 and an increase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

Gross Cost of Waste Disposal Per Premise

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

Waste Recycling

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



Street Cleaning

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

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

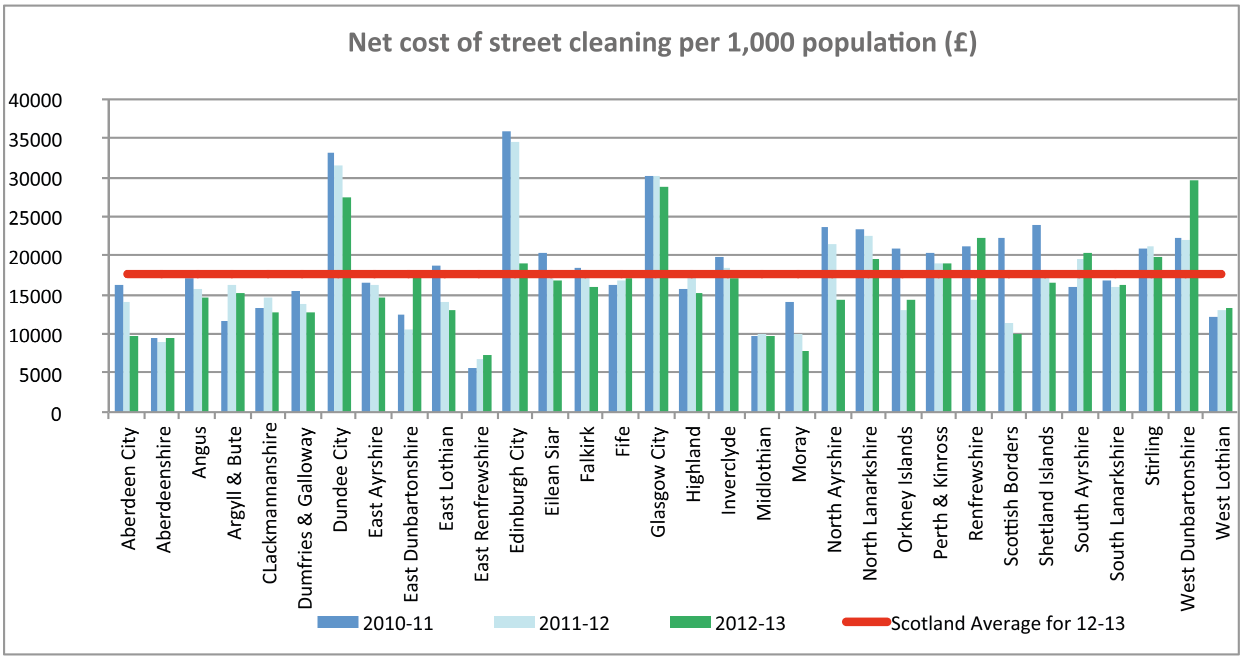
The Scottish average for both the Cleanliness Score and satisfaction with street cleaning has

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

3 http://www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/

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

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



Net Cost of Street Cleaning Per 1000 Population

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

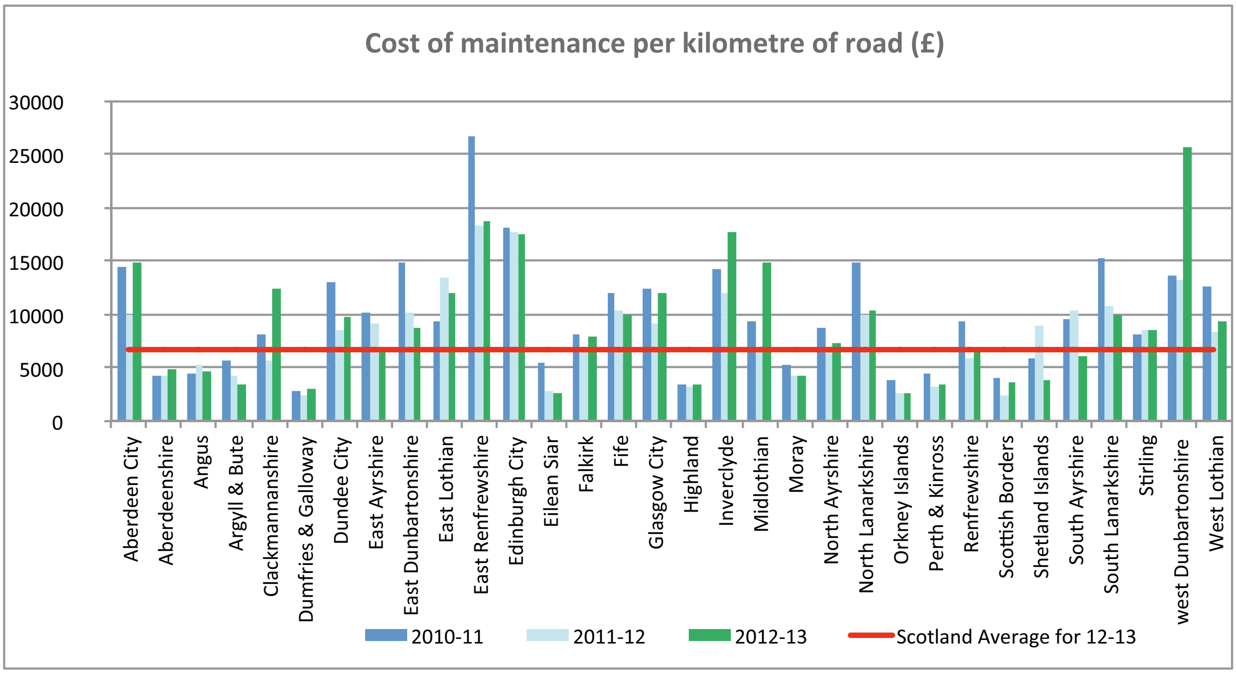
Percentage of Adults Satisfied with Waste Collection & Street Cleaning

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

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

Roads Maintenance

In terms of the cost of road maintenance per kilometre of road, the Scottish average was £6655. The range of cost per kilometre in 2012/13 was from £2619 to £25,598. There is a significant difference in costs between urban, rural and semi-rural councils. The average in 2012/13 for urban councils was £10,278 per kilometre, for rural councils it was £3414 and for semi-rural area councils it was £9641. The higher traffic volumes experienced in urban and semi-rural areas, where some large towns are located, is a key factor behind the variations in spending.



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

Cost of Maintenance Per Kilometre of Road

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

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

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

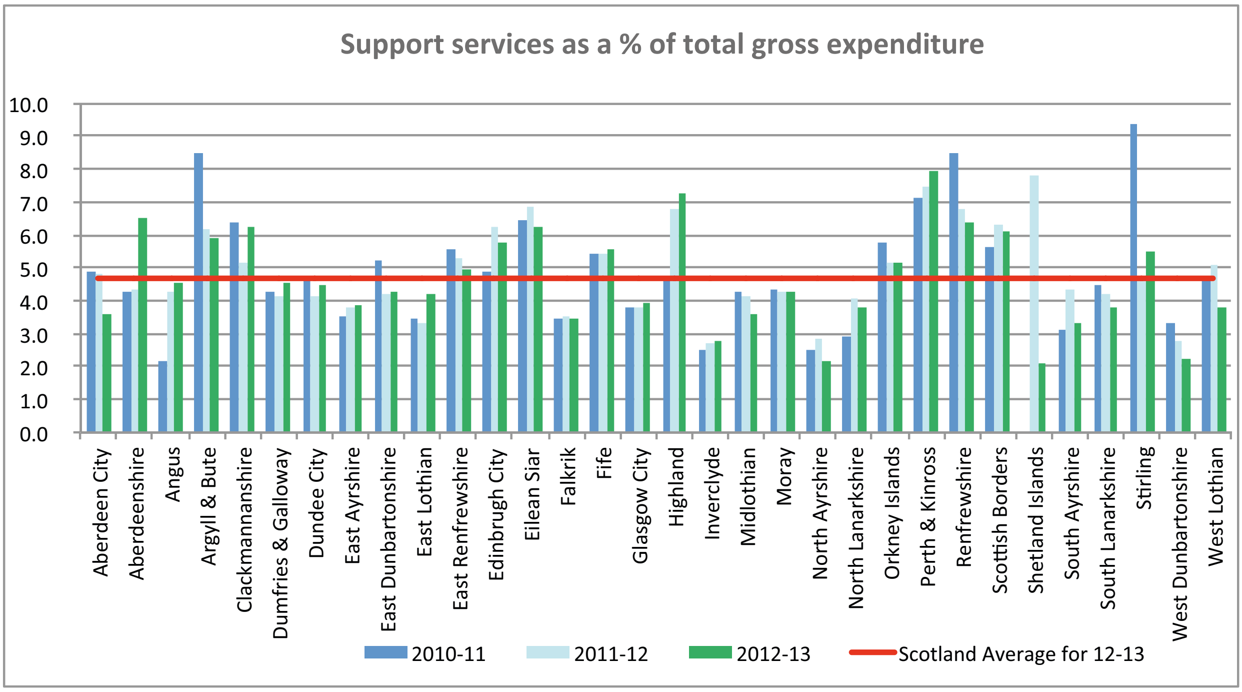
4 http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/local/2013/nr_130517_roads_maintenance.pdf

Corporate Services

Support Services

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

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



Democratic Core

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

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

Percentage of Women in Top Salaries

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

Cost of Council Tax Collection

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

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

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

Sickness Absence Rates

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

Invoices Paid

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

Housing Services

Tenants' Arrears and Voids

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

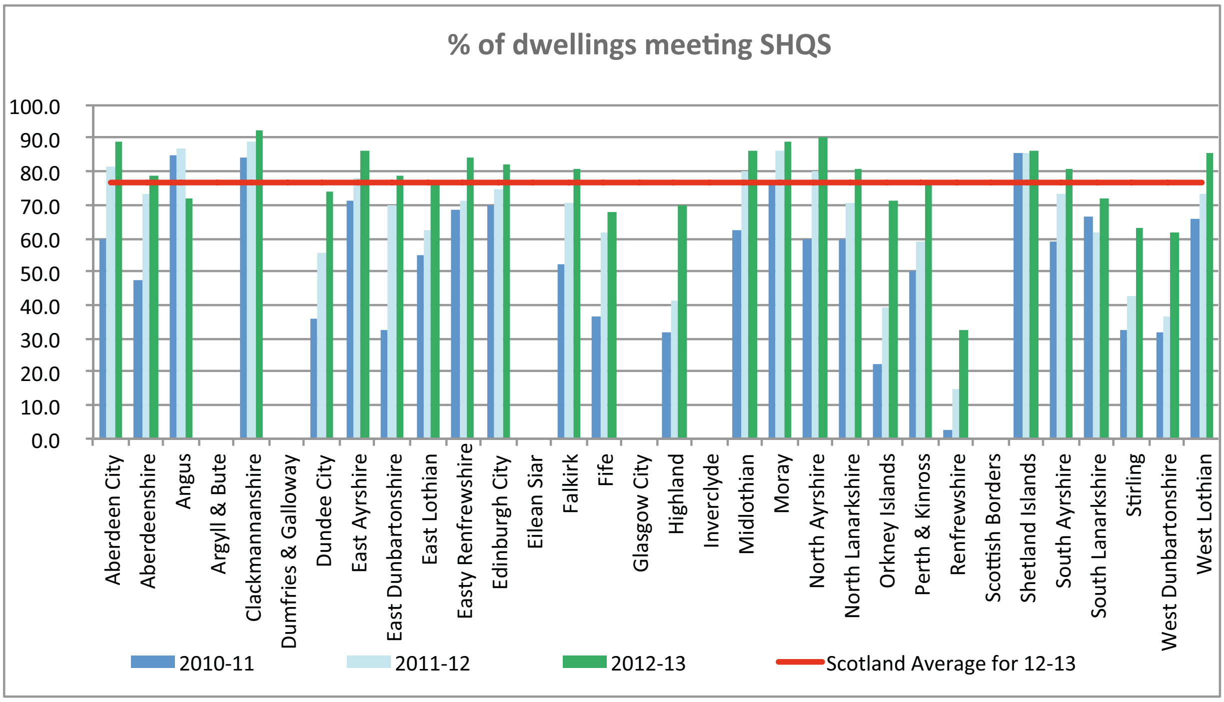
Meanwhile, the rent due lost to voids has decreased since 2010/11, with all of the decrease occurring between 2011/12 and 2012/13. Again, figures vary across authorities, from 0.3% to 4.1%, with rural and smaller authorities reporting higher losses. Overall, these figures suggest the councils continue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

Tenants' Arrears and Percentage of Rent Due Lost to Voids

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

Housing Quality

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



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

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

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

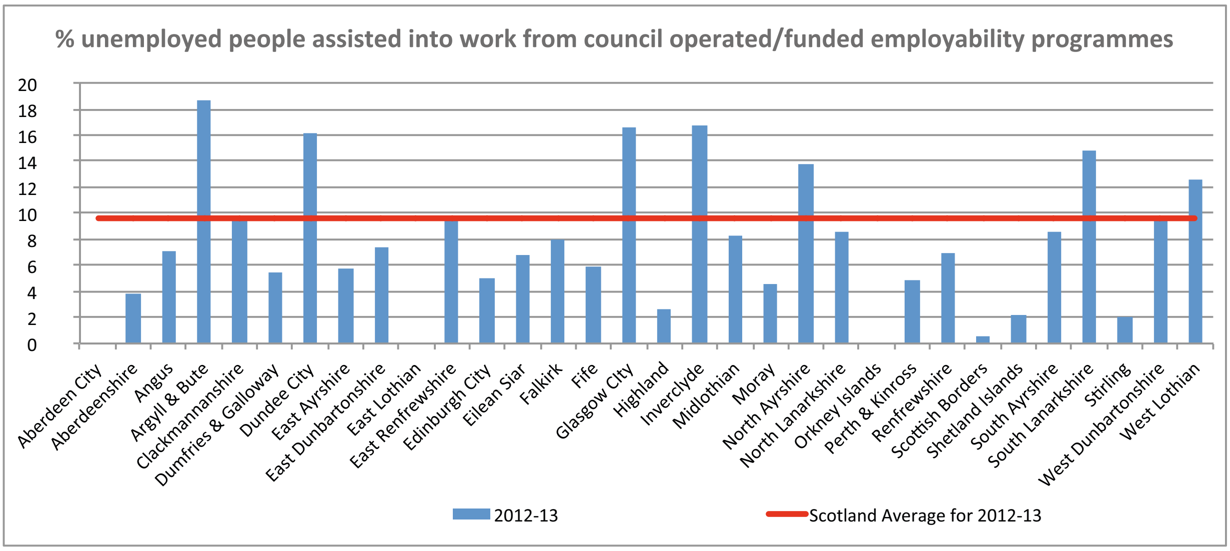
Year	% of council dwellings meeting Scottish Housing Standards	% of repairs completed within target times	% of council dwellings that are energy efficient
2010/11	53.6	93.3	74.9
2011/12	66.1	93.6	81.2
2012/13	76.6	93.1	88.8

Economic Development

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

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

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



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

Conclusions and Next Steps

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

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

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

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

Appendix 1 Full List of Indicators and Service Categories

	Data	Indicator Description
Children's Services	CHN1	Cost per primary school pupil
	CHN2	Cost per secondary school pupil
	CHN3	Cost per pre-school education registration
	CHN4	Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 5
	CHN5	Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 6
	CHN6	Percentage of pupils from deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at level 5 (SIMD)
	CHN7	Percentage of pupils from deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at level 6 (SIMD)
	CHN8a	The gross cost of "children looked after" in residential based services per child per week
	CHN8b	The gross cost of "children looked after" in a community setting per child per week
	CHN9	Balance of care for looked after children: % of children being looked after in the community
	CHN10	Percentage of adults satisfied with local schools
	CHN11	Proportion of pupils entering positive destinations
Corporate Services	CORP1	Support services as a percentage of total gross expenditure
	CORP2	Cost of democratic core per 1,000 population
	CORP3b	The percentage of the highest paid 5% of employees who are women
	CORP4	The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax
	CORP5b2	Average time (hours) between time of noise complaint and attendance on site, for those requiring attendance on site
	CORP6	Sickness absence days per employee
	CORP7	Percentage of income due from Council Tax received by the end of the year
	CORP8	Percentage of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days
Adult Social Care	SW1	Older persons (over 65) home care costs per hour
	SW2	SDS spend on adults 18+ as a % of total social work spend on adults 18+
	SW3	Percentage of people 65+ with intensive needs receiving care at home
	SW4	Percentage of adults satisfied with social care or social work services
	SW5	Net residential costs per week for older persons (over 65)
Cutture & Leisure Services	C&L1	Cost per attendance at sports facilities
	C&L2	Cost per library visit
	C&L3	Cost of museums per visit
	C&L4	Cost of parks & open spaces per 1,000 population
	C&L5a	Percentage of adults satisfied with libraries
	C&L5b	Percentage of adults satisfied with parks and open spaces
	C&L5c	Percentage of adults satisfied with museums and galleries
	C&L5d	Percentage of adults satisfied with leisure facilities

	Data	Indicator Description
Environmental Services	ENV1 & 1a	Gross and net cost of waste collection per premises
	ENV2 & 2a	Gross and net cost per waste disposal per premises
	ENV3a	Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population
	ENV3c	Street Cleanliness Score
	ENV4a	Cost of maintenance per kilometre of roads
	ENV4b	Percentage of A class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment
	ENV4c	Percentage of B class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment
	ENV4d	Percentage of C class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment
	ENV4e	Percentage of U class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment
	ENV5	Cost of trading standards and environmental health per 1,000 population
	ENV6	The percentage of total waste arising that is recycled
	ENV7a	Percentage of adults satisfied with refuse collection
	ENV7b	Percentage of adults satisfied with street cleaning
Housing Services	HSN1	Current tenants' arrears as a percentage of net rent due
	HSN2	Percentage of rent due in the year that was lost due to voids
	HSN3	Percentage of dwellings meeting SHQS
	HSN4	Percentage of repairs completed within target times
	HSN5	Percentage of council dwellings that are energy efficient
Corp. Asset	C-AST 1	Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use
	C-AST 2	Proportion of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition
Econ Dev	ECON1	Percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from council operated/funded employability programmes

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

T. 01506 775558
E. info@improvementservice.org.uk
www.improvementservice.org.uk

Local
Government
Benchmarking
Framework

www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking

Mar 2014