

2016/17 Local Government Benchmarking Results

Report by Kenneth Lawrie, Chief Executive

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the Cabinet with the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) overview of the Council's performance against the indicators for 2016/17.

2 Background

Over the last seven years all councils have been working with the Improvement Service and SOLACE to develop a common approach to benchmarking. Information is collected on a set of indicators that lets us know how we are performing in comparison to others, this is known as the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF). The LGBF allows us to share best practice and learn from councils who are performing well in certain areas.

There has been an increase in the number of LGBF indicators for 2016/17 with the main additions being to the indicator sets for Children's Services. This work has resulted in a national dataset comprising of 75 indicators. The key principle of the indicators was that they were comparable across all 32 councils. It should be noted that two of the indicators relate to museums and galleries therefore only 73 are relevant to Midlothian and 5 indicators have no data yet

The indicators are grouped under the following categories:

- Social Work Services
- Children's Services
- Corporate Assets and Services
- Culture and Leisure
- Economic Development
- Environmental Services
- Housing Services

The framework reports on how much councils spend on particular services, service performance and how satisfied people are with the major services provided by councils. The cost indicators have been developed using the best available cost information for councils from existing sources such as the Local Financial Return (LFRs). A range of satisfaction measures have also been included from the Scottish Household Survey (SHS).

Local results are considered in the context of the national picture, including comparison of 2016/17 data with the Scottish average and graphs showing Midlothian trend data against the Scottish and Family Group averages.

Rather than being viewed as a league table, the data-set can be regarded as a useful 'can-opener' in flagging up issues worthy of further investigation. For example, high costs for one indicator may reflect investment to affect a policy change rather than inefficient spend and a trade-off between cost and performance can be expected.

When considering the data, it is also important to be aware of intended/expected levels of performance, rather than focusing on the collective number of indicators in the top quartile. For example the Council's spend on our schools means we are meeting our objective to achieve higher educational attainment year on year.

It is important to remember that councils across Scotland do not have common service structures. Each council has a structure and service arrangement that it believes is the most appropriate and cost effective way to support its local community.

3. Current Position

Within the Council, performance against the indicators will be monitored as part of the performance management arrangements which includes quarterly reporting to Cabinet and Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committees.

Cabinet and Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee should note that the framework continues to be reviewed and this year a range of new measures for Children's Services have been introduced which will strengthen the framework coverage of Children's Services. These measures are:

- percentage of children meeting developmental milestones;
- percentage of funded early years provision which is graded good/better;
- School attendance rates for all pupils and for looked after children (per 100);
- School exclusion rates for all children and for looked after children (per 1,000);
- Participation rates for 16-19 year olds (per 100);
- percentage of child protection re-registrations;
- percentage LAC with more than 1 placement in the last year (Aug- July).

In summary, whilst there are questions about the relevance, comparability and reliability of some of the indicators, there is nevertheless clear value in a number of the indicators, particularly those that are direct measures of performance. These show some areas of strength and some areas for improvement in Midlothian, and point to areas such as invoice payments and educational attainment where improvement is necessary.

Whilst full details of the 16/17 Benchmarking results are shown in appendix 1, the table below provides a high level summary of our performance across the four quartiles. It should be noted that there are 5 indicators for which the data is not available yet and at this time half of our indicators are in the top two quartiles.

Scottish ranking	Percentage % of indicators falling within each quartile
	2016/17
1 st and 2 nd Quartile (ranked 1-16)	34/68 50%
3 rd and 4 th Quartile (ranked 17-32)	34/68 50%

Information comparing performance information from all councils 32 Scottish councils is available on a national website called [Mylocalcouncil](http://www.mylocalcouncil.org.uk). The website compares performance information from all 32 Scottish councils. The Improvement Service also published the data for all councils in February 2018, details can be found at <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/>

4 Report Implications

4.1 Resource

There are no resource implications

4.2 Risk

This report seeks to mitigate the risk that the Council does not meet its obligations in terms of the requirement to publicly report on performance information.

4.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☒ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

4.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

The LGBF measures for 16/17 contribute to all three Priorities identified in the SMP, Reducing the gap in learning outcomes; Reducing the gap in health outcomes and Reducing the gap in economic circumstances.

4.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The LGBF benchmarking dataset along with service plan outcomes are incorporated in the Balanced Scorecard and form a key component of the ongoing performance reporting requirements.

4.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The council's Planning Performance Management Framework is underpinned by the previously identified Future Model key principles, one of which focuses on prevention.

4.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

This report does not directly relate to involving communities and stakeholders though access to the information is widely available via the council's website and the national website noted in **section 3**.

4.8 Ensuring Equalities

The LGBF indicators monitor some aspects of equalities with a few of the indicators relating to the equality characteristics of gender and disability.

4.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

The Council's Planning and Performance Management Framework demonstrates a sustainable approach to service delivery by ensuring that stakeholders are informed and able to comment on Council planning and performance. LGBF indicators are included in the framework.

4.10 IT Issues

There are no IT issues directly relating to this report. The LGBF results will be made available on the council Website.

5 Recommendations

Cabinet are requested to:

- (a) Note the 2016/17 LGBF comparison results detailed in Appendix 1; and
- (b) Pass this report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for their consideration.

Date: 3 May 2018

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Background Papers: Appendix 1 – Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2016/17 Report