



Elected Member Briefing Note

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EMBN Number: 025-24

Date: 18 March 2024

Subject: Local Government Benchmarking Framework – New Reporting Arrangements and Data Refresh

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Publication

This Briefing Note will be published on the Council's website following circulation to Councillors. Its contents may be disclosed or shared out-with the Council.

Purpose

This briefing note is to advise elected members of changes to future publication schedules of Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) data and provide a summary of the most recent data published (primarily relating to 2022/23).

Briefing Information

Background and Changes to Reporting

In April 2023 officers circulated [Briefing Note 044-23](#) to inform elected members that 2021/22 LGBF data had been published alongside changes the Improvement Service had made to how data was presented, including the introduction of a new dashboard.

Throughout 2023, the Improvement Service have been publishing data more frequently to the online dashboard as it has become available. They have now confirmed that, as of April 2024, they will be introducing monthly data releases on the 28th of each month. These monthly releases will be accompanied by short summary updates advising what new data is available on the dashboard and highlighting any emerging trends. The Improvement Service will also continue to publish an annual overview report. The most recent [National Benchmarking Overview Report](#), which primarily relates to 2022/23 data, was published on 01 March 2024.

To ensure appropriate reporting to Elected Members, officers will communicate the Improvement Service monthly summary updates via the Elected Members Weekly Briefing and publish Elected Member Briefing Notes twice a year, examining key trends in Perth and Kinross (PKC) data and any relevant context against the national picture. Officers and elected members will still be able to access benchmarking information at any time on the Improvement Service dashboard.

This briefing note and information below, is the first of these local reports for 2024, providing a summary of some of the key points emerging from PKC LGBF performance data. Information on national trends has been taken from the annual Improvement Service LGBF event held in December 2023.

Strategic Leads are using this data to inform any areas of improvement. It should be noted, however, that information represents a snapshot in time and some indicators may have moved since 2022/23.

Longer Term Trends

Performance Overview: Since Base Year (2010)

Nationally

Overall, performance has largely improved or been maintained. Whilst this improvement slowed during Covid-19, the long-term picture remains positive (with 67% of indicators improving since base year and 33% declining). Despite this, year on year analysis shows that since 2014/15, the proportion of indicators showing negative trends has increased and this was observed more significantly in the most recent data.

Locally

Within PKC, since the base year, 60% of our indicators have improved and 36% have declined. Similar, to the national picture, we have also seen a decline in improving indicators in our most recent data.

Financial Context

National General Trends

Scottish Government Revenue Funding (excluding non-recurring Covid-19 funding) has increased by 1.8% since 2013/14 but decreased by 0.2% in 2022/23. The overall rise in recent years is due to an increase in specific grants and funding for core Local Government services has fallen in real terms.

Local Government Total General Fund Expenditure has increased in real terms by 7.4% since 2013/14 and by 0.7% in 2022/23. Spending is not keeping pace with demographic pressures (for example, an annual increase of above 6% would be needed to keep pace with accelerating demographic pressures).

National Expenditure Trends: Since Base Year (2010)

Although there have been Covid-19 related fluctuations in expenditure in the past few years, the long-term trends show councils are continuing to protect Social Care, Education, Looked After Children, which is creating growing pressure on other services, for example Culture and Leisure, Roads, Environmental, Support Services and Planning. National changes in expenditure since 2010 are shown in figure 1.

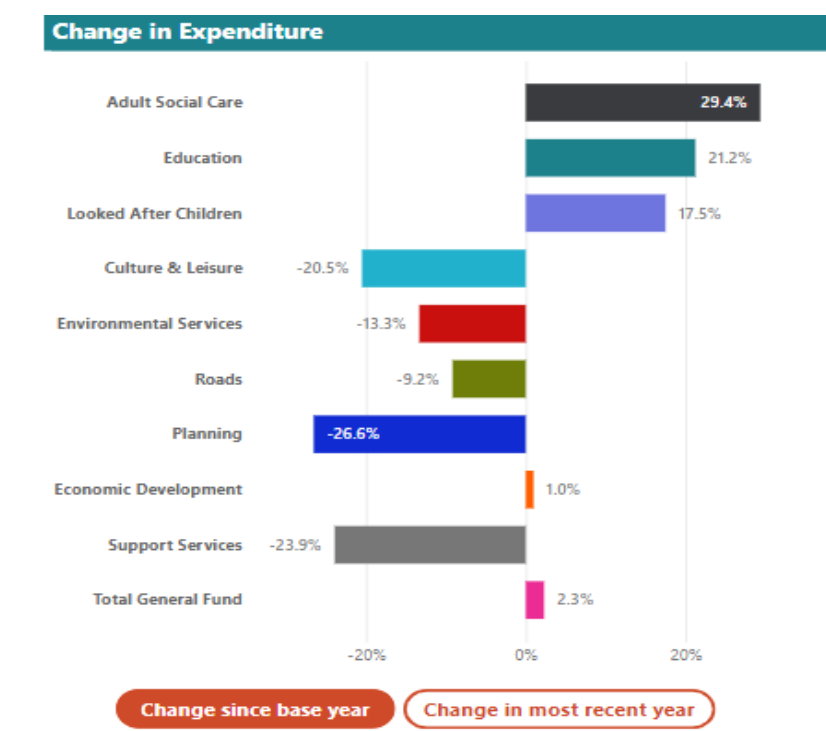


Figure 1.

Local Expenditure Trends: Since Base Year (2010)

Local expenditure trends reveal that our pressure areas are similar to those highlighted nationally, but with a greater proportion of cuts to support services. Where nationally cuts have been applied to roads, this shows as an area of increase at a local level. However, this was following years of decline from 2017 and following monies being significantly allocated to this area from 2020 onwards. Proportionally there has been a greater change in expenditure in Looked After Children and Economic Development than at a national level, with a significant increase in expenditure in the latter from 2019 (including non-recurring external funding). Local changes in expenditure since 2010 are shown in figure 2.

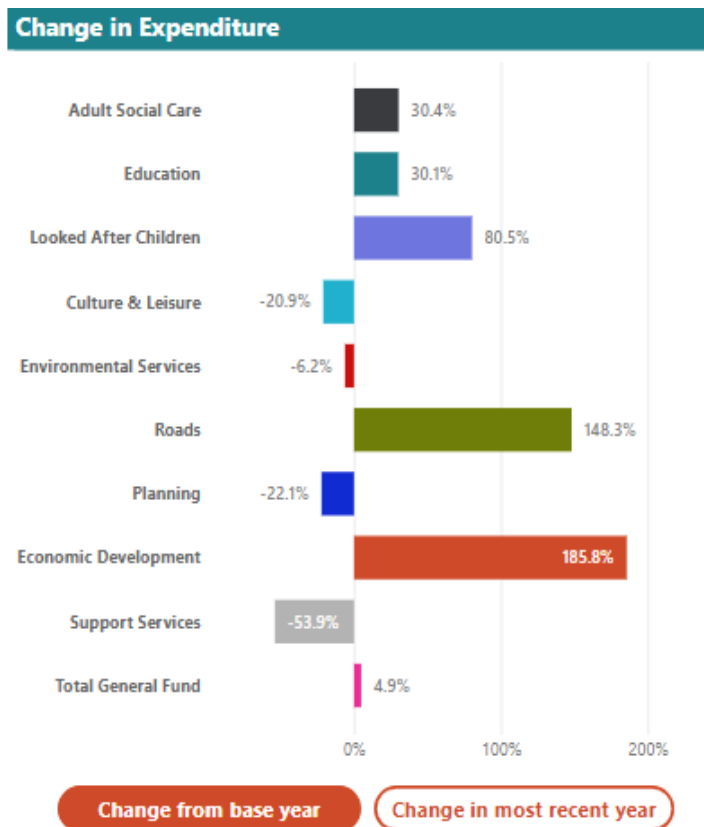


Figure 2.

Summary of most recent local data Performance Overview

There are 86 LGBF indicators with recently published data (2022/23 unless stated otherwise). Within this, there are 63 non-cost indicators (performance and satisfaction indicators), 18 cost indicators, and 5 financial indicators. Locally we do not rank cost indicators as reduced costs do not necessarily mean improved outcomes for local communities.

Within the most recent data 31 performance indicators (49%) improved and 32 declined (51%) from the previous year, with 37 (59%) being favourable against the Scottish average. In comparison to the previous year, this represents less favourable outcomes, which is following the national trend. Changes in improving/declining performance and performance against the Scottish average are demonstrated in figure 3. Figure 4 shows the breakdown of whether costs have increased or decreased in our most recent cost indicator data.

Figure 3.

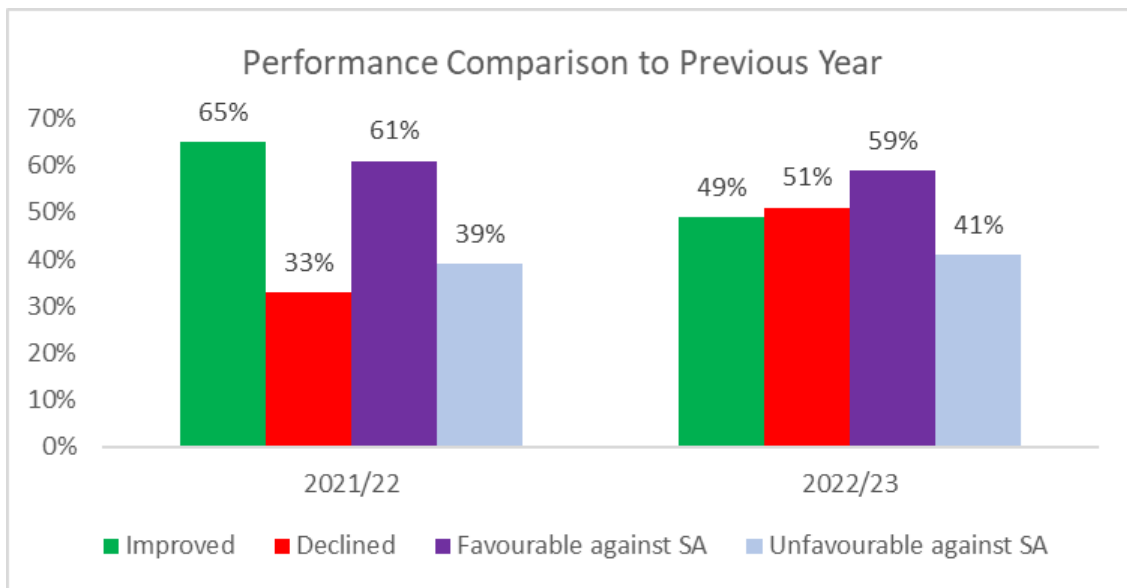
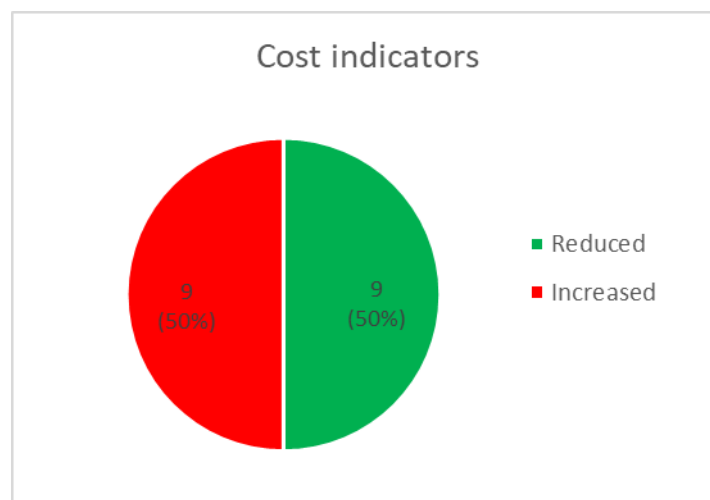


Figure 4.



Rank Positions

The Improvement Service rank all indicators in terms of their performance out of the 32 Scottish local authorities, then consider these in ranking groups, known as quartiles. Looking at how PKC performance indicators sit within these quartiles gives a sense of how PKC is performing in comparison to other local authorities. However, it is necessary to consider that legitimate variations in data will exist across councils due to **local policy choices** and **demographic profiles**.

In the most current data, more than half (55%) of our non-cost indicators are in the upper two quartiles. This is consistent to how we ranked last year.

Further information on the number of indicators sitting in each quartile and those which are currently in the upper and lower quartiles can be found at figure 5 and table 1.

Figure 5.

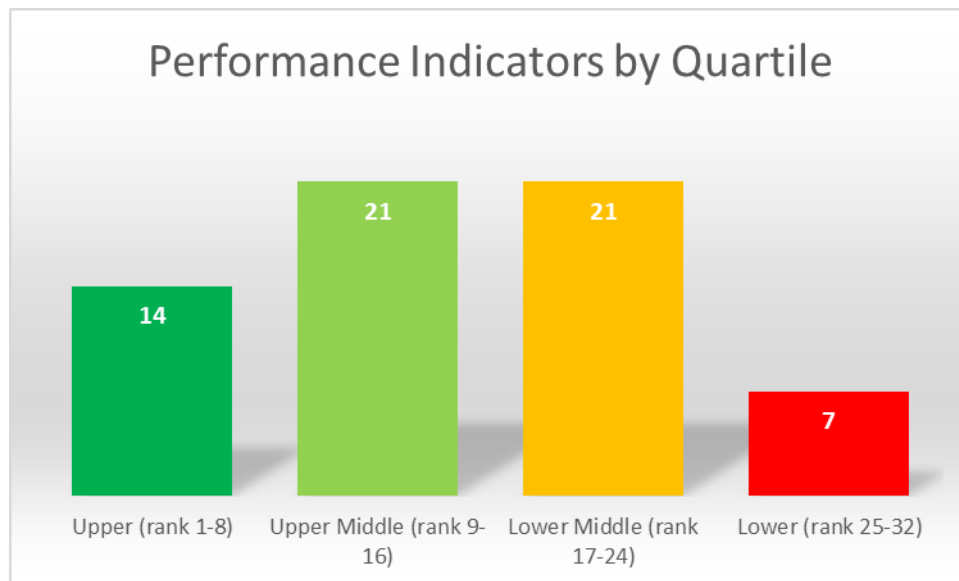


Table 1.

Performance Indicators in Upper/Lower quartiles	
Upper (rank 1-8)	Lower (rank 25-32)
<p>The following 6 indicators have consistently been in the upper quartiles for the past 5 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDS (DP + MPB) spend on adults as a % of total adult social work spend; • The Gender Pay Gap (%); • % of income tax due from council tax received by the end of the year; • Proportion of Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Grants decision within 1 day; • Claimant Count as a % of Working Age Population; and • % of adults satisfied with street cleaning. 	<p>The following 5 indicators have consistently been in the lower quartiles for the past 5 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate of readmission to hospital within 28 days per 1,000 discharges; • Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 2; • Sickness absence days per teacher; • % of A Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment; and • Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband.
<p>The following 6 indicators have fluctuated between the upper two quartiles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of adults satisfied with parks and open spaces; • Proportion of SWF budget spent; • % of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use; • % of U Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment; • Average time per business and industry planning application (weeks); and • Claimant Count as a % of 16-24 population. 	<p>The following 2 indicators have dropped into this quartile this year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 3 (previously ranked 18 – now 25); and • Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 5 (previously ranked 6 – now 26).
<p>The following 2 indicators are new indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CO2 emissions from Electricity per capita; • CO2 emissions from Natural Gas per capita. 	

Key Points in Local Data

Our local LGBF data has been reviewed and some key points, aligned to our Corporate Plan priorities, have been highlighted below (table 2).

All information and rankings were correct at the time of this publication.

Table 2

Key Points
Priority: Tackling poverty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within PKC, the percentage of children living in poverty increased by 3.2 percentage points (pp) to 21.9%, with rates remaining below the national average. This increase is in line with the national trend where child poverty increased to pre-Covid levels (22.6% in the most recent data). • Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due for the year have increased slightly (by less than 1pp to 11.1%). This trend is reflected nationally with continued rising rent arrears, particularly in Local Authorities serving the least deprived communities. Whilst we are performing unfavourably against the national average (9.6%), we have decreased this gap and improved our rank position in the most recent year. • There has been an improvement (reduction) in figures relating to claimant counts for the working age population and 16-to-24-year-olds both locally and nationally for the second year in a row, with figures returning to pre-Covid levels. We continue to rank well in this area, having remained in the upper quartiles for both indicators for over 5 years. • We continue to perform well in relation to Scottish Welfare Fund indicators. In 2022/23 almost 99% of Crisis Grants decisions were made within 1 day (ranking us at 5 nationally) and we increased the proportion of community care grant decisions made within 15 days by 3pp, taking us to 95.5%, which is approximately 8pp higher than the national average. • The percentage of people earning less than the living wage has reduced (improved) both locally and nationally in 2022/23. In Perth and Kinross this reduction was by 4.5pp, taking us to 12% against a national average figure of 9.4%.
Priority: Climate Change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following a drop in Covid-19 years, we have significantly increased the percentage of council dwellings meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. In the past year we have seen an improvement of over 22pp, taking us to 69% and within 2pp of the national average. However, in line with the national trend, we remain below pre-Covid levels. • We continue to rank well in relation to CO2 emissions per capita. This includes new indicators for emissions from transport, electricity, and natural gas, where we have lower emissions than the national average. However, for CO2 area wide emissions within the scope of the local authority, we remain higher than the national average. All emissions indicators have shown a slight increase in the most recent data both locally and nationally. • There has been a slight reduction in the proportion of total household waste arising that is recycled (from 50.2% to 49.0%). Despite this, we continue to outperform the national average (43.3%). • The level of investment in our roads, per kilometre, increased in 2021/22, reflecting the decision of Council as part of the budget setting process. As a result of this additional investment, there has been an improvement in the standard of the road network and positive results in roads maintenance and our performance trend

Key Points

continues to improve. Despite this, we are still ranked in the lowest quartile for A Class roads (rank 30).

Priority: Developing a resilient, stronger, and greener local economy

- There has been an increase in the number of properties receiving superfast broadband, improving by just under 2pp to 88%. This continues the ongoing upwards trend; however, we remain lower than the national average by 7pp, and rank in the lowest quartile for this indicator.
- Following a drop in 2021/22, the number of Business Gateway start-ups increased slightly in 2022/23 to 16.3 per 10,000 population. This indicator shows a long-term declining trend both locally and nationally, however, we remain higher than the national average for the 4th year in a row.
- Satisfaction with libraries continues to perform higher than the national average, this year by 5pp. Satisfaction with museums and galleries however decreased slightly, but remains higher than the national average, for the 10th year in a row.
- There has been a reduction in the percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from Council programmes in the most recent year both locally and nationally. Whilst we remain better than the national average, we have not yet returned to pre-Covid levels.

Priority: Enabling our children and young people to achieve their full potential

- We have seen a reduction in the average total tariff SIMD Quintile 5, declining by 21.8pp and taking us below the national average. We are now ranked 26th having been in the upper quartile the previous year. The national picture also shows a decrease, although less significant, declining by 3.5pp.
- We are in the lowest quartile and below the national average for indicators relating to the average total tariff SIMD Quintile 2 and 3 also.
- Costs per pupil for both Primary and Secondary schools has increased, by 5.1pp and 2.6pp respectively. Both locally and nationally, costs have continued to rise over the past 6 years and are at the highest they have ever been.
- We have seen an increase of over 4pp in the proportion of funded early years provision which has been graded as good or better and improved our rank from 20 to 13. Rates also increased nationally, but less significantly, at 0.7pp more than the previous year. The trends both locally and nationally show figures beginning to return to pre-Covid levels.

Priority: Protecting and caring for our most vulnerable people

- The rate of re-admission to hospital within 28 days of discharge (per 1,000 discharges) increased by 5.4% in 2022/23. This is contrary to a decline nationally in the same period. We continue to rank in the lowest quartile for this indicator (rank 29).
- The number of days people spend in hospital when they are ready to be discharged (per 1,000 population, aged 75+) increased by 58% in 2022/23 to 939 days. This increasing trend was seen nationally, albeit from a lower rate and higher baseline in the previous year (increasing by 23% to 919 days).
- The proportion of adult care services graded good or better reduced from 76.5% in 2021/22 to 73.0% in 2022/23. Whilst this decrease takes us below the national average by 2pp, a decrease has been observed nationally also. The Improvement Service has observed that methodological changes may account for this movement.
- Residential costs for residents aged 65+ have risen by 4.6% in 2022/23, whilst nationally costs have reduced by 1%. Home care costs per hour (65+) also buck the

Key Points
<p>national trend, reducing by 4.3% in 2022/23, while nationally costs increased by 2.8%. Regardless of movements in the most recent data, our costs continue to be lower than the national averages by over £140 per person per week and £10 per hour respectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our self-directed support spend as on adults as a percentage of total adults social work spend continues to increase (12.2%) and has been consistently ranked in the upper quartile for the past 5 years (rank 3).
<p>Priority: Supporting and promoting physical and mental wellbeing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs per attendance at sports facilities, libraries and museums show signs that they are continuing to reduce and return to pre-Covid levels, both locally and nationally. • Costs of parks and open spaces per population remained fairly steady, however, our costs remain approximately 35% higher than national and comparator authorities for this indicator. The proportion of adults satisfied with parks and open spaces is at 91.3% against a Scottish average of 87.3%. • The proportion of adults satisfied with leisure facilities has decreased both locally and nationally within the past year and since the base year (decreasing locally by less than 1pp in latest data). However, we consistently perform better than the national figure.
<p>Priority: Working in partnership with communities</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LGBF data set does not currently have any indicators which directly align with this priority.
<p>Best Value</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence for teachers has increased more rapidly than in other areas, is at the highest rate recorded since 2010 at 8.9 days, almost 2pp above the national average, with a rank of 30, which is in the lowest quartile. Sickness for employees has also increased (to 13 days) but remains comparable nationally. • Our gender pay gap is closing as the gap is now closer to zero, however it is still marginally in favour of women. We remain well placed in the rankings, sitting in the upper quartile (rank 4). Nationally there has been continued improvement in reducing the gender pay gap also. • We have seen good results in both of our Council tax indicators, with our cost of collection decreasing and being lower than the national average by almost £2 and income received by year end increasing to 98.4%. • Both indicators relating to building suitability and condition improved and are above the national average. There was an improvement in building suitability of 3% taking us to 96.2% and ranking 3rd nationally. There was also further improvement in building condition score when the national average dipped slightly.

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