Item 6

18th June 2025

Glasgow City Council

Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee

Report by Chief Executive

Contact: Cormac Quinn Ext: 73625

Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2023/24

Purpose of Report:

This report provides the Committee with an overview of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF). This report presents a wide suite of measures for consideration and assessment of performance.

Recommendations:

The committee is asked to note this report and to:

- consider the Local Government Benchmarking Framework and provide comment on those indicators that may highlight areas of comparative interest.
- note that the Local Government Benchmarking Framework will be reported annually to the committee when the figures are updated; and
- note the ongoing programme of benchmarking work.

Ward No(s):	Citywide: ✓
Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐	consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

1.0 Background

1.1 This report presents detailed information from the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF). These indicators form part of the suite of Statutory Performance measures used by the Council to consider how it is performing in its duty to deliver Value for Money and are used by Audit Scotland to assess how the Council is performing in its duty to deliver Best Value.

1.2 This report reflects the data provided by all 32 local authorities in Scotland, based on their Local Financial Return (LFR) for 2023/24. The LGBF is managed by the Improvement Service, the national improvement organisation for local government in Scotland.

1.3 The LGBF provides benchmark comparisons across nine key headings

- Children's Services
- Adult Social Care
- Culture and Leisure
- Environmental Services
- Corporate Services
- Housing
- Economic Development and Planning
- Financial Sustainability
- Tackling Climate Change

1.4 To facilitate comparisons within the LGBF, local authorities are grouped into two sets of benchmarking families, called Family Group Comparators (FGC) These groupings reflect either similar social or environmental characteristics, depending on the measure being considered.

1.5 The report follows on from the presentation given to members of Operational Performance and Delivery Scrutinycommittee on the 7th of May 2025 by Improvement Service Performance Leads D Barr and S Tennent. The presentation provided members with a brief overview of the LGBF toolkit and explanation of Improvement Services aim to provide clear recommendations and a standard approach to sector wide collaborative improvement. Operational and Performance Scrutiny Meeting 7th May 2025

2.0 The Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF)

2.1 The opportunity to view full performance for each of the LGBF indicators is available from the Improvement Service website. The previous online comparison tool, accessed via the My Local Council Scotland webpage, has now been discontinued.

2.2 The indicators themselves are a derived from; and are reflective of, a range of key areas. Some indicators are reflective of cost; some also look at customer satisfaction, and some are directly relevant to our strategic commitments.

2.3 As the Council is not a direct provider of social housing, the indicators relating to housing management, housing conditions and housing energy efficiency are not included.

2.4 No value judgement is made about a high or low ranking as this may be affected by several factors including local choices on investment priorities, population distribution, and the socio-economic composition of each local authority.

2.5 In order to ensure consistency as to how the highest quartile and lowest quartile are reflected (in the table at 4.0); where costs or expenditure are high, this will always be placed in the lowest quartile. Notwithstanding that in some cases it may be as result of active investment or service reform.

2.6 It should also be noted that although extracted from the Local Financial Return (LFR), there can be significant variation in the detail of each indicator as reported by each authority. An Improvement Service hosted subgroup of Directors of Finance across all 32 local authorities continue to look in detail at how to improve consistency, identify potential anomalies, and highlight areas for improved financial recording and reporting.

2.7 Some of the key LBGF indicators are also a component part of the Strategic Plan actions and are therefore included in the thematic reporting cycle.

3.0 Learning and Improvement in the LGBF: Highlights of the Council's placement in the highest and lowest eight (Quartile)

3.1 Below are some of the key indicators in the lowest eight nationally, with a note of some context and where appropriate, the actions being undertaken to understand and to address areas of improvement where required.

Key Indicators placed in the Lowest Eight (Quartile)

- **Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population**
  The **net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 is the 2nd highest in Scotland** at **£25.41 per person**, which is an increase of **£5.75** per person on 22/23 figures **(£19.66** per person). Only Edinburgh has higher costs per at **£28.55** per person.

Glasgow has several costs within this indicator which are not highlighted within this figure and include elements which are consistent with a large urban authority. These include:

- A significant number of large-scale events take place which generate increased demands for street cleaning
- Clean-ups operations required after sporting events which take place or are conducted in the city.
- River/boat cleaning service
- Night shift cleaning work

Glasgow also has a programme of investment which is also reflected in the ongoing costs.

- **Net Cost per Waste Disposal per premises**

Waste disposal per premises costs in Glasgow are **£125.78**, this is **£21.40** higher than the Scottish Average figure and **£26.91** higher than the average figure across our family group. Our average relative position for this indicator has remained **25**th since 20/21.

- **Street Cleanliness Scores**

Glasgow has recorded only slightly lower Street Cleanliness score than both our family group and the national average. Glasgow scored **86.5%,** compared to a FGC score of **90%** and national average of **92%**.

- **% Of total household waste that is recycled**

Currently **Glasgow at 27.2% of all waste recycled**; has **the third lowest rate** of recycling across all Councils. The **average rate** of recycling for Scotland **is 43.5%** of all waste.

- **% of Crisis Grant Decisions within 1 day**

The most recent data has Glasgow decisions made within one day at **95%**, against a Scottish Average of the Scottish average is **96%**. Although GCC remains ranked in the lower quartile, there has been significant improvement since last year when only **84%** of decisions were processes within 1 day.

- **Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a % of council annual budgeted net revenue**

Glasgow is ranked 28th in this measure.

Councils hold reserves to deal with unexpected financial pressures and risks. The council's target for uncommitted general fund reserves is to achieve 2% over the medium term. The balance as at March 2024 was £26.3 million

equivalent to 1.3% and this is not expected to change in the short term. However, the council also has a Budget Support Fund, established in March 2023 to support the delivery of the budget over the medium term. The estimated balance at March 2025 is £39 million.

- **Cost per attendance at sports facilities**

  Glasgow has the second highest cost per attendance at sports facilities in Scotland at £9.41 against a Scottish average of £4.34 and FG Average of £4.35. This is however a significant reduction since last year's figure of £12.26 per attendance.

- **Cost per Library visit**

  Glasgow has the fifth highest cost per library visit at £4.65 compared to a Scottish National Average of £2.38.

  The cost of visiting a library in Glasgow has fallen £1.54 over the last year and £8.74 since 21/22 figures were calculated.

3.2 Key indicators Ranked in the Highest Eight (Quartile)

Below are some of the key indicators in the highest eight nationally, with a note of some the actions being undertaken to understand and to support areas of improvement where appropriate.

- **% Of the highest paid 5% of employees who are women**

  At **63.4%** Glasgow has the **fifth highest proportion of female employees** in highly paid posts with a **Scottish Average of 59.8%** From 2019 this indicator has been supplemented by an additional pay equality indicator, so this will continue to be reflected in future reporting.

- **Investment in Economic Development and Tourism per 1000 population**

  Glasgow has the **3rd highest level of investment at £213,088 per 1000** of the population; the Scottish **national average** for this indicator is **£118,765.**

- **Proportion of People Earning Less Than the Living Wage**

  Glasgow has the **2nd lowest** percentage of people recorded as **earning less than the Living Wage** at **7.4.%** against a **national figure of 10.2% and FGC average of 11.4%.**

  The Glasgow Living Wage was originally launched in 2009 by Glasgow City Council to tackle in-work poverty focusing on Council Family staff in the first instance. The move increased the pay of 5,000 of the lowest paid staff across the council family. Since then, other employers throughout the city have been encouraged by the council to pay their staff a Living Wage.

- **Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband**

  Glasgow at **98.5%** of properties has **6th highest** proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband in Scotland. The **Scottish average** is currently **95.9%.**

- **Percentage of procurement spent on local enterprises.**
  Glasgow is placed **6th within Scotland** in respect to this measure. When compared to the Scottish average, Glasgow is around 6% higher in its performance.

- **SDS Spend on adults as a % of total adult spend.**
  Glasgow is the **3rd highest placed Local Authority** in respect to this measure. Glasgow introduced the option of Self-Directed Support a number of years ago and, compared to the Scottish Average, currently spends around 5% more on this area of spend.

4.0 Overview of key outlying indicators and placement within the LGBF

4.1 Table 1 below summarises the indicators which are ranked within the highest or lowest eight local authorities (the highest and lowest quartiles).

4.2 It is of note that, in terms of Glasgow's position within these quartiles, some elements of performance are not easily comparable. Under section 5.0 in this report, we detail how we are working collaboratively with Improvement Service Colleagues and Performance Peers nationally to better understand and improve the comparative detail and evidence base used within calculations.

Highest Ranked Quartiles 2023-24					
		Rank			Rank
CHN01	Cost per Primary School Pupil	**6**	CORP6b	Sickness Absence Days per Employee (Non-Teacher)	**3**
CHN06	% Pupils Living in the 20% Most Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5	**4**	SW02	Self Directed Support (Direct Payments + Managed Personalised Budgets) Spend on Adults as % of Total Adult Social Work Spend	**3**
CHN07	% Pupils Living in the 20% Most Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 6	**4**	ENV4c	Percentage of B Class Roads Considered for Maintenance Treatment	**6 (2022/24)**
CHN09	% of Children Being Looked After in The Community	**6 (2022/23)**	ENV4d	Percentage of C Class Roads Considered for Maintenance Treatment	**6 (2022/24)**
CHN12b	Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 1	**3**	ENV4e	Percentage of Unclassified Roads Considered for	**8 (2020/24)**

Highest Ranked Quartiles 2023-24					
				Maintenance Treatment	
CHN12c	Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 1	**4**	ECON04	Proportion of Procurement Spent on Local Enterprises	**6**
CHN12e	Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 4	**8**	ECON06	Investment in Economic Development & Tourism per 1,000 Population	**3**
CHN12f	Average Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 5	**6**	ECON07	Proportion of People Earning Less Than the Living Wage	**2**
CHN23	Proportion of LAC with More Than 1 Placement in the Last Year	**3 (2022/23)**	ECON08	Proportion of Properties Receiving Superfast Broadband	**6**
CORP3b	% the Highest Paid 5% of Employees Who are Women	**5**	FINSUS05	Actual Outrun as a Percentage of Budgeted Expenditure	**6**
CORP04	The Cost per Dwelling of Collecting Council Tax	**4**	CLIM01	CO2 Emissions Area Wide Per Capita	**7 (2022/23)**
CORP06a	Sickness Absence Days per Teacher	**4**	CLIM02	CO2 Emissions Area Wide: Emissions Within Scope of LA Per Capita	**2 (2022/23)**

Lowest Ranked Quartiles 2023-24					
		Rank			Rank
CHN4	% Pupils Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5	**25**	ENV3a	Net Cost of Street Cleaning per 1,000 Population	**30**
CHN08a	The Gross Cost of "Children Looked After" in Residential Based Services	**31 (2022/23)**	ENV03c	Street Cleanliness Score	**30**
CHN10	% of Adults Satisfied with Local Schools	**29 (2021/24)**	ENV04a	Cost of Roads per Kilometre	**26**
CHN13a	% of P1, P4 and P7 Pupils Combined Achieving Expected CFE Level in Literacy	**32**	ENV04b	Percentage of A Class Roads Considered for Maintenance Treatment	**26 (2022/24)**
CH13b	% P1, P4 and P7 Pupils Combined Achieving Expected CFE Level in Numeracy	**31**	ENV06	Portion of Total Household Waste Arising that is Recycled	**30**
CHN18	% Funded Early Years Provision Which is Graded Good/Better	**27**	ECON01	% Unemployed People Assisted into Work from Council Programmes	**28**

Lowest Ranked Quartiles 2023-24					
CHN19a	School Attendance Rate (per 100 pupils)	**29**	ECON02	Cost of Planning & Building Standards per Planning Application	**30**
CHN21	% Participation for 16-19 Year Olds	**25**	ECON03	Average Time per Business and Industry Planning Application (Weeks)	**28**
CORP01	Support Services as a % of Total Gross Expenditure	**28**	ECON05	No. of Business Gateway Start-Ups per 10,000 Population	**28**
CORP07	% Income Due from Council Tax Received by the End of the Year	**28**	ECON12a	Claimant Count as a % of Working Age Population	**30 (2023/24) 32 (2024/25)**
CORP09	% of Crisis Grant Decisions Within 1 Day	**29 (2023/24) 26 (2024/25)**	FINSUS01	Total Useable Reserves as a % of Council Annual Budgeted Revenue	**31**
SW05	Residential Costs per Week per Resident for People Aged 65 or over	**25**	FINSUS02	Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a % of Council Annual Budgeted Net Revenue	**28**
C&L01	Cost per Attendance at Sports Facilities	**31**	CLIM04	CO2 Emissions from Electricity per 1,000 population (2022-23)	**28 (2022/23)**
C&L02	Cost per Library Visit	**25**	CLIM05	CO2 Emissions from Natural Gas per 1,000 population (2022-23)	**25 (2022/23)**
ENV02a	Net Cost of Waste Disposal per Premise	**25**			

5.0 Collaborative Working with the Improvement Service.

5.1 Since early 2025 Corporate Policy performance officers have been working in collaboration with Improvement Service colleagues to better understand a specific series of benchmarking indicators. Colleagues are working together to analyse areas of poor performing or 'outlier' indicators and areas where Glasgow's ranking has been consistently within the lowest quartile.

5.2 This collaborative work will seek to review the metadata and evidence-based research used for each of our 'outlier' indicators to ensure meaningful comparison. Colleagues will explore the appropriateness of family groupings and try to better understand the rich data that supports 'like for like' comparisons between councils. The indicators currently under review include the following:

- **Business Gateway Start Ups per 10,000 population:**

  Glasgow has consistently ranked poorly at 2nd Lowest, however alternative data sets available from the Office of National Statistics, not currently used by LGBF has Glasgow as outperforming most other Local Authorities in this field.

- **Claimants count as % of working age population & as a % of 16-24 population.**

  We will be liaising with the Improvement Service to better understand the data provided with respect to these measures.

- **Cost of Planning Per Application**

  Glasgow has the 2nd **highest cost per application at £12**,**259** with the Scottish average figure reported as **£6.679** and FG average of **£7,599**.

  A fuller understanding of what figures were used to calculate the cost per planning application is required to ensure that accurate direct staff costs alone are attributed rather than a cost centre approach.

- **Education: Cost per Pupil (Primary and Secondary)**

  Education Performance Colleagues would like further details on data sets related to Pupil Roll/Census information and calculations relative to published LFR figures.

5.3 We have also identified areas were, although performance is not in the lower quartile and has been either good or improving, analysis would be beneficial to ensure use of the most appropriate data sets for comparison. These include:

- **Home care costs of per hour for people aged 65 or over:**

  Some elements of performance are not easily comparable, and it is important to ensure that methodology across measures are calculated consistently in order to accurately reflect Glasgow's performance.

- **% of adults supported at home who agree that their service and support has had an impact on their quality of life:**

  Locally available figures and data intelligence would suggest higher satisfaction ratings. Further work to review the most appropriate data sets could potentially improve reliability of this measure.

5.4 Glasgow also continues to engage in an on-going programme of work with the Improvement Services and the Scottish Performance Network to ensure we are making effective use of the LGBF data. Using the LGBF indicators as 'can-openers' we aim through these collaborative networks to explore the very high-level indicators to focus questions on why variations in costs, outcomes and performance are occurring across similar council areas.

6.0 Other Benchmarking Activities

6.1 Each Council Service is required to produce an Annual Business Plan which sets out current year priorities. The guidance around the development process for the individual service plans recognises the importance of benchmarking for achieving and demonstrating Best Value. Services are also encouraged to consider any other relevant benchmarking activity that could be undertaken out with those reflected within the LGBF structure.

6.2 As noted within the table at 4.0 the indicators highlighted within the highest and lowest quartile will also be followed up by individual Services and service leads throughout the year. The Strategic Planning and Performance Working Group, comprising performance leads across the Council Family also regularly scrutinise LGBF outliers in the course of the scheduled work programme.

6.3 In addition to the on-going collaborative work noted a 5.1, the Improvement Service also offer a programme of Learning and Development events to relevant stakeholders. These events provide an opportunity for analysis of LGBF data and for colleagues to share best practise experience, The 2024/25 Programme of Learning and Development Events will include sessions on:

- Street Cleaning
- Libraries
- Finance
- Climate Action
- Sports and Activity
- Workforce

.

6.4 The Link to the Improvement Services LGBF data-sets can be found here**:**

https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/explore-the-data

Recommendations

The committee is asked to note this report and to:

- consider the Local Government Benchmarking Framework and provide comment on those indicators that may highlight areas of best value.
- note that the Local Government Benchmarking Framework will be reported annually to the committee when the figures are updated; and
- note the ongoing programme of benchmarking work.

Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial:	None
Legal:	None
Personnel:	None
Procurement:	None

Council Strategic Plan:	The report details performance information which reflects aspects relevant to the Grand Challenges outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? *Please specify.*	Yes, by highlighting benchmarked areas of Equality work the report seeks to assist in increasing people's knowledge about Equality and Fairness which supports the Equality Outcomes.
What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?	No EQIA required as the report is a comparative one; based on local authority data from 2023-24, and no policy decisions are initiated in this report.
Please highlight if the policy/proposal	Yes, by highlighting areas of work the report seeks to assist in increasing people's knowledge

will help address socio-economic disadvantage:	about Fairness and impact of policy/planning on socio-economic outcomes.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any climate Plan actions? Please specify:	No significant climate impacts identified at this point.
What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?	None
Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?	N/A

Privacy and Data Protection impacts:	Data collated with be handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation