



Council Offices, Almada Street  
Hamilton, ML3 0AA

Monday, 11 March 2024

Dear Councillor

## **Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum**

The Members listed below are requested to attend a meeting of the above Forum to be held as follows:-

**Date:** Tuesday, 19 March 2024

**Time:** 14:00

**Venue:** Hybrid - Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton, ML3 0AA

The business to be considered at the meeting is listed overleaf.

Yours sincerely

**Paul Manning**  
**Chief Executive**

### **Members**

Joe Fagan (Chair), Gerry Convery (Depute Chair), John Anderson, Maureen Chalmers, Maureen Devlin, Richard Lockhart, Katy Loudon, Davie McLachlan, Kirsten Robb, John Ross

### **Substitutes**

Andrea Cowan, Gladys Ferguson-Miller, Martin Hose, Eileen Logan, Margaret B Walker

## BUSINESS

### 1 Declaration of Interests

- 2 Minutes of Previous Meeting** 3 - 6  
Minutes of meeting of the Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum held on 5 December 2023 submitted for approval as a correct record. (Copy attached)

---

### Item(s) for Consideration

---

- 3 Scottish Household Survey Key Findings** 7 - 30  
Report dated 29 February 2024 by the Chief Executive. (Copy attached)
- 4 Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2022/2023 Results and Action Plan** 31 - 76  
Report dated 29 February 2024 by the Chief Executive. (Copy attached)
- 5 Best Value in Scotland** 77 - 82  
Report dated 29 February 2024 by the Chief Executive. (Copy attached)
- 6 Accounts Commission New Approach to the Audit of Best Value – Initial Reports** 83 - 90  
Report dated 29 February 2024 by the Chief Executive. (Copy attached)

---

### Urgent Business

---

- 7 Urgent Business**  
Any other items of business which the Chair decides are urgent.

***For further information, please contact:-***

Clerk Name:	Stuart McLeod
Clerk Telephone:	07385 370 117
Clerk Email:	stuart.mcleod@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

## PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW SCRUTINY FORUM

2

Minutes of meeting held via Confero and in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 5 December 2023

**Chair:**

Councillor Joe Fagan

**Councillors Present:**

Councillor John Anderson, Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Councillor Gerry Convery (Depute), Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Richard Lockhart, Councillor Katy Loudon, Councillor Davie McLachlan, Councillor Kirsten Robb, Councillor John Ross

**Attending:**

**Community and Enterprise Resources**

A Brown, Head of Enterprise and Sustainable Development; F Carlin, Head of Planning and Regulatory Services; K Carr, Head of Facilities, Waste and Grounds; C Park, Head of Roads, Transportation and Fleet Services

**Education Resources**

D Dickson, Education Operations Manager

**Finance and Corporate Resources**

P Manning, Executive Director; T Little, Head of Communications and Strategy; K McLeod, Administration Assistant; S McLeod, Administration Officer; L Marshall, Finance Adviser; N Reid, Improvement and Community Planning Manager

**Housing and Technical Resources**

L Hayes, Performance and Support Adviser

**Social Work Resources**

M Kane, Senior Development Manager

---

### 1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

---

### 2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum held on 3 October 2023 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

**The Forum decided:** that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

---

### 3 Council Plan Connect 2022 to 2027 - Quarter 2 Progress Report 2023/2024

A report dated 9 November 2023 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the progress of 'Connect', the Council Plan 2022 to 2027, at the Quarter 2 stage of 2023/2024.

'Connect' detailed the Council's vision, values, priorities and outcomes to be delivered in the 5 year period of the Plan. Progress made on 'Connect' outcomes was summarised in the report. Of the 68 measures nominated for reporting against the Plan:-

- ◆ 3 projects had been completed
- ◆ 44 had met their timescale or target as per expectations
- ◆ 8 had minor slippage against timescale or minor shortfall against target
- ◆ 1 had major slippage against timescale or major shortfall against target
- ◆ 12 were contextual or would be reported on at a later stage

The 'Connect' Performance Report for Quarter 2, 2023/2024, covering the period to the end of September 2023, was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

To aid scrutiny, additional analysis of the measures that had been identified as 'contextual' or 'report later' in the Quarter 4 Progress Report 2022/2023, considered by the Forum at its meeting on 8 August 2023, had been undertaken. Of the 3 measures which had been identified as 'contextual' or 'report later':-

- ◆ 1 was a contextual measure for which figures and narrative had been provided in the Quarter 4 Progress Report 2022/2023 and no further action had been required
- ◆ 1 measure related to the reduction in the Council's carbon emissions achieved by March 2023, for which figures had not been available at 8 August 2023, and had now met its timescale or target as per expectations
- ◆ 1 measure related to the percentage of Council dwellings that were Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing 2 (ESSH2) and remained as 'report later' as the Scottish Government continued to review the ESSH2 standards to realign them with the target for net zero heat in houses from 2045

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council had been forced to suspend or reduce a number of services that could not be continued in full due to government advice. The Council had also been obliged to redirect resources so that it could deliver vital new services and supports for individuals, communities and businesses and, despite the return of services through the Council's Recovery Plan, there remained an inevitable impact on performance in some areas.

On a point raised regarding the Child Poverty Commitment, officers undertook to provide the information requested to the members.

#### **The Forum decided:**

- (1) that the 'Connect' Quarter 2 Progress Report 2023/2024, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the progress and key achievements made in terms of the reporting measures contained in 'Connect', as detailed in the report, be noted; and
- (3) that the additional scrutiny of the updated status of those measures identified as 'contextual' or 'report later' in the 'Connect' Quarter 4 Progress Report 2022/2023, as summarised in the report and detailed at Appendix 2 of the report, be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 8 August 2023 (Paragraph 3)]*

---

#### **4 Resource Plans – Red and Amber Results at Quarter 2, 2023/2024**

A report dated 9 October 2023 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on performance measures where results at Quarter 2, 2023/2024 had been recorded as either 'red' (there had been major slippage against timescale or major shortfall against target) or 'amber' (there had been minor slippage against timescale or minor shortfall against target).

Across all Resources, 28 out of 272 measures relating to Council priorities had a status of 'amber' and 1 had a status of 'red'. The remaining 243 measures (89%) had a status of 'blue' (project completed), 'green' (the timescale or target had been met in line with expectations) or 'report later' (the information was not yet available to allow officers to say whether the target had been reached or not but would be reported when available).

For 2023/2024, there had been an increase in the number of 'red' and 'amber' measures reported in comparison to the previous year. This was due, in part, to a continuing and comprehensive review of measures and targets which had resulted in greater clarity when assigning measures with the appropriate status.

An explanation on progress to date, the circumstances which had determined the 'red' or 'amber' status, including unforeseen changes in timescales, circumstances, or work being underway but not yet complete, and progress updates providing revised timescales for completion, where relevant, as well as management actions, were provided in Appendix 1 to the report.

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

On points raised regarding the percentage of reports being submitted to the Children's Reporter within timescale and the number of road casualties in South Lanarkshire during 2023, officers undertook to provide the information requested to the members.

**The Forum decided:** that the report be noted.

---

## **5 Urgent Business**

---

There were no items of urgent business.



# Report

**3**

Report to:	<b>Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>19 March 2024</b>
Report by:	<b>Chief Executive</b>

Subject:	<b>Scottish Household Survey Key Findings</b>
----------	---

## **1. Purpose of Report**

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ provide a summary of the key findings from the Scottish Household Survey which was published in December 2023

## **2. Recommendation(s)**

2.1. The Forum is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the contents of the report be noted.

## **3. Background**

3.1. The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) is an annual survey of the general population in Scotland, carried out since 1999. It aims to collect reliable and up-to-date information on a range of topics, through a random sample of people in private residences. It is a voluntary and interviewer-led survey.

3.2. This report presents key findings from the latest survey relating to 2022, which were published in December 2023.

## **4. The SHS**

4.1. In 2022, the SHS was carried out as a face-to-face interview, primarily administered in people's homes. This represents a return to the traditional methodology after the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted the 2020 and 2021 survey years and necessitated a change in approach.

4.2. Around 10,500 households across Scotland were interviewed for the SHS 2022 survey, between 11 March 2022 and 6 March 2023. This represents 0.4% of the total Scottish households in 2022. Response rates were lower than they had been pre-pandemic (2019 and earlier), however, the SHS states that these differences are unlikely to have a significant impact on the reported results, and the 2022 results are broadly comparable to 2019 and earlier years.

4.3. The report notes, however, that questions which relate to social contact and aspects of community life that were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic may have been affected by the repercussions of the pandemic, including changes to work, recreation, commerce, the design of public services, community social infrastructure, public transport and more. It is important to bear this in mind when considering the results.

- 4.4. In South Lanarkshire, around 450 households participated in the survey, around 0.3% of the total in 2022.
- 4.5. Section 5 below summarises key findings for Scotland as a whole, with a focus on those relevant to local government. Section 6 looks at survey responses from South Lanarkshire, while appendix 1 gives selected data for South Lanarkshire relative to Scotland.

## **5. Key Findings - Scotland**

### **Housing**

- 5.1. For social rented properties (local authority and housing association properties):-
- ◆ Almost half (49%) of local authority properties and over six in 10 (62%) of housing association properties were flats.
  - ◆ Over four in 10 (43%) of local authority properties and over half (53%) of housing association homes were in the 20% most deprived areas.
  - ◆ Around six in 10 adults were not in employment (57% for local authority households and 56% for housing association households). The proportion of adults in social rented properties who were permanently sick or disabled was higher than those in all other tenure types (15% of social rented properties compared to between one and 4% in other tenures), and a further 7% were unemployed and seeking work.
  - ◆ 24% of social rented households stated that they manage well financially, a figure lower than all other tenures. 7% reported to have had difficulty paying the rent in the last 12 months.
  - ◆ Almost six in 10 adults stated that they would prefer to remain in social rented accommodation (58%). Around a third (34%) would most like to live in owner occupier accommodation.
- 5.2. Around one in 10 (11%) of households living in a social rented property in 2022 were on a housing list to move to another social rented property. A further 2% of social rented households had applied for social housing using a choice based letting system or similar within the last year.
- 5.3. Of the households on a housing list in 2022, around two thirds (65%) were on a single list and over half (53%) had been on a housing list for three years or less.
- 5.4. For social rented households on a housing list to move to another social rented property, the main reported reasons were to move to a bigger or smaller property (32%), to move to a different area due to anti-social or safety concerns (11%), and to move to a property with ground floor access (10%). For private rented households on a housing list, the main reasons were that they could not afford current housing or would like cheaper housing (24%), to move to a bigger or smaller property (15%), to move to a better area (12%), and being threatened with homelessness (12%).
- 5.5. Around nine in 10 households (91%) reported that they were very or fairly satisfied with their housing in 2022, with 51% being very satisfied and 39% being fairly satisfied, similar proportions to 2019.
- 5.6. Over nine in ten households (95%) rated their neighbourhood as either a very or fairly good place to live, with 88% of social rented households responding with this rating, compared to 95% of private rented households and 97% of owner occupier households.

## **Neighbourhoods and Communities**

- 5.7. The majority of adults (57%) rated their neighbourhood as a 'very good' place to live. This has increased over the last ten years from 55% in 2012. Over nine in 10 adults (95%) rated their neighbourhood as a 'very good' or 'fairly good' place to live in 2022, an increase from 94% in 2012.
- 5.8. Neighbourhood ratings varied by area deprivation. Adults in the 20% least deprived areas were more likely to rate their neighbourhood as a 'very good' place to live than those in the 20% most deprived areas (77% in the least deprived areas, and 29% in the most deprived areas). This gap has remained stable over the past ten years.
- 5.9. In 2022, people were more positive about the people-based features of their neighbourhood (such as kindness and trust), and less positive about the physical aspects of their neighbourhoods (such as the availability of places to socialise and meet new people). In 2022, 87% agreed with the statement "this is a neighbourhood where people are kind to each other" (this has maintained from 2019), 82% agreed "this is a neighbourhood where most people can be trusted" (an increase from 79% in 2019), and 57% agreed "there are places where people can meet up and socialise" (the same as 2019).
- 5.10. In the 20% most deprived areas, over two-thirds (68%) agreed "this is a neighbourhood where people from different backgrounds get on well together", an increase from 57% in 2019. There was higher agreement in the least deprived areas, with 79% agreeing with this statement (this figure has maintained since 2019).
- 5.11. In 2022, 87% of adults agreed that "If I was alone and needed help, I could rely on someone in this neighbourhood to help me", an increase from 85% in 2019. Nine-in-ten (91%) agreed that "In an emergency, such as a flood, I would offer to help people in my neighbourhood who might not be able to cope well" and 81% agreed with the statement "I feel I could turn to someone in this neighbourhood for advice or support".
- 5.12. Nearly a quarter of adults living in Scotland (23%) experienced feelings of loneliness in the last week, an increase from 21% in 2018. Those aged 75 or older reported the highest levels of loneliness, with 29% experiencing loneliness over the last week. Those living in the 20% most deprived areas were almost twice as likely to experience feelings of loneliness (30%) as those living in the 20% least deprived areas (16%). Disabled people, single pensioners, single adults and single parents were also more likely to experience loneliness in the last week compared to adults from other household types.
- 5.13. Since 2019, problems with rubbish and litter, and with vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property, have increased, particularly for social and private renters and those living in the most deprived areas.
- 5.14. The majority of people (81%) said they felt 'very' or 'fairly safe' walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark, a decrease from 83% in 2019. There are differences by gender, with 91% of men saying they would feel 'very' or 'fairly safe' walking alone after dark, compared to 72% of women.

## **Finance**

- 5.15. Historically, the proportion of households reporting they were managing well financially had been increasing, from 42% in 1999 to 56% in 2019. The most recent figures, for 2022, show a drop since 2019, with 50% of households reporting they were managing well financially.

- 5.16. Of households with a net annual household income over £30,000, 60% reported that they were managing well in 2022, and 5% said that they did not manage well. The proportion of households with a net annual household income up to £10,000 reporting that they managed well was 31%, with nearly one in five (21%) saying they did not manage well – over twice the overall Scottish average of 9%.
- 5.17. As in previous years, single parent and single adult households were the most likely to report that they were not managing well financially (26% and 15% respectively), compared to the Scotland average of 9%.
- 5.18. Of the different household tenures, owner occupiers were most likely to report they were managing well financially: 61%, compared to 24% for households in the social rented sector.
- 5.19. Households relying mainly on benefits (including the state pension) were the most likely to say they were not managing well financially (17%), compared to households relying on earnings (7%). Where households relied on other sources of income (including occupational pension and other investments), 3% reported that they were not managing well financially.
- 5.20. Households where the highest income householder (HIH) were male were more likely to say they managed well financially compared to those where the HIH was female (54% and 46% respectively).

### **Physical Activity and Sport**

- 5.21. More than eight in ten (82%) adults had taken part in physical activity and sport in the previous four weeks. The percentage of adults taking part in physical activity and sport has increased slightly since 2019 when 80% of adults participated in physical activity and sport.
- 5.22. Recreational walking (for at least 30 minutes) was the most common type of physical activity with just under three quarters (74%) of adults reporting doing this in the past four weeks. This has increased from 68% in 2019. Excluding walking, just over half (51%) of the adult population participated in physical activity and sport in the previous four weeks, this has decreased slightly from 54% in 2019.
- 5.23. Participation rates in physical activity and sport (including recreational walking) were higher among men than women (84% and 80% respectively). Participation in physical activity and sport declined with age – 91% for those aged 16 to 34, 86% for those aged 35 to 59 and 70% for those aged 60 and over.
- 5.24. There was a 20% difference in participation in physical activity and sport (including recreational walking) between those living in the most deprived areas and the least deprived areas. Of those living in the most deprived areas, 70% participated in physical activity and sport (including recreational walking) compared to 90% for those living in the least deprived areas.
- 5.25. Satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities among all respondents (including non-users) was 42%, a slight decrease from 44% in 2019. For those who used sports and leisure facilities, 83% of people were satisfied with them in the last 12 months, consistent with results from 2019.

- 5.26. In 2022, 40% of adults were satisfied with the quality of all three of the main public services (local health services, schools and public transport). This represents a decrease of 13 percentage points in the overall satisfaction of public services compared to the year 2019, when 53% of adults were satisfied. This indicates that satisfaction with public services was generally higher prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 5.27. Satisfaction for each of the individual public services has also decreased since 2019. In 2022, 64% of adults were satisfied with local health services; 69% of adults were satisfied with local schools; and 58% of adults were satisfied with public transport. In 2019, 80% of adults were satisfied with local health services, 73% of adults were satisfied with local schools; and 68% of adults were satisfied with public transport.
- 5.28. In 2022, service users were more satisfied with local schools and public transport than the whole adult population, but there was no difference in satisfaction with local health services between service users and non-users.
- 5.29. For local schools, 85% of service users reported being satisfied with the quality of the service. For public transport, 67% of service users reported being satisfied with the quality of the service. For local health services, 63% of service users were satisfied.
- 5.30. In 2022, 43% of respondents agreed that their local council does the best it can with the money available; 35% of respondents agreed that their local council is good at letting people know about what services it provides; and 31% of respondents agreed that their local council designs its services around the needs of the people who use them.
- 5.31. Respondents aged 16 to 24 were less likely than adults aged 75 and over to agree that their local council does the best it can with the money available (39% compared to 49%); that their local council is addressing the key issues affecting the quality of life in their neighbourhood (29% compared to 37%); and that their local council is good at letting people know how well it is performing (20% compared to 33%).
- 5.32. Less than one in five adults (18%) felt they could influence decisions affecting their local area. At the same time, nearly one in three adults (33%) want to be more involved in the decisions their council make that affect their local area.

### **Climate Change**

- 5.33. There has been an increase in the proportion of adults viewing climate change as an immediate and urgent problem, from 68% in 2019 to 74% in 2022.
- 5.34. By age group, the largest increases were amongst those aged 25-34, increasing from 67% in 2019 to 78% in 2022 and those aged 75+, increasing from 56% to 65% over the same period. The lowest proportions for all age groups were for those aged 16-24 (60%) and 75+ (65%).
- 5.35. In 2022, 70% of adults visited the outdoors at least once a week, a substantial increase from 56% in 2019.
- 5.36. The proportion of adults visiting the outdoors at least weekly in 2022 was lower for older age groups (50% for those age 75+ compared to 78% for those age 25-34). For all age categories 16-59 the proportion was more than 70%.

- 5.37. Adults living in the 20% most deprived areas were less likely to have visited the outdoors at least weekly (56%) compared to those in the 20% least deprived areas (77%). For the 20% most deprived areas, this was an increase from 43% in 2019 and for the 20% least deprived areas the proportion increased from 66% in 2019.
- 5.38. Adults in the 20% most deprived areas were also more likely not to have visited the outdoors at all in 2022 (15%) than those in the 20% least deprived areas (3%).

## **Other Findings**

### Internet Access

- 5.39. The proportion of households in Scotland with internet access was at a record high of 91% in 2022, an increase on 2019 (88%). Household internet access increased with net annual household income. Home internet access for households with a net annual income of between £6,001 and £10,000 was 69% in 2022, compared with almost all households (99%) with a net annual income of over £40,000.
- 5.40. Almost all (98%) adults who use the internet access it at home, and 67% access the internet on the move using a mobile phone or tablet. Younger internet users were more likely to access the internet using a smartphone than older users, with 99% of 16-34 year olds using smartphones compared with 75% of adults aged 60+. Older internet users were more likely than younger users to use a tablet to access the internet.

### Volunteering

- 5.41. In the last year, 46% of respondents had taken part in volunteering of any kind (formal or informal).
- 5.42. The percentage of respondents who said that they had undertaken formal volunteering had dropped since 2019, when 26% of respondents said they had done so.
- 5.43. For informal volunteering, the last year for which comparable data are available is 2018, when 22% of respondents said they did informal volunteering only and 14% said they did both formal and informal volunteering.
- 5.44. The most common type of formal volunteering was with organisations working on 'local community and neighbourhood' issues (27% of adults). This is an increase from 2019 when 22% of adults did this. In 2022, 'Youth or children's activities outside school' was the second most popular type of volunteering (21%).
- 5.45. Similar percentages of respondents said they had volunteered for organisations working on 'Health, disability and wellbeing' (15%), 'Hobbies and recreation' (15%), and 'Physical activity, sport and exercise' (15%). The proportion of respondents who said they volunteered with 'children's education and schools' had dropped from 19% in 2019 to 14% in 2022.
- 5.46. 79% of respondents who said they had not done any formal volunteering in the past 12 months said that nothing would encourage them to do this in the future. For those who identified any reasons that would encourage them to volunteer, the most common reasons given were if they knew how their time and skills could help others (8%); and availability of information on roles and how to get started (6%).

### Culture and Heritage

- 5.47. 2022 data shows that 88% of adults had been culturally engaged in the last year, either by attending a cultural event or place of culture or participating in a cultural activity. This figure has decreased from 90% in 2019.
- 5.48. In 2022, the cinema (49% of adults) or a live music event (32% of adults) were the most common cultural events or places of culture to attend. Attendance at all events and places was lower in 2022 than 2019 apart from streaming of a live performance which has maintained (8%).
- 5.49. In 2022, just under nine out of ten users were satisfied with local authority libraries (89%), museums and galleries (87%), and theatres and concert halls (85%). Satisfaction with libraries and museums and galleries have maintained since 2019. Satisfaction with theatres and concert halls has decreased from 89% in 2019 to 85% in 2022.
- 5.50. Satisfaction levels for 'all adults' are generally lower than among service users. This is because non-service users are included, who may express no opinion about the service.

### Childcare

- 5.51. In 2022, the most common forms of childcare used were a local authority nursery and a private nursery, used by 39% and 28% of households respectively. A further 22% used a relative or friend for childcare. 5% used a childminder, a decrease from 10% in 2018. 18% of households used no childcare, the same as in 2018 and 2019.
- 5.52. The most common reason given for using childcare was so that parents/carers can work (72%), which was also the most common reason in 2018 and 2019. The next most common reasons were for the child's social development (25%) and for the child's learning and language development (21%) (respondents could choose more than one reason).
- 5.53. Across the full year, 46% of households receiving funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) used the full entitlement of 1,140 hours, with 39% using less than this. The remaining 15% did not know how many hours they used annually.
- 5.54. Of households using funded ELC, 93% were either very or fairly satisfied with it, broadly the same as in 2019 (91%). Only 1% of households were dissatisfied with the funded ELC they received.
- 5.55. All households with at least one child aged up to eleven years old were asked how easy or difficult they found it to afford childcare. More than half said that they found it easy (16%) or very easy (37%) to afford childcare, with a further quarter (24%) stating they found it neither easy nor difficult. However, 9% of households said they found it difficult to afford childcare, and 5% found it very difficult.

### Trust in Institutions

- 5.56. The institutions that respondents were most likely to express trust in were the Health System (79%) and the Police (78%). Respondents were most likely to express distrust in the Scottish Government (38%) and Local Government (32%). Respondents were least likely to express distrust in the Education system (15%) and the Police (14%).

## 6. SHS Results - South Lanarkshire

- 6.1. As noted at 4.4 above, around 450 households were sampled within South Lanarkshire. This is approximately 0.3% of the total.
- 6.2. For most of the data items there is a local authority breakdown, and in many cases a further breakdown by, e.g., deprivation or housing tenure etc. Some data items such as childcare are only available at the Scotland level.
- 6.3. In terms of housing, South Lanarkshire has a higher proportion of owner-occupied houses (70%) compared with Scotland (65%) and a correspondingly lower proportion of social and private rented houses (South Lanarkshire: 20% social and 10% private; Scotland: 22% social and 13% private). However, South Lanarkshire has a considerably higher percentage of local authority rented properties (17%) than the Scottish average (12%).
- 6.4. A slightly higher percentage of local authority tenants rate their neighbourhood as a very good or fairly good place to live (89%) than the Scottish average (87%), though the % describing their neighbourhood as “very good” is lower in South Lanarkshire (33% vs 39% for Scotland).
- 6.5. Overall, residents (all households, not just local authority(LA)) rated their neighbourhood more highly than the Scottish average across a number of “strengths”:-

	Scotland	SLC
People are kind to each other	87%	93%
Most people can be trusted	82%	86%
Welcoming places and opportunities to meet new people	53%	54%
There are places where people can meet up and socialise	57%	63%
People from different backgrounds get on well together	74%	75%
Local people take action to help improve the neighbourhood	64%	65%

- 6.6. The sense of community was also found to be higher in South Lanarkshire than Scotland as a whole, with 45% of households feeling “very strongly” that they belonged to the community compared with 38% nationally. This was further demonstrated by the proportion of people who agreed with statements about people in the neighbourhood helping each other:-

	Scotland	SLC
I could rely on someone in this neighbourhood to help me	87%	93%
I could count on someone to keep an eye on my home	87%	94%
I feel I could turn to someone for advice or support	81%	83%
I would offer to help people who might not be able to cope well	91%	96%

- 6.7. The great majority of households in South Lanarkshire perceived their neighbourhood as very or fairly safe (78%), however, the % was slightly lower than for Scotland as a whole (81%).
- 6.8. When asked about problems in their neighbourhood, the most commonly experienced issue was “rubbish or litter” (34% for Scotland vs 35% South Lanarkshire), followed by “animal nuisance such as noise or dog fouling” (31% Scotland vs 28% South Lanarkshire Council (SLC)).

- 6.9. A lower % of households said they were managing well financially (45%) than in Scotland as a whole (50%), with a correspondingly higher proportion agreeing that they could “get by” on their income (46% SLC vs 41% Scotland).
- 6.10. In relation to climate change, a majority of households (71%) agree that climate change is an immediate and urgent problem, however, this is slightly lower than the Scottish average of 74%. South Lanarkshire households are more likely to doubt that climate change is happening than the Scottish average (9% SLC vs 5% Scotland) or to class themselves as “don’t know” (8% SLC vs 5% Scotland) on the issue.
- 6.11. Participation in physical activity is broadly comparable with the Scottish average, with 83% of South Lanarkshire households having engaged in physical activity (including walking) compared with 82% nationally. A closer analysis shows that while cycling is less prevalent in South Lanarkshire (7% vs 12%), swimming (16% vs 14%), keep fit/aerobics (18% vs 13%), and gym use (19% vs 16%) are more likely to be undertaken in South Lanarkshire. That these activities typically take place within a sports centre setting may indicate that South Lanarkshire residents are relatively well served in this respect compared with Scotland overall.
- 6.12. Attendance at cultural events in South Lanarkshire is in line with the Scottish average (74%).
- 6.13. South Lanarkshire residents express lower satisfaction with a range of public services than elsewhere in Scotland. This includes local health services (57% vs 64%), schools (66% vs 69%) and public transport (54% vs 58%). These are the views of all households, irrespective of whether they have used a service or not. In terms of education services, when service users are asked about their satisfaction with local schools, the SLC rate is higher than the Scottish average (88% SLC vs 85% Scotland).
- 6.14. In terms of respondents’ satisfaction with specific council services and facilities, the SHS paints a broadly positive picture for South Lanarkshire, with services generally achieving higher satisfaction ratings than the Scottish average. When all respondents are asked their opinion of specific services (regardless of whether they have used those services recently), SLC approval rates are higher than Scottish equivalents, particularly for “sport and leisure facilities” and “parks and open spaces”, where SLC scores higher by more than 10 percentage points. When the question is put to service users only (those who have used the service in the last 12 months), SLC continues to score higher than Scotland except for “museums and galleries” and “community centres and facilities”, where satisfaction is marginally lower (by one percentage point) than the Scottish average.

Percentage of respondents “Satisfied” or “Fairly satisfied”

	All respondents		Service users	
	Scotland	SLC	Scotland	SLC
Sport and leisure facilities	41%	53%	83%	85%
Libraries	37%	41%	89%	90%
Museums and galleries	38%	44%	87%	86%
Theatres and concert halls	38%	49%	86%	95%
Parks and open spaces	72%	78%	86%	86%
Community centres and facilities	26%	32%	76%	75%

- 6.15. South Lanarkshire residents expressed more positive views about their local council than the Scottish average, as illustrated by the percentage agreeing with the following statements, which across the board are more favourable in South Lanarkshire:

My local council....

	Scotland	SLC
... provides high quality services	42%	46%
... does the best it can with the money available	43%	48%
... is addressing key issues affecting quality of life in my neighbourhood	33%	40%
... is good at listening to people's views before taking decisions	24%	26%
... designs its services around the needs of the people who use them	31%	36%
... is good at letting local people know how well it is performing	27%	32%
... is good at letting people know about what services it provides	35%	43%
I can influence decisions affecting my local area	18%	20%
I would like to be more involved in the decisions my council makes	33%	26%

- 6.16. Trust in institutions is generally within a few percentage points of the Scottish average, however, there are some notable variations. In South Lanarkshire, 63% of households “trust or tend to trust” Local Government, compared with 59% in Scotland. Trust is also higher in the education system (72% vs 68%), the police (80% vs 78%) and the justice system (66% vs 65%), however, lower for the Scottish Government (53% vs 55%) and the health system (77% vs 79%).
- 6.17. With regard to trust in local government in particular, levels of trust decrease with age-group, both for Scotland overall and within South Lanarkshire:-

Age-group	Scotland	SLC
16 to 34	62%	72%
35 to 59	59%	62%
60 or over	57%	58%
All	59%	63%

## 7. Next Steps and Recommendations

- 7.1. The SHS is a key source of information about behaviours and attitudes among Scotland’s population. As well as contributing to high-profile initiatives such as the LGBF and the National Performance Framework, it is a useful data set which offers insights at a local authority level.
- 7.2. This report necessarily focuses on summary findings and an overview of the results for South Lanarkshire. Resources should examine the SHS findings to assess specific relevance to and implications for their own services.

## 8. Employee Implications

- 8.1. There are no direct employee implications.

## 9. Financial Implications

- 9.1. There are no direct financial implications.

## 10. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 10.1. There are no direct climate change, sustainability and natural environment implications arising from this report.

## **11. Other Implications**

- 11.1. Considering the detail of the report and identifying actions as appropriate contribute towards effective risk management.

## **12. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 12.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and therefore no impact assessment is required.
- 12.2. Consultation was not required to inform the contents of this report, however, the information will be shared with the Corporate Improvement Advisory Board and Resources are advised to look at the SHS results where relevant to their services.

**Paul Manning**  
**Chief Executive**

29 February 2024

### **Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes**

- Promote Performance Management and Improvement

### **Previous References**

- None

### **List of Background Papers**

- None

### **Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Tom Little, Head of Communications and Strategy

Ext: 4904 (Tel: 01698 454904)

E-mail: [Tom.Little@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:Tom.Little@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

### Appendix 1 – selected statistics for South Lanarkshire Council vs Scotland

Housing Tenure	Scotland	SLC
Owner occupied	65%	70%
Owner occupied - owned outright	36%	38%
Owner occupied - buying with loan/mortgage	28%	32%
Social rented	22%	20%
Social rented - local authority	12%	17%
Social rented - housing assoc./co-op/char. trust	9%	3%
Private rented	13%	10%
Private rented - private landlord	11%	9%
Private rented - rented from family/friends/employer	2%	1%
Other	1%	0%
All	100%	100%

Number of bedrooms	Scotland	SLC
1 bedroom	12%	9%
2 bedrooms	34%	37%
3 bedrooms	36%	36%
4 or more bedrooms	19%	19%
All	100%	100%

Number of people in household	Scotland	SLC
1 person	35%	35%
2 people	36%	36%
3 people	14%	14%
4 or more people	15%	16%
All	100%	100%

Household type	Scotland	SLC
----------------	----------	-----

Single adult	22%	21%
Small adult	19%	17%
Single parent	5%	6%
Small family	12%	13%
Large family	5%	6%
Large adult	9%	9%
Older smaller	14%	16%
Single pensioner	15%	14%
All	100%	100%

Net household income	Scotland	SLC
Up to £6,000	2%	0%
£6,001 to £10,000	5%	6%
£10,001 to £15,000	10%	9%
£15,001 to £20,000	14%	14%
£20,001 to £25,000	12%	13%
£25,001 to £30,000	10%	10%
£30,001 to £35,000	7%	7%
£35,001 to £40,000	7%	9%
£40,001 to £50,000	11%	11%
£50,001 to £60,000	8%	9%
£60,001 to £70,000	4%	4%
£70,001 to £80,000	3%	1%
£80,001 or more	3%	2%
Unknown or low	5%	3%
All	100%	100%

Rating of neighbourhood as a place to live (LA tenants only)	Scotland	SLC
Very good	39%	33%

Fairly good	48%	56%
Fairly poor	9%	10%
Very poor	4%	1%
No opinion	0%	0%
All	100%	100%

Rating of neighbourhood as a place to live	Scotland	SLC
Very/fairly good	95%	97%
Very good	57%	55%
Fairly good	38%	41%
Fairly poor	4%	3%
Very poor	1%	1%
No opinion	0%	0%
All	100%	100%

Neighbourhood strengths - agree or strongly agree	Scotland	SLC
People are kind to each other	87%	93%
Most people can be trusted	82%	86%
There are welcoming places and opportunities to meet new people	53%	54%
There are places where people can meet up and socialise	57%	63%
People from different backgrounds get on well together	74%	75%
Local people take action to help improve the neighbourhood	64%	65%

Strength of feeling of belonging to community	Scotland	SLC
Very strongly	38%	43%
Fairly strongly	45%	45%
Not very strongly	13%	10%
Not at all strongly	4%	3%
Don't know	1%	0%
All	100%	100%

Involvement with other adults in neighbourhood	Scotland	SLC
I could rely on someone in this neighbourhood to help me	87%	93%
I could count on someone in this neighbourhood to keep an eye on my home	87%	94%
I feel I could turn to someone in this neighbourhood for advice or support	81%	83%
I would offer to help people in my neighbourhood who might not be able to cope well	91%	96%

Perceptions of neighbourhood safety	Scotland	SLC
Very/Fairly safe	81%	78%
Very/A bit unsafe	14%	19%
Dont Know	1%	1%
Not applicable	4%	3%
All	100%	100%

Neighbourhood problems	Scotland	SLC
Noisy neighbours or regular loud parties	10%	8%
Vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property	10%	10%
Rubbish or litter lying around	34%	35%
Neighbour disputes	7%	8%
Groups or individuals intimidating or harassing others	7%	6%
Drug misuse or dealing	15%	12%
Rowdy behaviour e.g. drunkenness, hooliganism or loutish behaviour	11%	8%
Abandoned or burnt out vehicles	2%	3%
Animal nuisance such as noise or dog fouling	31%	28%
Any of the above	52%	54%
None of the above	48%	46%

How the household is managing financially	Scotland	SLC
Manages well	50%	45%
Gets by	41%	46%

Does not manage well	9%	8%
All	100%	100%

Methods used to access the internet for personal use	Scotland	SLC
A personal computer or laptop	74%	66%
Digital, cable or satellite television	40%	38%
Mobile phone, for example iPhone / Smartphone	92%	93%
A games console, for example Playstation / xBox	19%	19%
A tablet - iPad/Playbook or similar	54%	61%
Another way	0%	2%
Any excluding a personal computer or laptop	95%	97%

Where the internet is accessed for personal use	Scotland	SLC
At home	98%	96%
At another person's home	10%	11%
At work	30%	32%
School, college, university, other educational institution	6%	11%
A government/council office	1%	3%
Community or voluntary centre/organisation	1%	1%
On the move via a mobile phone/smartphone/tablet	67%	76%
Public library	2%	2%
Somewhere else	7%	4%
Don't know	0%	0%

Participation in physical activity and sport	Scotland	SLC
Walking (at least 30 minutes for recreational purposes)	74%	78%
Swimming	14%	16%
Football	6%	7%
Cycling (at least 30 minutes for recreational purposes)	12%	7%
Keep Fit /Aerobics	13%	18%
Multigym use / Weight Training	16%	19%

Golf	6%	7%
Running / jogging	12%	12%
Snooker / Billiards / Pool	3%	2%
Dancing	6%	7%
Bowls	2%	3%
Other	11%	9%
None of these	18%	17%
Any including walking	82%	83%
Any excluding walking	51%	53%

Use of local authority sport and leisure facilities	Scotland	SLC
Have used in the past year	29%	30%
Not used in the past year	35%	42%
Never used	36%	27%
Don't know	1%	1%
All	100%	100%

Satisfaction with local health services, all households	Scotland	SLC
Satisfied	64%	57%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10%	8%
Dissatisfied	26%	35%
All	100%	100%

Satisfaction with quality of local schools, all households	Scotland	SLC
Satisfied	69%	66%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	24%	31%
Dissatisfied	7%	2%
All	100%	100%

Satisfaction with quality of local schools, service users only	Scotland	SLC
Satisfied	85%	88%

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	7%	8%
Dissatisfied	9%	4%
All	100%	100%
<hr/>		
Satisfaction with quality of public transport, all households	Scotland	SLC
Satisfied	58%	54%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	19%	20%
Dissatisfied	23%	27%
All	100%	100%
<hr/>		
Perceptions of climate change as a problem	Scotland	SLC
Climate change is an immediate and urgent problem	74%	71%
Climate change is more of a problem for the future	12%	9%
Climate change is not really a problem	3%	2%
I'm still not convinced that climate change is happening	5%	9%
None of these	2%	1%
Don't know	5%	8%
All	100%	100%
<hr/>		
Attendance at cultural events	Scotland	SLC
Cinema	49%	53%
Library (including mobile and online)	17%	17%
Live music event - e.g. traditional music, rock concert	32%	33%
Theatre - e.g. pantomime / musical / play	24%	26%
Dance show / event - e.g. ballet	6%	9%
Historic place - e.g. castle, stately home and grounds, battle or archaeological site	29%	31%
Museum	26%	26%
Art gallery	18%	14%
Exhibition - including art, photography and crafts	12%	9%
Street arts (e.g. musical performances or art in parks, streets or shopping centre)	10%	9%
Culturally specific festival (e.g. Mela /Feis/ local Gala days)	5%	3%

Book festival	3%	2%
Archive or records office (e.g. Scotland's Family History Peoples Centre)	1%	1%
Streaming of a live performance (e.g. theatre, dance, concert or comedy performance)	8%	9%
Classical music performance	5%	6%
Opera	2%	2%
Comedy performance	10%	8%
None	27%	26%
Any excluding cinema	65%	64%
Any including cinema	74%	74%

View of local council	Scotland	SLC
Council provides high quality services	42%	46%
Council does the best it can with the money available	43%	48%
Council is addressing key issues affecting quality of life in my neighbourhood	33%	40%
Council is good at listening to local people's views before it takes decisions	24%	26%
Designs its services around the needs of the people who use them	31%	36%
Is good at letting local people know how well it is performing	27%	32%
My local council is good at letting people know about what services it provides	35%	43%
I can influence decisions affecting my local area	18%	20%
I would like to be more involved in the decisions my council makes for my local area	33%	26%

Trust in institutions	Scotland	SLC
The Scottish Government	55%	53%
Local Government	59%	63%
The Civil Service	62%	63%
The Education System	68%	72%
The Health System	79%	77%
The Police	78%	80%
The Justice System which includes courts, lawyers and prisons	65%	66%

Trust in local government by age	Scotland	SLC
----------------------------------	----------	-----

16 to 34	62%	72%
35 to 59	59%	62%
60 or over	57%	58%
All	59%	63%

**Satisfaction with specific local authority services, 2022**  
**All respondents, including those who have not used the service recently.**

Sports and Leisure Facilities	SLC	Scotland
Very satisfied	17%	13%
Fairly satisfied	36%	28%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13%	16%
Fairly dissatisfied	6%	4%
Very dissatisfied	3%	3%
No opinion	25%	36%
All	100%	100%

Libraries	SLC	Scotland
Very satisfied	16%	14%
Fairly satisfied	25%	23%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	18%	18%
Fairly dissatisfied	3%	2%
Very dissatisfied	2%	2%
No opinion	36%	42%
All	100%	100%

Museum and Galleries	SLC	Scotland
Very satisfied	25%	15%
Fairly satisfied	19%	23%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	20%	18%
Fairly dissatisfied	1%	1%
Very dissatisfied	1%	1%
No opinion	34%	41%
All	100%	100%

Theatres and Concert Halls		SLC	Scotland
	Very satisfied	25%	14%
	Fairly satisfied	24%	24%
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	17%	18%
	Fairly dissatisfied	1%	1%
	Very dissatisfied	0%	1%
	No opinion	32%	41%
	All	100%	100%
Parks and Open Spaces		SLC	Scotland
	Very satisfied	33%	30%
	Fairly satisfied	45%	42%
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8%	9%
	Fairly dissatisfied	6%	4%
	Very dissatisfied	2%	2%
	No opinion	8%	13%
	All	100%	100%
Community Centres and Facilities		SLC	Scotland
	Very satisfied	10%	8%
	Fairly satisfied	22%	18%
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	22%	21%
	Fairly dissatisfied	4%	2%
	Very dissatisfied	2%	2%
	No opinion	41%	50%
	All	100%	100%

## Satisfaction with local authority services, 2022

Users who have said they have used services recently (within the last 12 months).

Sports and Leisure Facilities	SLC	Scotland
Very satisfied	24%	30%
Fairly satisfied	61%	53%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4%	7%
Fairly dissatisfied	10%	6%
Very dissatisfied	1%	3%
No opinion	-	1%
All	100	100%
Libraries	SLC	Scotland
Very satisfied	38%	42%
Fairly satisfied	52%	47%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3%	6%
Fairly dissatisfied	4%	3%
Very dissatisfied	-	-
No opinion	3%	2%
All	100%	100%
Museum and Galleries	SLC	Scotland
Very satisfied	56%	42%
Fairly satisfied	30%	45%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10%	9%
Fairly dissatisfied	2%	1%
Very dissatisfied	-	-
No opinion	1%	3%
All	100%	100%

Theatres and Concert Halls	SLC	Scotland
Very satisfied	53%	36%
Fairly satisfied	42%	50%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2%	9%
Fairly dissatisfied	1%	1%
Very dissatisfied	-	1%
No opinion	1%	4%
All	100%	100%
Parks and Open Spaces	SLC	Scotland
Very satisfied	37%	37%
Fairly satisfied	49%	49%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	5%	6%
Fairly dissatisfied	6%	5%
Very dissatisfied	2%	2%
No opinion	1%	1%
All	100%	100%
Community Centres and Facilities	SLC	Scotland
Very satisfied	27%	27%
Fairly satisfied	48%	49%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	16%	15%
Fairly dissatisfied	3%	4%
Very dissatisfied	3%	1%
No opinion	3%	5%
All	100%	100%

# Report

4

Report to:	<b>Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>19 March 2024</b>
Report by:	<b>Chief Executive</b>

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2022/2023 Results and Action Plan</b>
-----------------	--

## 1. Purpose of report

1.1. The purpose of this report is to:-

- provide the Forum with the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) results for 2022/2023
- provide the Forum with explanatory narrative for the suite of indicators, including the proposed actions, where appropriate, being taken to address those LGBF indicators where the results are declining and/or are below the Scottish average
- provide a family group analysis of those LGBF indicators where South Lanarkshire Council's result is below the Scottish average

## 2. Recommendations

2.1. The Forum is asked to approve the following recommendations:-

- (1) that the importance of viewing LGBF measures in the local context, as detailed in the limitations and cautions section below (paragraphs 4.1 to 4.4) be noted;
- (2) that the results, narrative, actions and family group analysis included, following the scrutiny of the 2022/2023 results, be noted; and
- (3) that the arrangements for the publication of South Lanarkshire Council's results, per the statutory requirements, be noted.

## 3. Background

3.1. The core purpose of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) is to make comparisons on spend/cost, performance and customer satisfaction results over several years and also between similar councils. It comprises a suite of performance indicators, collated under the following service headings:-

- Children's Services
- Corporate Services (ie support services)
- Adult Social Care
- Culture and Leisure Services
- Environmental Services
- Housing Services
- Corporate Assets
- Economic Development
- Climate Change
- Financial Sustainability

- 3.2. These headings represent approximately 70% of local authority spend.
- 3.3. Publication of the LGBF results is a statutory requirement set out by the Accounts Commission in the Direction to local authorities as required by the Local Government Act 1992. It is seen as a key part of councils' commitment to Best Value, public performance reporting (PPR) and continuous improvement.
- 3.4. This report presents the 2022/2023 LGBF results (on a Service by Service basis) and sets out commentary and improvement actions against those indicators. Of particular interest in terms of continuous improvement are those indicators which are declining and/or falling below the Scottish average. The steps and actions identified in the report will not necessarily show immediate improvements - many are long term plans.

#### **4. Interpreting the LGBF Results: Limitations and Cautions**

- 4.1. Although the LGBF results are available for all councils in Scotland – and therefore can be used to construct council league tables – the Local Government Improvement Service cautions against this approach, emphasising that the purpose of the data is to act as a 'can-opener' for discussions about performance and improvement in the context of specific services, taking into account geography, demographics and local council priorities.
- 4.2. Within this report, South Lanarkshire's performance trend for the past 3 years is provided, together with the most recent year's performance relative to the Scottish average. As with the LGBF as a whole, these summary figures are intended to frame a closer examination of the underlying data and context for specific indicators. For this reason, it is necessary to pay close attention to the narrative against each indicator (provided in Appendix 1) when forming a judgement about what the performance means in a South Lanarkshire context.
- 4.3. All statistics require, for correct interpretation, a knowledge of potential limitations. In particular, the following specific points should be borne in mind when reviewing the LGBF results:-
- Local policy decisions can impact on the LGBF results and interpretation of the data. This is particularly true for cost indicators in the LGBF suite, where lower costs are generally equated with good performance. In these instances, where the Council has opted to invest resources (for example in roads maintenance or in the school estate), costs will appear higher than the Scottish average or for comparable councils, and performance may be assessed as 'worse'.
  - A number of satisfaction measures within the LGBF are derived from the Scottish Household Survey (SHS). There are important limitations to this data – which the Council has highlighted for several years now. First, the number sampled is very small relative to the population – in 2022, around 450 households participated in the survey, around 0.3% of the total. Second, survey respondents are asked how satisfied they are with services even if they have not used the service in question. Third, for these indicators, the Council conducts its own surveys of service users so that it can closely monitor and respond to user experiences. These surveys – of people who have used the services – invariably rate the services more highly than the SHS (the results of the SHS telephone survey are not directly comparable to SHS results for previous years. This is due to a reduced sample size and a change in methodology due to the Covid-19 pandemic).

- The figures within the LGBF are the result of a wide range of service provision models and data collection processes carried out in each of Scotland's 32 councils. While the LGBF endeavours to achieve high standards of completeness and consistency, there are inevitably differences between councils and between indicators in terms of what is counted and how it translates into LGBF performance.

- 4.4. These points are not intended to undermine the LGBF results. Rather they serve to emphasise the importance of looking individually at each service and each indicator to understand the local drivers and determinants of performance.
- 4.5. The Local Government Improvement Service (LGIS) hosted their annual learning event on 7 December 2023. The LGIS analyse the LGBF results and identify the key national expenditure and performance trends. The lead benchmarking performance officers from local authorities across Scotland are invited to discuss these findings, and to offer some local insights that may have affected the results. The Local Government Improvement Service uses the information and intelligence gathered to populate their National Overview Report which is published at the same time as the actual results. Key general points emerging from this analysis include:-
  - The pre-Covid improvements continue to slow down. This is unlikely to change as the long-term impact from increasing financial pressures is beginning to show in the results
  - Budget ring-fencing in service areas like social care, education and looked after children creates growing pressure on other services for example culture and leisure, roads, environmental services etc
  - caution must be exercised in interpreting the national trends from the data as they often disguise the variations and complexities in the local picture
  - as a general observation, staff shortages and recruitment challenges continue to affect service provision and associated costs

South Lanarkshire Council specific analysis and narrative is included in the 'comments/progress' column in Appendix 1.

## **5. Results and Key Messages**

- 5.1. The report attached as Appendix 1 summarises the recent results for South Lanarkshire Council, indicating whether performance in 2022/2023 has improved (↑) or declined (↓) compared with 2021/2022 results, and if performance is better (✓) or worse (X) than the Scottish average in 2022/2023. It also includes explanatory narrative for the movements in performance between 2021/2022 and 2022/2023.
- 5.2. The table below summarises South Lanarkshire Council's performance, which should be considered in the context of the Covid 19 legacy.

**Table 1 – Summary of performance of LGBF Results (as at February 2024)**

KEY:		Number (%) of indicators			
		2020-21	2021-22	2021-22 updated	2022-23
<b>South Lanarkshire performance</b>					
↑	improving performance in SLC	36 (38%)	35 (35%)	39 (39%)	45 (45%)
↓	declining performance in SLC	36 (38%)	39 (40%)	53 (54%)	26 (25%)
↔	No change in performance in SLC	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	3 (3%)	3 (3%)
---	Results/trends not available	21 (22%)	22 (22%)	4 (4%)	28 (27%)
<b>Comparison with Scottish average</b>					
✓	SLC results better than Scottish average	37 (39%)	41 (42%)	50 (51%)	38 (38%)
X	SLC results worse than Scottish average	37 (39%)	34 (34%)	43 (43%)	34 (33%)
↔	SLC results same as Scottish average	0 (0%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)
--	Results not available	21 (22%)	22 (22%)	4 (4%)	28 (27%)

2020-21 Results at May 2022 refresh

2021-22 Results at 31 January 2023 (currently on website)

2021-22 updated Results at 29 November 2023

2022-23 Results at February 2024

Note: three new indicators under the Climate change service heading were recommended for inclusion in the LGBF suite in 2022/2023:-

- Emissions from Transport per Capita
  - Emissions from Electricity per Capita
  - Emissions from Natural Gas per Capita
- (data for which is not yet available)

- 5.3. Across the 102 indicators in the 2022/2023 suite, South Lanarkshire Council's performance improved against 45 (45%) indicators, remained the same against 3 (3%) indicators, and declined for 26 (25%) indicators. There are 28 (27%) indicators for which the results or trend information is not yet available for 2022/2023, including home care, cost of looked after children, educational attainment and attendance/exclusions. It is hoped that these results will be available when the 2022/2023 data is refreshed in May 2024.
- 5.4. In terms of South Lanarkshire's figures relative to the Scottish results, performance was better than the Scottish average for 38 (38%) indicators and was worse than the average for 34 (33%) indicators. There are 28 (27%) indicators for which the 2022/2023 results are not yet available.
- 5.5. Following an Audit Scotland recommendation, the Forum (at its meeting on 26 November 2019) agreed to introduce a family group analysis in the annual reporting of the Council's LGBF results. The family group analysis focuses on those indicators where the Council is performing worse than the Scottish average. Based on the 2022/2023 results, this relates to 34 (33%) indicators. This analysis is attached at Appendix 2.

## **6. Publication of the Data**

- 6.1. The 2022/2023 data has been shared on the Local Government Improvement Service interactive LGBF Dashboard - [Explore the data](#). The Local Government Improvement Service published their national overview report on 1 March 2024, which provided a high-level analysis of performance both during 2022/2023 and over the longer term. It also sets out the challenges facing councils in the context of current funding pressures, growing demand, Covid legacy and the cost of living crisis.
- 6.2. At a local level each council is required to publish its own results at the same time as the official publication by the Local Government Improvement Service. As in previous years, the LGBF results information for South Lanarkshire Council will be uploaded on to the Council's website, together with contextual information about and explaining the indicators.

## **7. Next Steps**

- 7.1. The actions identified in the comments column in Appendix 1 will be taken forward.
- 7.2. As noted at 6.1 above, these results are to be considered final, however, a refresh of the data is scheduled to be released by the end of May 2024 following completion of the Scottish Government final validation process on the financial data, and to allow inclusion of the as yet unavailable results. Updates will be made, as appropriate, to the performance data and narrative uploaded onto the Council's website.
- 7.3. The Local Government Improvement Service organise annual benchmarking events, in which colleagues from specific services representing all local authorities are invited to attend, to come together to learn and share good practice for their particular area of operation. The Local Government Improvement Service align these events with existing networks/forums wherever possible, minimising duplication of discussions and bringing together relevant expertise. Following a break due to the Covid crisis in 2020, these events resumed via Teams during 2021. This has proved to be a popular move away from the in-person events with more interested 'performance' officers able to attend from across Scotland. In South Lanarkshire Council, where officers were unable to attend, learning materials from the events can be accessed on the Knowledge Hub.

## **8. Employee Implications**

- 8.1. There are no employee implications.

## **9. Financial Implications**

- 9.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. To further the work of the Local Government Improvement Service in relation to the LGBF, each Scottish local authority has committed to make a £2,766 (plus VAT) annual contribution, set and approved for a three-year period, namely 2021/2022 to 2023/2024. This is to be met from within existing budgets.

## **10. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications**

- 10.1. There are no climate change, sustainability or environmental implications as a result of this report.

## **11. Other Implications**

- 11.1. There are no risk or other implications associated with the content of this report.

## **12. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 12.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and therefore, no impact assessment is required.
- 12.2. Consultation has taken place with Resources in gathering the information and explanations included within this report and appendices.

**Paul Manning**  
**Chief Executive**

29 February 2024

### **Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes**

- Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent
- Ambitious, self-aware and improving

### **Previous References**

- Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum - 21 March 2023

### **List of Background Papers**







- LGBF results 2022/2023

### **Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Tom Little, Head of Communications and Strategy  
Extension: 845 4904 (Tel: 01698 454904)  
Email: [tom.little@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:tom.little@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)











## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
Children's Services	CHN01	Cost per primary school pupil	£5,963.00	£6,589.00	£6,977.00		£6,863.00		Our cost per primary school pupil has risen in 2022-23 which is slightly above the Scotland average and in line with the family group median. There has been increased expenditure within the primary sector on staff costs as a result of the national pay settlement; additional support for council investment in teachers and classroom support and Children and young people wellbeing including digital inclusion.  These cost results give no indication of the quality of education delivered. SLC's results are linked directly to our position in ensuring our level of spending on education is supporting the delivery of a high quality learning experience and environment for all South Lanarkshire's pupils at all levels of their education.
	CHN02	Cost per secondary school pupil	£7,538.00	£8,230.00	£8,294.00		£8,482.00		The cost per secondary school pupil in South Lanarkshire has increased slightly is again in line with the family group median but is lower than the Scottish Average. The increase can be attributed to a number of areas including the continuing investment in the secondary school estate schools and costs for our PPP contract commitments; costs associated with teachers' salaries including pay award as well as council investment in staffing supporting Children and young people wellbeing and digital inclusion and continuation of investment in teachers and classroom support in the secondary sector.  In isolation this measure gives no indication of the quality of the education delivered. South Lanarkshire's results are linked directly to our position in maintaining our level of spending on education relative to other local authorities during a challenging economic period.
	CHN03	Cost per pre-school education place	£8,557.00	£10,595.00	£10,589.00		£11,008.00		The cost per pre-school education place in South Lanarkshire has marginally decreased and is lower than the family group median and below the Scottish average for a few main reasons: the reduction in ranking is as a result of the reduced funding received for 1140 expansion due to population as well as our efficiency programme to move to a peripatetic model of ELC teachers across nursery classes and ELC establishments,







## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
									<p>similar to other authorities.</p> <p>Actions to improve will include efficient use of resources through our admission process, maximising pupil to staff ratio whilst continuing to provide parental choice and funding follows the child provision.</p> <p>Comparisons between councils enable an informed debate as to why variations exist and where best practice exists and lessons to be learned. Looked at in isolation this measure gives no indication of the quality of the education delivered.</p>
	CHN04	Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 5	69.0%	71.0%	-----	----	-----	----	Data not yet available
	CHN05	Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more awards at level 6	43.0%	41.0%	-----	----	-----	----	Data not yet available
	CHN06	Percentage of pupils from deprived areas gaining 5 or more awards at level 5	46.0%	52.0%	-----	----	-----	----	Data not yet available
	CHN07	Percentage of pupils from deprived areas gaining 5 or more awards at level 6	22.0%	21.0%	-----	----	-----	----	Data not yet available
	CHN08a	The gross cost of "Children Looked After" in residential based services per child per week	£3,650.00	£3,860.00	-----	----	-----	----	Data not yet available
	CHN08b	The gross cost of "Children Looked After" in a community setting per child per week	£277.50	£307.00	-----	----	-----	----	Data not yet available
	CHN09	Percentage of children being looked after in the community	90.43%	90.40%	-----	----	-----	----	Data not yet available

## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
	CHN10	Percentage of Adults satisfied with local schools	75.80%	74.70%	72.00%		73.70%		This data is from the Scottish Household Survey which is a community based opinion survey.
	CHN11	Percentage of pupils entering positive destinations	96.2%	96.2%	-----	-----	-----	-----	Data not yet available
	CHN12a	Overall Average Total Tariff	1,009	1,007	987		915		The tariff score is used by individual schools to assess the progress of learners in SCQF qualifications. The overall tariff level in South Lanarkshire in 2021-22 is above the National level and in line with the Family Median. Qualifications are awarded tariff points based on their Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) level. Average tariff scores are calculated from the latest and best achievement of pupils during the senior phase (S4-S6) across a range of awards included in a national benchmarking tool. This offers a wider measure of achievement to consider alongside the narrower LGBF attainment measures (CHN 4 to CHN7). This measure can be influenced by curricular models and the selection of more appropriate routes to positive destinations for young people.
	CHN13a	% of P1, 4, 7 pupils combined achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence Level in Literacy	70.0%	71.0%	73.5%		-----	-----	In 2022/23, 73.5% of pupils in South Lanarkshire achieved the appropriate attainment level. The performance has improved by 2.2% points between 2021/22 and 2022/23.
	CHN13b	% of P1, 4, 7 pupils combined achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence Level in Numeracy	78.0%	79.0%	81.6%		-----	-----	In 2022/23, 81.6% of pupils in South Lanarkshire achieved the appropriate attainment level. The performance has improved by 2.5% points between 2021/22 and 2022/23.
	CHN14a	Literacy attainment gap P1,4,7 combined - % point gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils	24.00%	24.40%	22.30%		20.50%		In 2022/23 the primary literacy "Closing the Gap" is 22.3% points. This means the Closing the Gap data has improved by 2.1% points between 2021/22 & 2022/23. Closing the Gap and raising attainment remains a key priority.
	CHN14b	Numeracy attainment gap P1,4,7 combined -	19.00%	18.60%	17.70%		17.00%		In 2022/23 the primary numeracy "Closing the Gap" is 17.7% points. This means the Closing the Gap data has improved by

## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
		% point gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils							1.1% points between 2021/22 & 2022/23. Closing the Gap and raising attainment remains a key priority.
	CHN17	% of children meeting developmental milestones	82.29%	80.80%	-----	-----	-----	-----	Data not yet available
	CHN18	% of funded early years provision which is graded good/better	89.68%	88.55%	85.70%		90.10%		Early Years establishments and school nursery classes are inspected both by Education Scotland around the quality of educational provision using Quality Indicators and separately by the Care Inspectorate. The results for 2022-23 show a slight decline in percentage terms compared with the previous year.
	CHN19a	School attendance rate	91.60%	-----	90.00%		90.20%		The school attendance rate fell in 2022/23 in South Lanarkshire as schools continued to recover from the impact of Covid-19. Attendance in South Lanarkshire is in line with both the national level and the Family Group median. Data is collected every 2 years - the next set of results will be available in 2024/25.
	CHN19b	School attendance rate - looked after children	86.01%	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	Data not yet available - published every 2 years
	CHN20a	School exclusion rates (per 1,000 pupils)	12.57	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	Data not yet available - published every 2 years
	CHN20b	School exclusion rates (per 1,000 looked after children)	81.57	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	Data not yet available - published every 2 years
	CHN21	Participation rate for 16-19 year olds	92.79%	92.31%	95.00%		94.30%		South Lanarkshire's performance increased to 95% which is 0-7% above the National Average and the Family Group. A partnership plan to increase the participation rate was developed. The action plan included detailed local tracking arrangements including door knocking to establish destinations and offering support where required. These actions have been in place since June 2022 – and has had a positive impact on the 2022-23 LGBF result.  A young person is deemed to be participating when they are actively engaged with an organisation for the purpose of learning, training or work – work includes volunteering. This









## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
									annual participation measure reports on the activity of the wider 16-19 year old cohort, including those at school.
	CHN22	% of child protection re-registrations within 18 months	6.47%	5.80%	-----	----	-----	----	Data not yet available
	CHN23	% Looked After Children (LAC) with more than 1 placement in the last year (Aug-July)	13.96%	15.60%	-----	----	-----	----	Data not yet available
	CHN24	Percentage of children living in poverty (After Housing Costs)	19.6%	22.8%	-----	----	-----	----	Data not yet available
Climate Change	CLIM01	CO2 Emissions area wide per Capita	4.13	4.54	-----	----	-----	----	Data not yet available
	CLIM02	CO2 Emissions area wide: emissions within scope of Local Authority (LA) per Capita	3.34	3.73	-----	----	-----	----	Data not yet available
	CLIM03	Emissions from Transport per Capita (New)	-----	-----	-----	----	-----	----	Data not yet available
	CLIM04	Emissions from Electricity per Capita (New)	-----	-----	-----	----	-----	----	Data not yet available
	CLIM05	Emissions from Natural Gas per Capita (New)	-----	-----	-----	----	-----	----	Data not yet available
Corporate Asset	CORP-ASSET1	Percentage operational buildings that are suitable for their current use	96.41%	94.73%	95.30%	↑	86.10%	✓	Continued implementation of the Council's asset management strategy and plans has resulted in a clear focus in optimising Council buildings to ensure they are suitable. The table indicates 95.3% of properties support delivery of services in terms of suitability, a slight increase from 94.7% in 2022 and reflects the changing nature of the Council's service requirements.
	CORP-ASSET2	Percentage internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory	87.78%	88.12%	88.90%	↑	89.70%	✗	Despite the current financial climate and reduced funding to Scottish Local Authorities, the figures show that, through programmes of Prioritised Capital Investment, Schools Lifecycle





## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
		condition							Investment and Planned Preventative Maintenance, performance remains positive for the majority of categories of property. The limitations placed on budgets will provide challenges to sustained performance going forward. We will continue to challenge the requirement for our assets, retaining only those that support our strategic objectives, in order to establish a core estate.
Corporate Services	CORP01	Support services as a percentage of total gross expenditure	3.59%	3.87%	3.80%	↑	4.00%	✓	There has been a small decrease in the cost of support as a percentage of total budget – this is a combination of an increase in support costs and also an increase in the total budget. These result in an overall minor decrease in the percentage.
	CORP03 b	The percentage of the highest paid 5% employees who are women	55.27%	56.71%	59.60%	↑	58.90%	✓	There has been an increase in the proportion of women in the top 5% earners in the Council between 2021-22 and 2022 -23. We continue to work in line with our current policies and processes to ensure that our female employees at that top end (which can shift depending on where the 5% falls), are being progressed appropriately. Our picture is improving year on year and we need to keep a focus on that along with the work that we continue to do in line with our equalities duties.
	CORP03 c	The gender pay gap	4.83%	4.00%	3.20%	↑	2.50%	✗	We continue to monitor pay and grading to ensure appropriate action to address any inconsistencies. This includes job evaluation exercises which have resulted in improved rates of pay. Actions We will continue to monitor gender and pay gap information and take action as required. We continue to plan and implement actions in partnership with trades union representatives in line with the principles of 'Delivering a fairer future'.
	CORP04	The cost per dwelling of collecting Council Tax	£6.63	£7.35	£6.38	↑	£6.84	✓	The cost of collecting council tax per dwelling in 2022-23 has decreased compared to 2021-22 due to an increase in income from cases progressing to summary warrant. The cost of collecting council tax will continue to be managed closely through regular monitoring and reporting of expenditure in this area.
	CORP06 a	Sickness absence days per teacher	5.12	7.24	7.40	↓	6.80	✗	The number of days lost due to sickness has increased compared to 2021-22, due to an increase in the number of

## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
									<p>short-term absences. For Q1 and Q2 the absence rate was the same or lower than the previous year, however there was an increase in the third quarter, which impacted the overall figure for the year. This was attributed to an increase in short term absence during this quarter.</p> <p>Actions: The HR team continue to monitor absences and have had a focus on short term absence. Specific service areas were reminded of the actions required to reduce short term absences through targeted sessions and training.</p>
	CORP06b	Sickness absence days per employee (non teacher)	10.11	12.98	13.90		13.20		<p>The number of days lost due to sickness has increased compared to 2021-22, due to an increase in the number of short-term absences. For Q1 and Q2 the absence rate was the same or lower than the previous year, however there was an increase in the third quarter, which impacted the overall figure for the year. This was attributed to an increase in short term absence during this quarter.</p> <p>Actions: The HR team continue to monitor absences and have had a focus on short term absence. Specific service areas were reminded of the actions required to reduce short term absences through targeted sessions and training.</p>
	CORP07	Percentage of income due from Council Tax received by the end of the year	95.55%	96.19%	97.00%		96.20%		<p>The improved collection rate is largely due to the cost of living payment of £150 applied to council tax accounts for low income households in 2022-23.</p> <p>South Lanarkshire's performance continues to be better than the Scottish average. Work to maximise council tax income collection will continue in 2023-24, utilising all available recovery methods.</p>
	CORP08	Percentage of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days	90.70%	92.94%	91.80%		90.60%		<p>Although South Lanarkshire's performance fell slightly in 2022-23 compared with the previous year, the result continues to be better than the Scottish average. Finance staff proactively discuss issues with Resources on a regular basis and work together to improve performance.</p>
	CORP09	% of Crisis Grant decisions within 1 day	97.75%	99.00%	97.80%		91.80%		<p>Crisis Grant application volumes continue to match the unprecedented levels experienced during the Covid pandemic</p>







## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
									with the council continuing to ensure processing timescales remained within target levels. Although the percentage of decisions made within target was slightly down compared to 2021-22, at 97.8% it was still well above the national benchmark. Actions: The timescales for processing Crisis Grants will continue to be monitored closely through regular reporting, ensuring adequate resources are allocated to process these applications.
	CORP10	% of Community Care Grant (CCG) Grant Decisions within 15 days	98.25%	97.50%	97.80%		87.30%	✓	Although Crisis Grants applications continue to be received at unprecedented levels and are prioritised for processing given the emergency need for financial assistance, the percentage of Community Care Grants decisions made within 15 days remained exceptionally high at 97.8% and slightly above 2021-22 performance. Actions: The timescales for processing Community Care Grants will continue to be monitored closely through regular reporting, ensuring adequate resources are allocated to process these applications.
	CORP11	The percentage of Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) Budget Spent	110.08%	181.57%	164.80%		130.00%	✓	The increased proportion of SWF expenditure in 2022-23 when compared to the Scottish Government SWF funding allocation is due to additional discretionary funding allocated by the Council to the SWF from the Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery (LACER) fund. This supplemented the initial SWF budget allocation received from Scottish Government in 2022-23. Actions: The administration of the SWF will continue to be monitored closely and reported on a regular basis to ensure effective financial management of the fund.
	CORP12	The percentage of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) Funding Spend	108.18%	101.94%	104.80%		94.40%	✓	South Lanarkshire continues to spend the budget it receives with performance well above the Scottish average. Actions: The administration of DHP funding will continue to be monitored closely and reported on a regular basis to ensure effective financial management of the fund.
Culture & Leisure Services	C&L01	Cost per attendance at sports facilities	£54.05	£6.30	£4.50		£4.89	✓	The cost of attendance has dropped by £1.80 to £4.50 which is below the Scottish average (£4.89). Although still within the third quartile we have moved up one place in the ranking from 18 to 17. More importantly, attendances have increased by 65% on

## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
									2021/22.  As we work to develop new ways of delivering services and adapt in these challenging times, we anticipate a slower but continued growth. As part of an Asset Review which is currently underway some services may be streamlined which will help keep costs low yet minimise any impact on customers.
	C&L02	Cost per library visit	£6.09	£5.07	£3.62	↑	£2.81	✗	There has been a drop of £1.40 in the cost per library visit, although this remains above the Scottish average and no change to our ranking or quartile.  However, library attendances have increased by 49% on the previous year, with virtual attendances now overtaking physical attendance figures, this trend is expected to continue in 2023/24. As part of an Asset Review which is currently underway some services may be streamlined which will help reduce costs further and with the shift to a higher proportion of virtual customers any impact should be minimal.
	C&L03	Cost of museums per visit	£13.49	£3.75	£2.47	↑	£3.07	✓	At £2.47 per visit, we are 60pence lower than the Scottish average and this puts us in the second quartile, rising in rank from 10 to 9.  Attendances have improved by over 44% on 2021/22 and have exceeded (pre-covid) 2019/20 attendances by 11%. There is a change in customer behaviour with more virtual visitors accessing services online and we anticipate this, and overall attendances, will continue to grow.
	C&L04	Cost of parks and open spaces per 1,000 population	£32,076	£31,458	£31,063	↑	£23,311	✗	The cost of parks and open spaces per 1,000 population in 2022/23 was £31,063. This is an improvement (reduction) from the previous year (£31,458) but remains higher than the Scottish average of £23,311.  SLC work to a high output specification on all council land and all maintenance operations including, general open spaces, parks, sports areas, golf courses, bowling greens, care of gardens, back courts and cemeteries, and of which are included within the





## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
									<p>overall net controllable expenditure.</p> <p>SLC operate with a large fleet of both cut and collect and cut and drop ride-on mowers as well as a large fleet of tractors with batwing mowers to ensure our grass is maintained: in excess of 10 million m2 is cut on 14-18 occasions throughout the summer season.</p> <p>We maintain 6 golf courses which are high maintenance areas requiring specialist skills and machinery to ensure they are of the highest possible standard. Likewise, we have a number of high maintenance bowling greens.</p> <p>We maintain 3000 residents' gardens on behalf of Housing service via the care of gardens service.</p> <p>We have 55 cemeteries spread throughout South Lanarkshire that are maintained to the highest standard - we appreciate what they represent to the local community.</p> <p>Notably, South Lanarkshire was shortlisted as an APSE Finalist for Parks and Grounds as best and most improved performer in 2022.</p>
	C&L05a	Percentage of adults satisfied with libraries	69.23%	67.30%	66.30%		71.00%		<p>SLC has dropped 1% on our 21/22 satisfaction rates and 4.7% below the Scottish average, however when taken in the context of the 'family grouping' SLC sits 1.8% above the average for library services. It should also be noted that the household survey does not necessarily mean those completing the survey have used our services. SLLC conducted a Customer Satisfaction Survey in 22/23 to assess actual service delivery, nearly 3,000 customers responded (12% of members across services), with very positive feedback saying - service delivery 95%, staff performance 97% and value for money 95%.</p>
	C&L05b	Percentage of adults satisfied with parks and open spaces	79.43%	83.00%	86.70%		87.30%		<p>Although the percentage is slightly below the Scottish average, within South Lanarkshire satisfaction has improved from 83% in 2021-22 to 86.7% in 2022-23, this also resulted in an improvement in our ranking from 24 to 19.</p>
	C&L05c	Percentage of adults satisfied with museums	64.70%	65.70%	66.30%		71.30%		<p>SLC saw an improvement of 0.6% in 2021/22 satisfaction rates although we remain 5% below the Scottish average. When taken</p>

## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
		and galleries							in the context of the 'family grouping' SLC sits 7.4% above the average for museum services. It should also be noted that the household survey does not necessarily mean those completing the survey have used our services. SLLC conducted a Customer Satisfaction Survey in 2022/23 to assess actual service delivery, nearly 3,000 customers responded (12% of members across services), with very positive feedback saying - service delivery 95%, staff performance 97% and value for money 95%.
	C&L05d	Percentage of adults satisfied with leisure facilities	68.27%	68.00%	69.70%	↑	71.00%	✗	SLC saw an improvement of 1.7% on 2021/22 satisfaction rates although we remain 1.3% below the Scottish average, however when taken in the context of the 'family grouping' SLC sits 7.4% above the average for sport and leisure services. It should also be noted that the household survey does not necessarily mean those completing the survey have used our services. SLLC conducted a Customer Satisfaction Survey in 2022/23 to assess actual service delivery, nearly 3,000 customers responded (12% of members across services), with very positive feedback saying - service delivery 95%, staff performance 97% and value for money 95%.
Economic Development	ECON01	Percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from council funded/operated employability programmes	5.54%	22.04%	12.90%	↓	12.90%	⚠	The percentage of unemployed people supported into employment by SLC employability programmes has reduced from 22% in 21/22 to 12.9%. This reflects the more buoyant labour market which has enabled higher numbers of unemployed people to find work without support. The figures also reduced due to the ending of the Kickstart and LTU programmes which directly recruited unemployed people into work in 21/22.
	ECON02	Cost of planning and building services per application	£4,334.00	£4,695.00	£5,410.00	↓	£5,538.00	✓	The overall cost of Planning and Building Standards per application increased from £4,695 in 2021/22 to £5,410 in 2022/23 which is below (better than) the Scottish average (£5,538). Total income across the service fell from £4.01m to £3.49m. The period saw a small drop in the number of applications received and significant turnover in staff which meant the service was not fully resourced at any point during 2022/23. Nevertheless, South Lanarkshire's service costs in this area remain better than the Scottish average.
	ECON03	Average time per	16.75 Wks	20.59 Wks	22.90 Wks	↓	12.00 Wks	✗	The average time for processing business/industrial planning











## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
		business and industry planning application (weeks)							applications in South Lanarkshire increased from 20.59 weeks in 2021/22 to 22.9 weeks in 2022/23. This remains higher (worse than) the Scottish average of 12.0 weeks. Through 2022/23 a number of "legacy" applications were decided which impaired the overall processing times. Clearing this backlog of applications, which were effectively on hold as further information was being sought from applicants, should result in improved performance against this indicator in the future. Additional resources have also been brought into the Planning Service which will positively impact on the processing of planning applications.
	ECON04	Percentage of procurement spend on local enterprises	17.0%	18.2%	18.1%		29.6%		Percentage of spend on local enterprises increased from 17% in 2020/21 to 18.2% in 2021/22 and has broadly maintained that improved level through 2022/23 at 18.1%. It does however remain significantly lower than the Scottish average of 29.6%.  Construction is an area of high spend where opportunities to improve local spend has been sought. The impact of high inflation in the construction sector and the challenges across the public sector on delivering large scale construction projects has reduced some opportunity at a local level.  The perceived complexity of public sector procurement and the required investment in completing tender submissions is deterring some small businesses that might lack sufficient administrative resources. There are a greater proportion of smaller enterprises in South Lanarkshire which increases the challenge in increasing and improving this measure.  Supplier engagement and promotion of the free to access support, continues to encourage participation in tendering exercises.
	ECON05	No of business gateway start-ups per 10,000 population	8.95	15.71	16.20		14.30		The number of business gateway start-ups per 10,000 population has continued to grow from 8.95 in 2020/21 to 15.71 in 2021/22 and 16.20 in 2022/23. This remains higher (better than) the Scottish average of 14.3.





## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
									Economic Development continue to work with the Lanarkshire Business Gateway to increase business start-up and sustainability. The revised Business gateway management arrangements from March 2024 should further enhance delivery and efficiency for businesses.
	ECON06	Investment in Economic development and Tourism per 1,000 population	£44,293	£74,111	£70,043	↓	£109,349	✗	Investment in Economic Development and Tourism per 1,000 population in South Lanarkshire stabilised in 2022/23 at £70,043. This level of spend is considered to be better (less than) the Scottish Average of £109,349. Less expenditure in these services however is not necessarily an indicator of efficiency or value for money, since some authorities as a result of council policy decisions, choose to invest more resources into Economic Development and Tourism.  It has been a particularly challenging period for the sector as difficulties around staff recruitment and retention have disproportionately impacted the industry.
	ECON07	Percentage of people earning less than the living wage	20.80%	12.50%	10.00%	↑	9.40%	✗	The figures that correspond to the year for reporting (Office for National Statistics, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2022) indicates that 10% of employees in South Lanarkshire currently earn less than the living wage. The percentage of employees earning less than the living wage in South Lanarkshire (10%) continues to run above the Scottish average (9.4%), the benchmark for this measure, although the gap between the two has closed to +0.6%, the closest that the two rates have been for 5 years. The South Lanarkshire figure for employees earning less than the living wage has been higher than the Scottish average for 4 of the past 5 years, the exception being 2021 when the returns were affected by the pandemic.
	ECON08	Percentage of properties receiving superfast broadband	96.20%	97.00%	97.60%	↑	95.50%	✓	In 2022/23, 97.60% of properties in South Lanarkshire had access to high-speed broadband and speeds greater than 30 Mbps. This figure continues to rise slowly and remains above the Scottish average of 95.50%.  The majority of the 2.40% of properties not yet able to access




## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
									high speed broadband are located within rural areas. These properties are either included within the Scottish Governments R100 investment Programme and projected to receive full fiber connection by 2026 or are too difficult or expensive to connect to an existing network and are then eligible for Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme to help find alternative solutions.
	ECON09	Town vacancy rates	8.80	9.85	14.00		12.00		There has been an increase in town centre vacancy rates and this is due to the high levels of vacancies in Hamilton and East Kilbride Shopping Centers as a result of the challenges that they are facing. However, overall vacancy rates have held up well under the recent pressures.
	ECON10	Immediately available employment land as a % total land allocated for employment purposes in the local development plan	37.47%	12.73%	12.10%		22.80%		This figure has reduced slightly against the 2021-22 figure and is significantly lower than the Scottish average, however work is being undertaken to identify and increase the available employment land.
	ECON11	Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita	£19,447	£18,886	-----	---	-----	---	Data not yet available
	ECON12 a	Claimant Count as % of Working Age Population	6.3%	4.7%	3.2%		3.2%		The SLC claimant count as a percentage of the population has fallen to 3.2 % from 4.7% the previous year. This is the same as the national figure and reflects the tighter employment market during 2022/23 with an increased availability of vacancies as the economy recovered after covid.
	ECON12 b	Claimant Count as % of 16-24 Population	7.83%	5.30%	3.50%		3.60%		The claimant count for 16-24 year olds is 3.5% which is lower than the Scottish rate and lower (better) than the result in 2021/22
Environmental Services	ENV01a	Net cost of waste collection per premise	£81.97	£86.51	£83.52		£79.20		<p>The net cost of waste collection per premises in South Lanarkshire reduced to £83.52 in 2022/23. This is slightly higher(worse) than the Scottish average of £79.20 but it is an improvement on the previous year, when the figure was £86.51. The overall ranking position has also improved to 21st from 25th in 2021/22.</p> <p>The higher costs reflect the Council's continued position to provide a range of services free of charge to residents. Unlike</p>













## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
									the majority of councils in Scotland, South Lanarkshire offers each household a free bulk uplift each year. The Council also does not charge for garden waste bin collections. Chargeable garden waste uplifts are becoming increasingly more common in Scotland and allow councils who implement a charge to offset collection costs. The Council also provides free compostable bags to residents whilst the majority of councils do not.
	ENV02a	Net cost of waste disposal per premise	£113.48	£113.57	£100.65		£99.76		<p>The net cost of waste disposal per premises in South Lanarkshire reduced to £100.65 in 2022-23. This is an improvement on the previous two years. The overall ranking position also improved from 20th in 2021/22 to 15th in 2022/23.</p> <p>The net cost of waste disposal per premise is slightly higher than the Scottish average of £99.76 but this reflects the fact that the Council does not send non-recyclable waste to landfill. Costs to thermally treat non-recyclable waste are higher than sending the material to landfill. It does mean though, that the Council has a higher landfill diversion rate than local authorities that are still in the process of procuring a solution to the forthcoming ban on the landfilling of biodegradable municipal waste.</p>
	ENV03a	Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population	£16,020.00	£17,640.00	£19,632.00		£16,068.00		<p>The costs associated with our street cleaning operations increased to £19,632 in 2022/23. The figure is above the Scottish average of £16,068, and South Lanarkshire ranks in 28th place out of all the local authorities.</p> <p>The higher costs associated with our street cleaning operation are attributed to the high levels of services that we provide: graffiti removal, street cleaning including shifts, fly tipping uplift, fly posting removal, blood spills, hypodermic needle uplift, dead animal uplift and both the large and smaller mechanical sweeping fleet that we utilize. This equipment performs an essential and legislatively required service including the removal of detritus from roads/channels, (COPLAR)</p> <p>Since the Litter Strategy was approved in 2022, work has been ongoing with regards to making changes to reduce the impacts</p>




## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
									and costs associated with fly tipping and general littering. A new litter action steering group which includes service reps across the Council have been working on a litter action plan to tackle these issues. This will hopefully have an environmental impact and a subsequent decrease in spend across the area.
	ENV03c	Street cleanliness score	94.05%	92.10%	92.30%		90.60%	✓	<p>South Lanarkshire Council continues to score higher for its street cleansing service than the Scottish average (90.6%), with 92.30% of streets surveyed found to be of an acceptable standard. This is a slight increase from 92.10% in 2021/22.</p> <p>South Lanarkshire Council also scored slightly higher than the Club 3 (local authority benchmarking club) average which is 92.20%.</p>
	ENV04a	Cost of roads per kilometre	£20,056.00	£19,295.00	£16,828.00		£12,844.00	✓	<p>Spend per kilometre of road has decreased compared to the previous year (from £19,295 in 2021/22 to £16,828 in 2022/23). This is partly due to less funding being allocated to carriageway resurfacing as we look to balance any available funding across all our key asset groups. The spending figure also varies year upon year dependent on the level of City Deal project spend.</p> <p>In 2022/23, South Lanarkshire has moved from the 7th to the 11th highest investing local authority per kilometre of road. The level of spend in South Lanarkshire remains higher than the Scottish average, reflecting the council's decision to continue to invest in our road network. It should be noted that the industry is currently encountering significant construction inflation and as a result projects are costing much more than before, and the equivalent scale of works are not presently possible with the same level of investment.</p>
	ENV04b	Percentage of A class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	23.90%	23.99%	23.90%		27.40%	✓	<p>There has been a marginal improvement in the condition of A Class roads in South Lanarkshire although the condition trend could be described as static. Due to continued high levels of construction inflation projects are costing much more than before, and the equivalent scale of works are not presently possible with the same level of investment. Positively however, the condition of the A Class network in South Lanarkshire</p>











## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
									remains better than the Scottish average.
	ENV04c	Percentage of B class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	26.20%	25.62%	26.10%		31.50%		There has been slight regression in the condition of B class roads in South Lanarkshire however their condition remains a substantial 5.4% better than the Scottish average.
	ENV04d	Percentage of C class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	37.60%	34.91%	35.60%		32.70%		There has been regression in the condition of C class roads in South Lanarkshire and their condition falls below that of the Scottish average.
	ENV04e	Percentage of U (unclassified) roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment	30.50%	29.91%	31.60%		36.40%		Unclassified roads make up a sizeable proportion of the road network in South Lanarkshire. In 2022-23 we have noted a regression in their condition however this remains 4.8% better than the Scottish average.
	ENV05a	Cost of Trading Standards, Money Advice & Citizen Advice per 1,000 population	£2,911.00	£3,464.00	£2,970.00		£7,060.00		The cost of Trading Standards per 1,000 population in 2022/23 reduced from the 2021/22 level due to difficulties in recruiting Officers. Vacancies were filled in 2023 and it is anticipated costs will return to the level seen in 2021/22 when 2023/24 figures are available. However, South Lanarkshire service costs are still expected to remain well below the Scottish average.  Despite costs being below the Scottish average, the service provides a good level of protection for local consumers.
	ENV05b	Cost of environmental health per 1,000 population	£12,549.00	£13,280.00	£12,404.00		£15,239.00		The cost of environmental health per 1,000 population decreased slightly in 2022/23, compared to the previous year, due to vacancies and continues to remain well below the Scottish average.  Costs are expected to return to previous levels following recruitment during 2023. Despite costs being below the Scottish average, the service provides a good level of public health protection for local communities.
	ENV06	The percentage of total household waste arising that is recycled	40.48%	40.40%	41.00%		43.30%		The percentage of total household waste that is recycled increased (improved) slightly in 2022/23 compared to the previous year but at 41% it is still below the Scottish average of 43.3%. Multi-occupancy properties (flatted developments) make





## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
									<p>up over 30% of housing stock in South Lanarkshire. The lack of space at these properties means opportunities to provide recycling services are limited. Moreover, when recycling bins are provided often the only option is to provide large communal bins, where contamination rates are significantly higher than in individual wheeled bins. This has a major impact on the amount of good quality recyclable material collected which negatively affects the Council's household recycling rate.</p> <p>It is also worth noting that, unlike a number of other councils, South Lanarkshire Council still accepts 'black bag waste' in bulk uplifts. This disincentivises residents from sorting their household waste and has a further a detrimental impact on recycling rates.</p>
	ENV07a	Percentage of adults satisfied with refuse collection	81.50%	84.30%	85.30%		78.00%	✓	The percentage of adults satisfied with refuse collection is taken from the Scottish Household Survey. The figure of 85.3% is higher than the Scottish average of 78% and an improvement on the previous year. It places South Lanarkshire in the second quartile for performance.
	ENV07b	Percentage of adults satisfied with street cleaning	60.33%	61.70%	61.70%		58.30%	✓	<p>Satisfaction rate has remained steady at 61.7%, however the ranking has improved to 16 (from 17) and is higher than the Scottish average.</p> <p>Results from the consultation during the development of the Litter Strategy gave a positive picture of the satisfaction with the Strategy and this is encouraging for moving forward with our future plans and initiatives.</p>
Financial Sustainability	FINSUS01	Total useable reserves as a % of council annual budgeted revenue	18.33%	14.74%	20.87%		24.50%	✗	<p>The council has seen an increase in useable reserves as a percentage of Council budget. This reflects an increase in the level of useable reserves (significantly as a result of the new accounting arrangements for Service Concessions) and an increase in the council's annual expenditure Budget, meaning that arithmetically, the percentage of useable reserves to annual budget increases.</p> <p>The important factor to consider is the purpose and use of reserves, and the fact is that the council is clear on what reserves we have, and the purpose of them. The use of Loans</p>



## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
									Fund Review and Service Concession Reserves will affect the figures for the next few years as they are used to support the Council's financial strategy. The key factor is that the reserves are sufficient.
	FINSUS02	Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a % of council annual budgeted net revenue	1.64%	1.50%	1.45%		3.20%		The value of the Council's Uncommitted General Fund balance has not changed from 2019/20. The Council's budget has increased therefore resulting in a minor decrease in the percentage. This is very much an arithmetic impact. Our uncommitted balance has not changed, but the budget does change due to external factors including government grant ringfenced for specific purposes. We and our auditors agree that the level of uncommitted reserve is sufficient.
	FINSUS03	Percentage of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream- General Fund	5.32%	5.18%	4.47%		5.40%		This ratio shows a reduction in the General Fund's ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream. The overall reduction reflects a reduction in financing costs mainly due to a change in how we account for the Council's schools PPP project combined with an increase in income (Council Tax, NDR and Non Ring Fenced Government Grants). The position reflects the product of strategic, sustained capital investment in schools and roads over more than twenty years.
	FINSUS04	Percentage of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream- Housing Revenue Account	16.31%	16.04%	13.98%		21.30%		This ratio shows a reduction in the HRA's ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream. The overall reduction reflects a reduction in loan charges combined with an increase in income (Rents). The position reflects the product of strategic, sustained capital investment in the Council's housing stock.
	FINSUS05	Actual outturn as a percentage of budgeted expenditure	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		98.60%		The outturn reflects that the council reported a breakeven position after all transfers to reserves. The SLC position is consistently across years, but movement in other councils' figures may result in a change to our ranking going forward.
Housing Services	HSN01b	Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March, as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year	8.26%	8.91%	8.70%		9.60%		Resource target achieved and significantly lower than Scottish average. A range of supports measures continue to assist tenants facing financial hardship. Arrears have increased over the last three financial years which reflects the pressure on rent collection due to the overall economic position. The Council will continue to set affordable rents and provide advice.



## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
									Performance continues to be routinely monitored with a number of improvement actions identified.
	HSN02	Percentage of rent due in the year that was lost due to voids	0.42%	0.60%	0.60%		1.70%	✓	<p>Performance over the past two years has remained consistent and the Resource continues to focus on void management to minimise void rent loss with a number of improvement actions identified.</p> <p>Performance in this area has been consistent among the best in Scotland compared to other LAs. In the past three years we have had either the lowest or second lowest void rent loss and well below the Scottish average.</p>
	HSN03	Percentage of dwellings meeting Scottish Housing Quality Standards	93.50%	78.32%	79.70%		70.90%	✓	<p>Performance decreased during 2022/23 due to the inclusion of Fixed Electrical Testing and Tolerable Standards as directed by Scottish Housing Regulator. This has been evident across other Local Authorities with the Scottish average also decreasing. Revised process being implemented to gain access to properties where access has not been achieved.</p>
	HSN04b	Average number of days taken to complete non emergency repairs	13.07 days	11.76 days	11.60 days		9.70 days	✗	<p>The improved performance in this area, whilst still above the Scottish average, is viewed positively because it is based on an appointment-based system that is supported by tenants and tenants' representatives.</p> <p>Improvement activity within the repairs service continues in 2023-24 to support the reduction of the average time taken although the council's focus will continue to be on quality rather than speed of service.</p>
	HSN05	Percentage of council dwellings that are energy efficient	93.88%	98.64%	-----	-----	-----	-----	<p>The 2025 and 2032 EESSH Milestones have been suspended as the Scottish Government are reviewing the EESSH2 standards to strengthen and realign the standard with the target for net zero heat in houses from 2045.</p> <p>In advance of the new national indicators, a review of housing stock is underway to determine the additional energy measures required to achieve energy efficiency and carbon reduction requirements within the council's housing stock.</p>
Social Work Services	SW01	Home Care costs per	£25.50	£30.47	£29.86		£31.85	✓	Home care costs per hour decreased to £29.86 in 2022-23. In

## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
		hour for people aged 65 or over							<p>South Lanarkshire Home Care costs per hour are less than the Scottish average of £31.85 and lower than the Family Group average of £30.36</p> <p>Rising costs are largely attributed to in-house pay-awards and Scottish Living Wage uplifts for commissioned services.</p> <p>South Lanarkshire's ranking has moved to 13, however, this is not necessarily a positive position in terms of commissioning services and generating growth within the sector as a lower rate may inhibit the local authority's ability to attract recruits into the sector, grow the external market and meet continuing demands for services.</p> <p>There is an imminent risk that the market has insufficient capacity and choice to meet demand, with providers unable to sustain their current business models. Recruitment and retention to the social care workforce remains a challenge and is further impacted by an existing ageing workforce. A mapping tool has been developed by the Care at Home service, in partnership with external providers, to support the efficiency of services by operating within agreed geographic areas.</p>
	SW02	Self Directed Support (Direct payments and managed personalised budgets) spend on adults 18+ as a percentage of total social work spend on adults 18+	3.78%	3.98%	6.70%		8.70%		<p>Self-Directed Support (Direct payments and managed personalised budgets) spend on adults 18+ as a percentage of total social work spend on adults 18+, in South Lanarkshire has increased by almost 70% from 2021-22 to 2022-23, resulting in South Lanarkshire's ranking improving significantly from 24 to 13. This indicator highlights only the social work spend allocated via Direct Payments, Personalised Managed Budgets and Individual Service Fund (ISF) - options 1 and 2. It does not recognise local authority managed services - option 3, which provide a legitimate choice for individuals or a default position in the legislation for individuals who do not wish to exercise their right to choose.</p> <p>Drivers behind this improvement include:</p>







## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
									<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review and update of public facing SDS information to promote all four SDS options.</li> <li>• Establishment of a Commissioning and Quality Assurance Team.</li> <li>• Establishment of an SDS Review Team.</li> <li>• Upskilling of the Care at Home staff to complete the Living the Life you Choose assessment and offer the four SDS options to service users.</li> <li>• Placing self-directed support at the heart of day services following the recent review of the service, to give service users greater choice, flexibility, and control over their care.</li> </ul> <p>Whilst improvement has been made during this reporting period, it should be noted that wider pressures - most notably in relation to workforce supply and the financial challenges facing social care - will continue to be influential.</p>
	SW03a	Percentage of people aged 65 and over with long-term care needs receiving personal care at home	63.88%	61.89%	61.00%		61.50%		<p>South Lanarkshire performance decreased from 61.89% in 2021-22 to 61% in 2022-23 which is similar to the Scottish average position of 61.5%. However, this indicator excludes individuals who are assessed and waiting for a service which currently accounts for approximately 1,500-2,000 hours each week.</p> <p>The introduction of Home First throughout South Lanarkshire is supporting the strategic vision to maximise the independence of service users, improving individual outcomes, and in doing so, reducing the reliance on statutory services. It provides short-term multi-disciplinary reablement and rehabilitation support with a focus on maximising individual choice and control for people at home, or as close to home as possible. The programme was successful in the Integrated Care category in the 2022 Scottish Health Awards which recognises excellence across health and social care services.</p> <p>As well as the introduction of Home First a modernisation programme of the Care at Home service has progressed to</p>



## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
									<p>respond to service demand and the increasingly complex needs of service users which has included: the establishment of a scheduling and response team; a new electronic scheduling system; transfer of the Out of Hours support function from Emergency Social Work Services to Care at Home; redesign of co-ordination roles to reflect changing responsibilities; enhancing the assessment and care management function; and targeted recruitment campaigns.</p> <p>Response to demand as well as an accelerated programme of installation saw an increase in assistive technology throughout 2022-23. For example, 4,151 telecare items and 3,163 Digital IP Alarms were installed with 24% of hospital discharge referrals supported through the Home First telecare pathway which ensured installation within 24 hours of referral being received.</p>
	SW04b	Percentage of adults supported at home who agree that their services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life	-----	80.00%	-----	-----	-----	-----	Data not yet available
	SW04c	Percentage of adults supported at home who agree that they are supported to live as independently as possible	-----	82.16%	-----	-----	-----	-----	Data not yet available
	SW04d	Percentage of adults supported at home who agree that they had a say in how their help, care or support was provided	-----	65.58%	-----	-----	-----	-----	Data not yet available
	SW04e	Percentage of carers who feel supported to	-----	28.70%	-----	-----	-----	-----	Data not yet available

## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
		continue in their caring roles							
	SW05	Residential cost per week per resident for people aged 65 or over	£659.00	£755.00	£697.00		£684.00		<p>This measure relates to the average net cost to the council. South Lanarkshire had a spend of £697 per week in 2022-23 compared to the Scottish average of £684. Within the LGBF family group costs range from £442 to £992. The performance of each council is influenced by demographics and contributions made by service users. The cost of care also increases year on year with changes to the national care home rate.</p> <p>There are currently variable costs for care homes across Scotland and it is anticipated that the review of the National Care Home Contract (NCHC), which has not been revised since 2013, will standardise some of this. Although it should be noted that the NCHC rate will not equate to the net cost per resident, it will impact only on local authority funded residents who are in private and voluntary care homes, whilst others will continue to pay a proportion of their care home fees.</p>
	SW06	Rate of readmissions to hospital within 28 days per 1,000 discharges	111.82	106.27	98.50		101.70		<p>The rate of readmissions in South Lanarkshire decreased again this year from 106.27 per 1,000 in 2021-22 to 98.50 in 2022-23 and we continue to perform better than the Scottish average. Information on the six areas of the Health and Social Care Delivery Plan are monitored monthly and formally reported on a quarterly basis to the Social Work Committee (alongside the Integration Joint Board).</p>
	SW07	Percentage of care services graded 'good' or better in Care Inspectorate Inspections	80.10%	76.08%	77.00%		75.00%		<p>The proportion of care services graded 'good' or better in Care Inspectorate Inspections decreased nationally from 75.8% in 2021-22 to 75% in 2022-23. However, South Lanarkshire saw an increase from 76.08% in 2021-22 to 77.0% in 2022-23. This performance has resulted in South Lanarkshire's ranking improving significantly from 26 to 17.</p> <p>More regular inspection activity resumed in 2022-23 following the agreed pause in the programme during COVID-19. Fifty-six inspections were completed across all care services in South Lanarkshire during this period with in-house inspections of adult</p>

## Local Government Benchmarking Framework Results

South Lanarkshire Council LGBF Results 2022/23			2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Result Trend	Scotland		Comments/Progress
Service	LGBF Ref	Description	Results	Results	Results		2022/23 Scottish Average	Comparison with Scotland: better or worse?	
									<p>care homes, children's houses, fostering and adoption services. The council has continued to implement improvement actions from inspections with regular reports to the Social Work Resources Committee and noting within the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report.</p> <p>The Care Home Providers Forum established during the pandemic has remained in place and includes representation from independent, voluntary, and local authority care homes. Chaired by a Social Work manager, the forum provides the opportunity to share and signpost providers to emerging guidance and reporting requirements, whilst acknowledging pressures across the sector and identifying shared solutions.</p>
	SW08	Number of days people spend in hospital when they are ready to be discharged, per 1,000 population (75+)	544.22	910.36	482.00		432.00		<p>Performance for this indicator has improved significantly from 910.36 days in 2021-22 to 482.00 days in 2022-23. In line with this our ranking shifted from 25 to 22.</p> <p>The initial work undertaken as part of our Discharge without Delay (DWD) programme has now been subsumed within Operation Flow. Hospital staff and other partners work together closely to establish clear timeframes of when someone will go from hospital to community.</p> <p>Early and effective discharge planning puts the patient at the centre of the process, it improves the benefits for those currently in hospital by discharging home at the earliest and safest opportunity and creates capacity for patients who require admission.</p> <p>We continue to embed the Home First approach across the localities. This re-ablement approach optimises independence over a six week period, enabling people to remain in their own homes, or supporting discharge from hospital with the support of health, social care and third sector provision to meet any ongoing needs identified.</p>



## Family Group Analysis graphs for indicators with results below the Scottish average

### FAMILY GROUPS

4

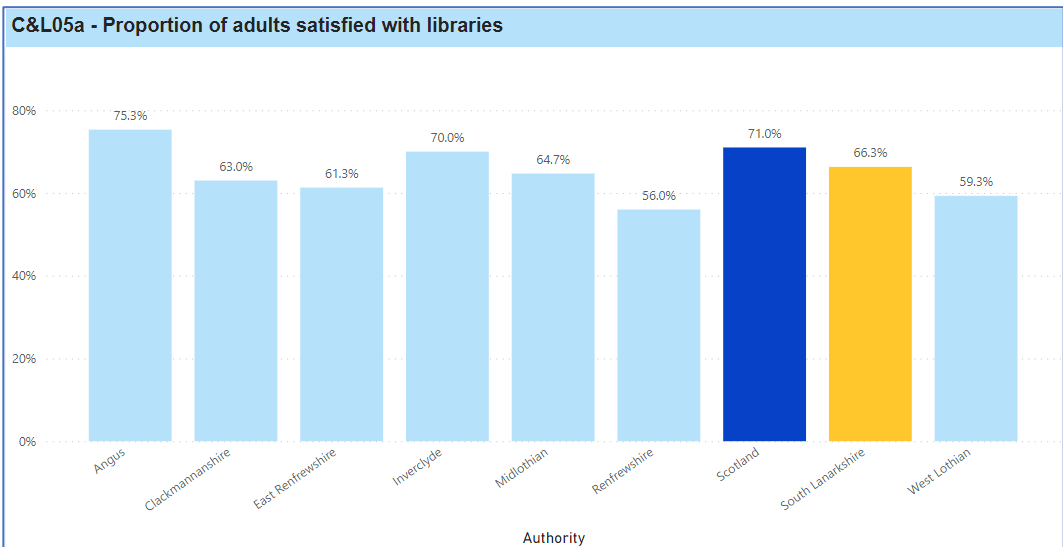
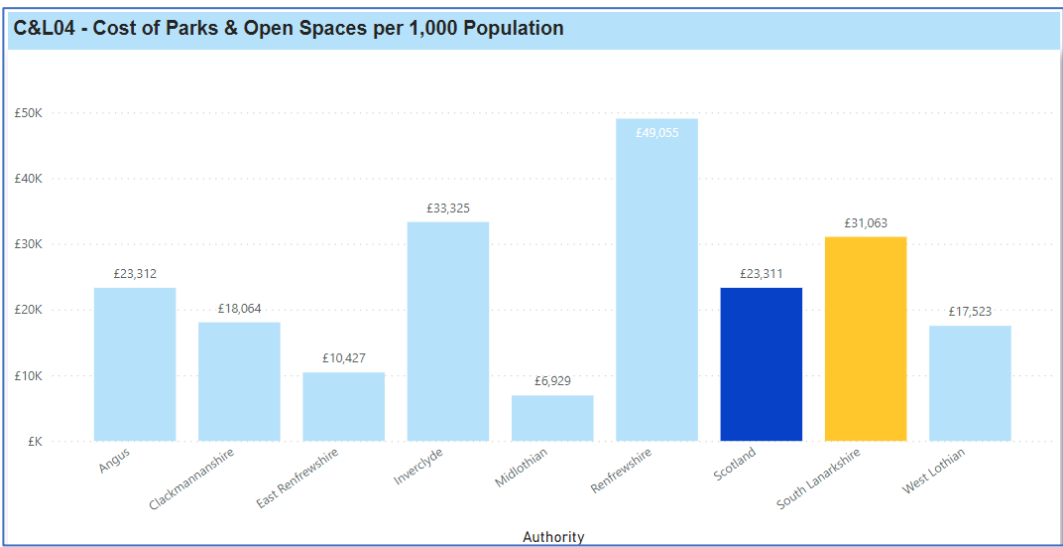
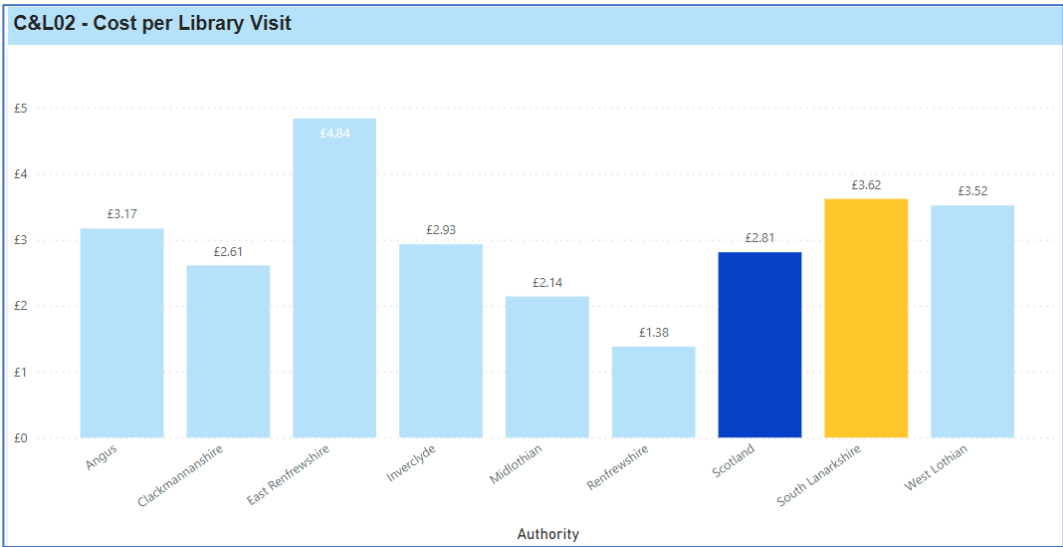
For indicators relating to Children, Social Work and Housing services, councils with similar levels of deprivation are grouped together. South Lanarkshire's family group for these indicators is:-

- Clackmannanshire
- Dumfries and Galloway
- Falkirk
- Fife
- Renfrewshire
- South Ayrshire
- South Lanarkshire
- West Lothian

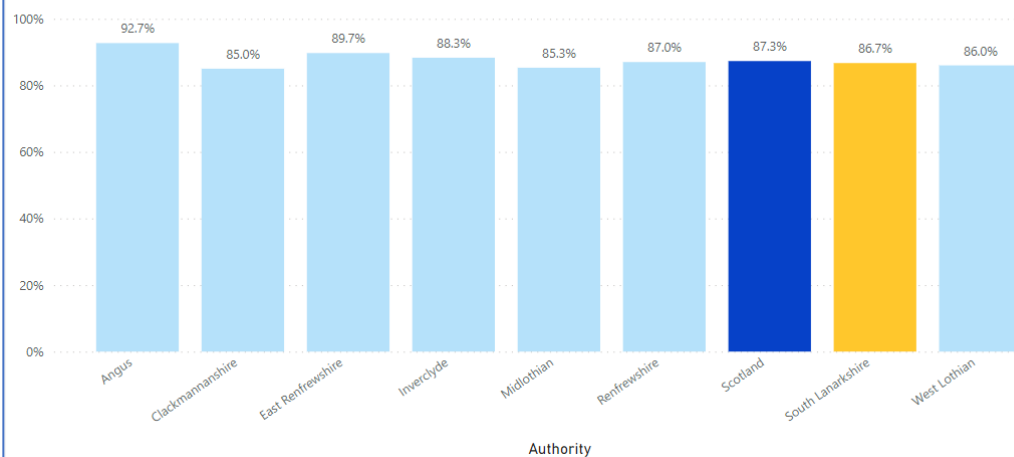
For indicators relating to Environmental, Culture and Leisure, Economic Development, Corporate and Property services, councils with similar urban/rural profiles are grouped together. South Lanarkshire's family group for these indicators is:-

- Angus
- Clackmannanshire
- East Renfrewshire
- Inverclyde
- Midlothian
- Renfrewshire
- South Lanarkshire
- West Lothian

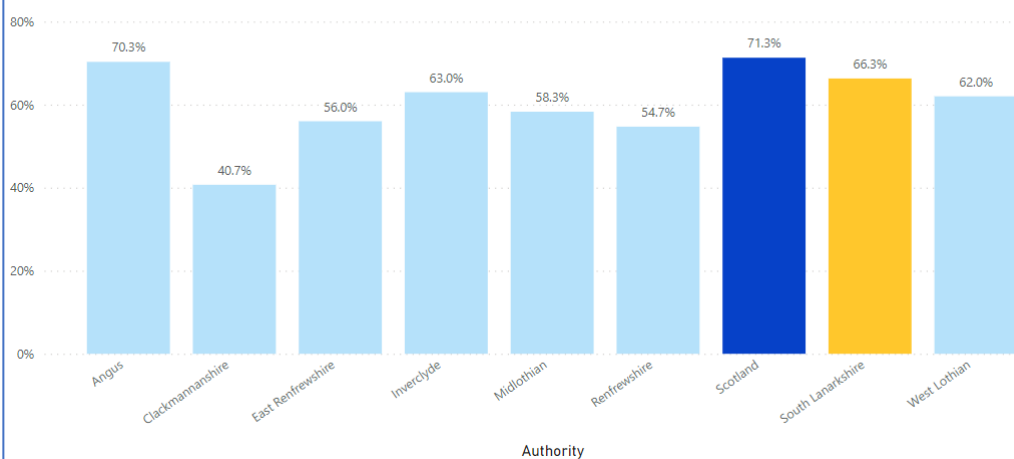
## Community and Enterprise Resources



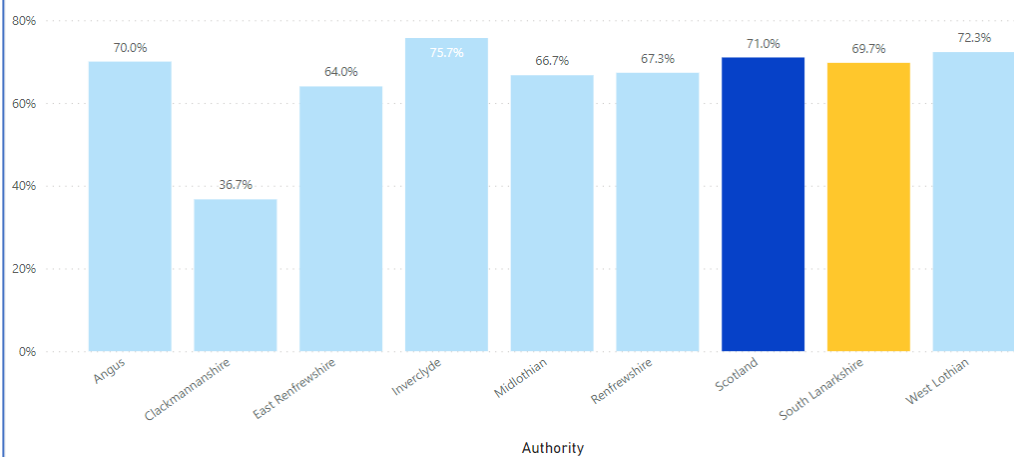
**C&L05b - Proportion of adults satisfied with parks and open spaces**



**C&L05c - Proportion of adults satisfied with museums and galleries**



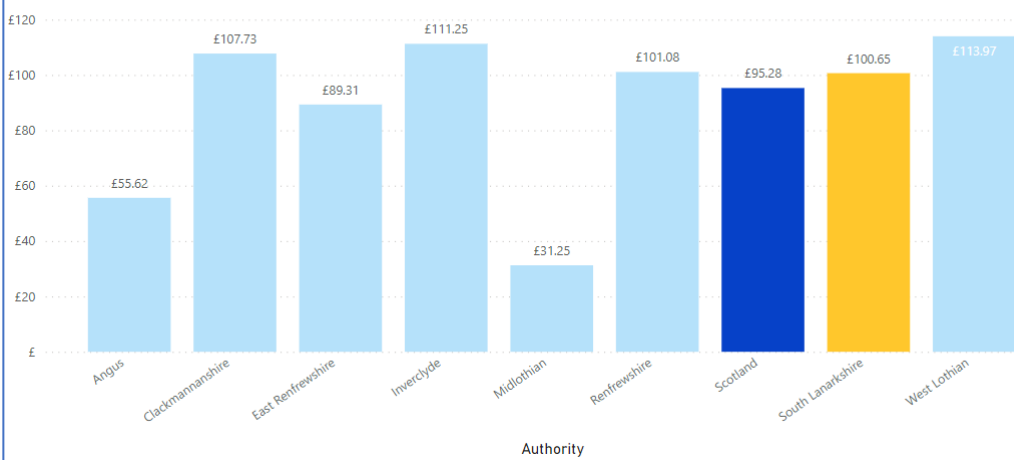
**C&L05d - Proportion of adults satisfied with leisure facilities**



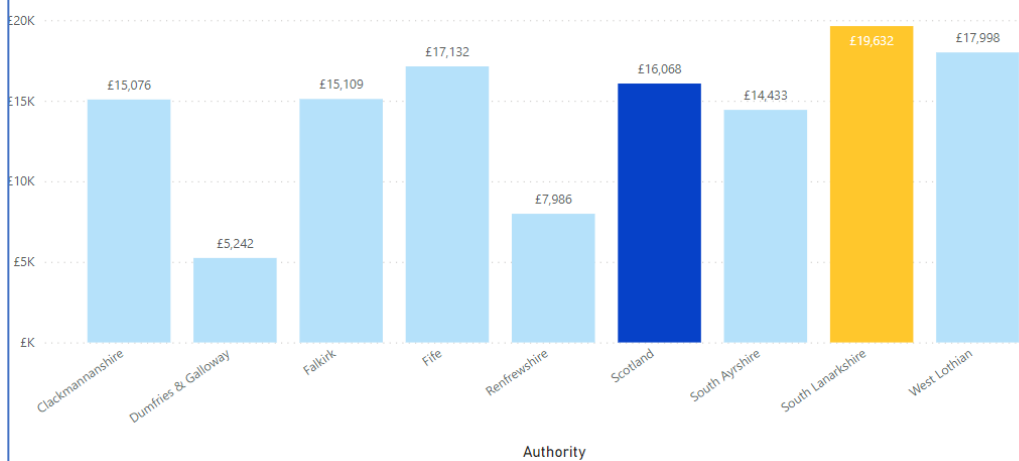
**ENV01a - Net cost per Waste collection per premises**



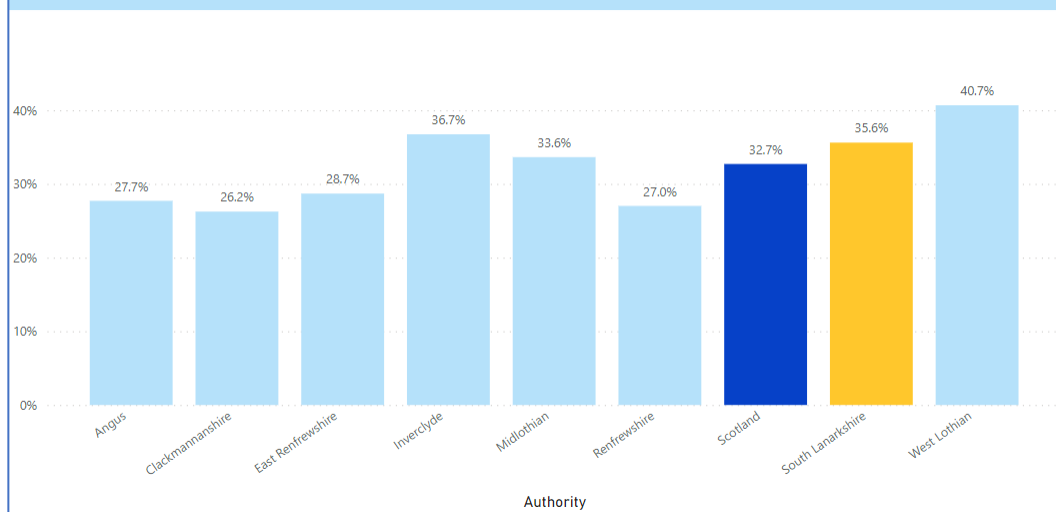
**ENV02a - Net cost per Waste disposal per premises**



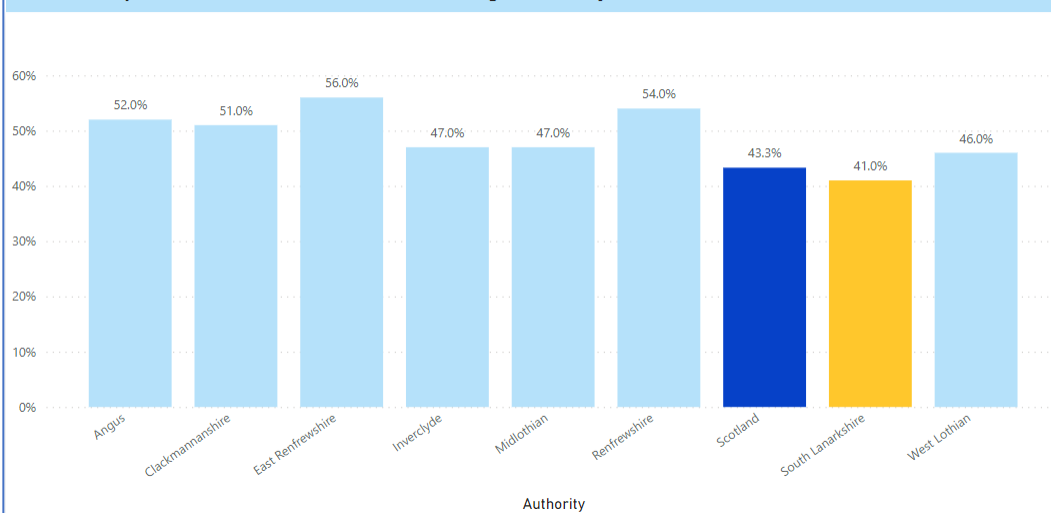
**ENV03a - Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population**



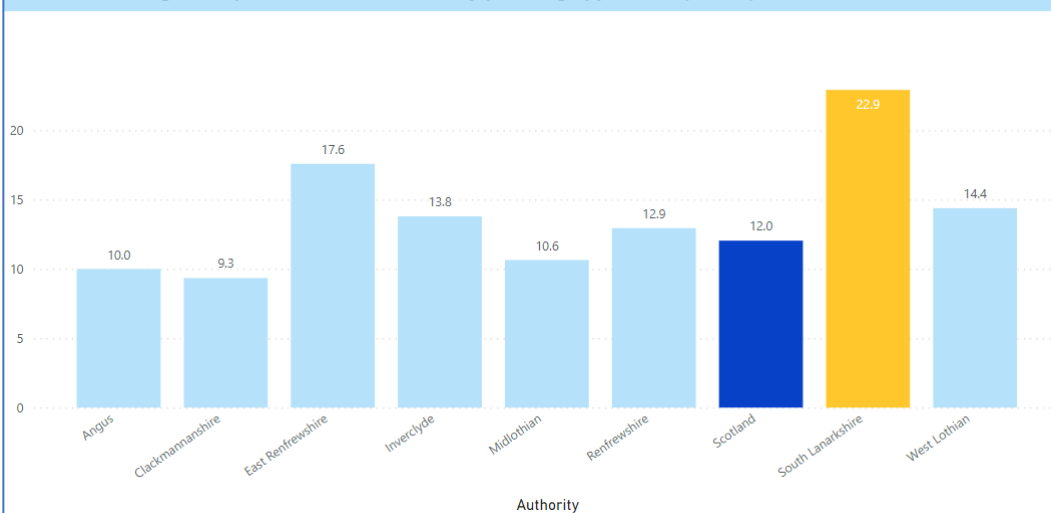
**ENV04d - Percentage of C class roads considered for maintenance treatment**



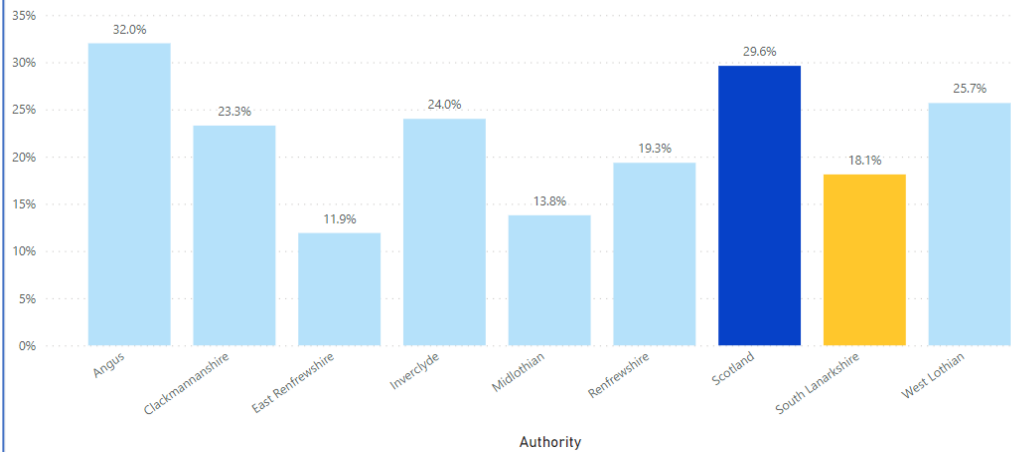
**ENV06 - Proportion of total household waste arising that is recycled**



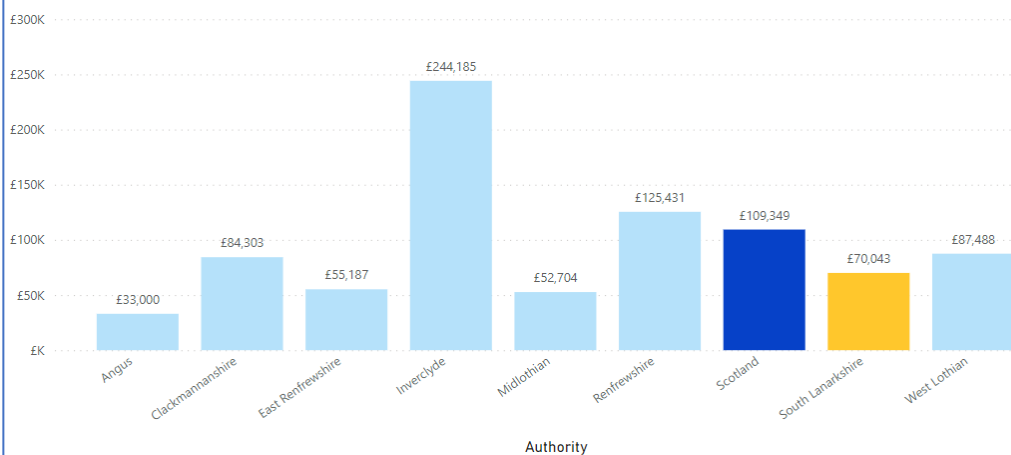
**ECON03 - Average time per business and industry planning application (weeks)**



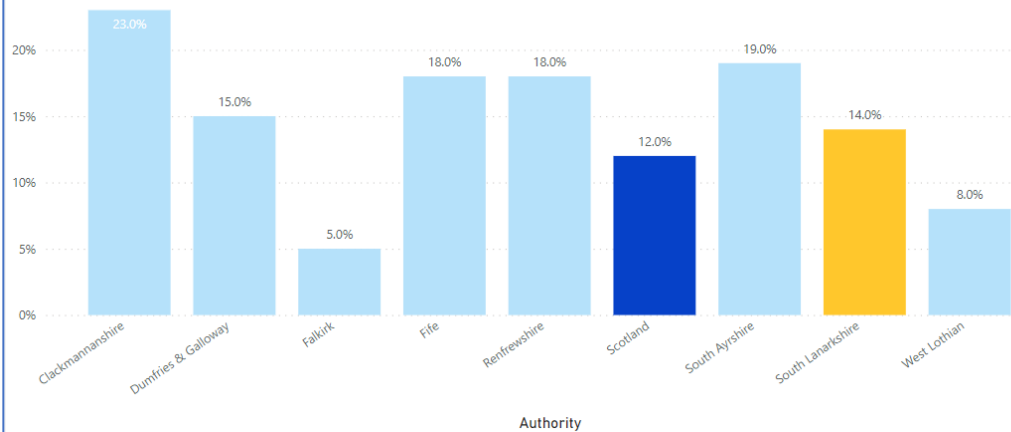
#### ECON04 - Proportion of procurement spent on local enterprises



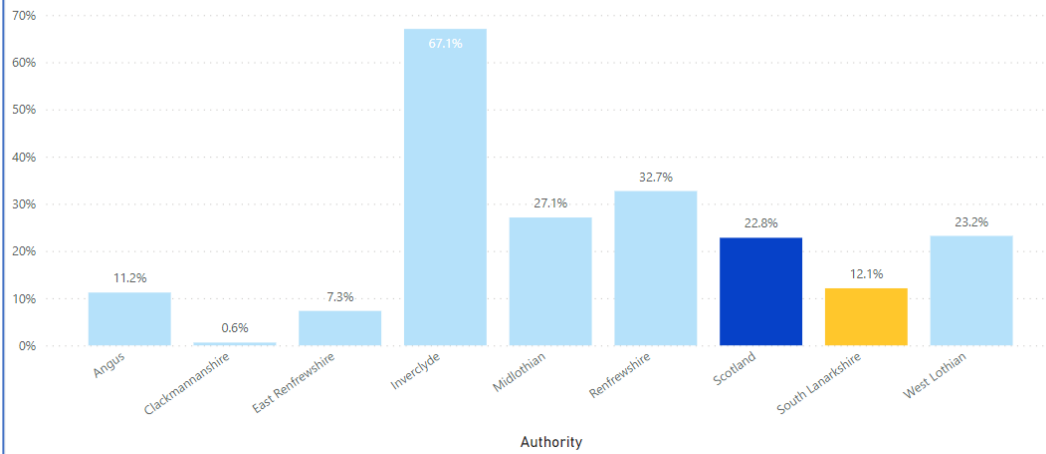
#### ECON06 - Investment in Economic Development & Tourism per 1,000 population



#### ECON09 - Town Vacancy Rates

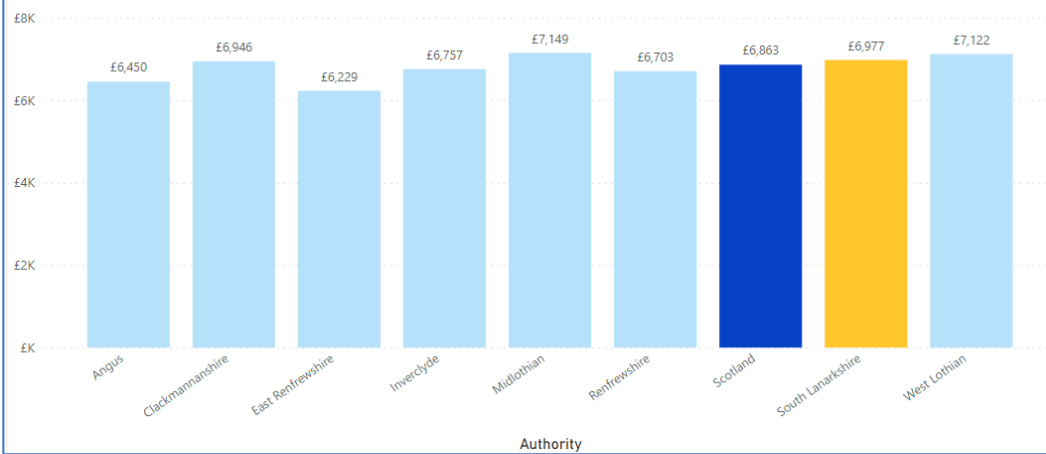


**ECON10 - Immediate available employment land as a % of total land allocated for employment purposes**

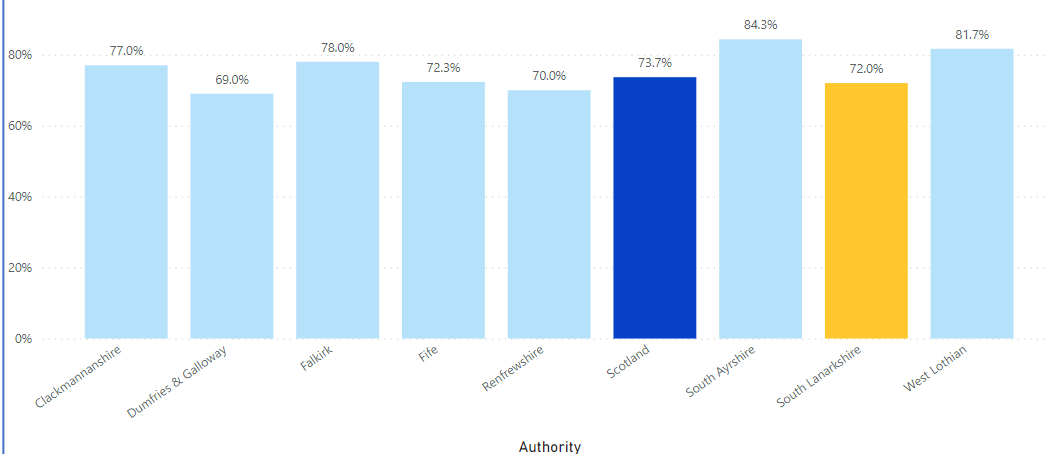


## Education Resources

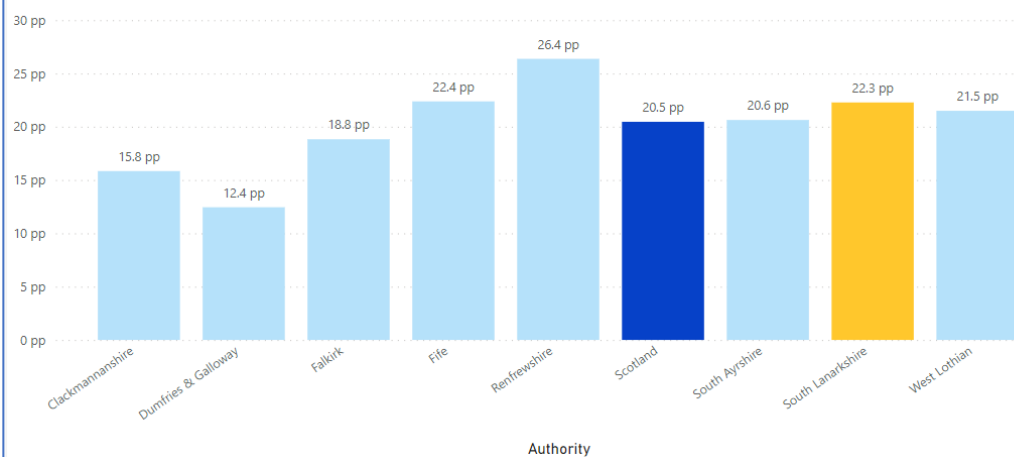
**CHN01 - Cost Per Primary School Pupil**



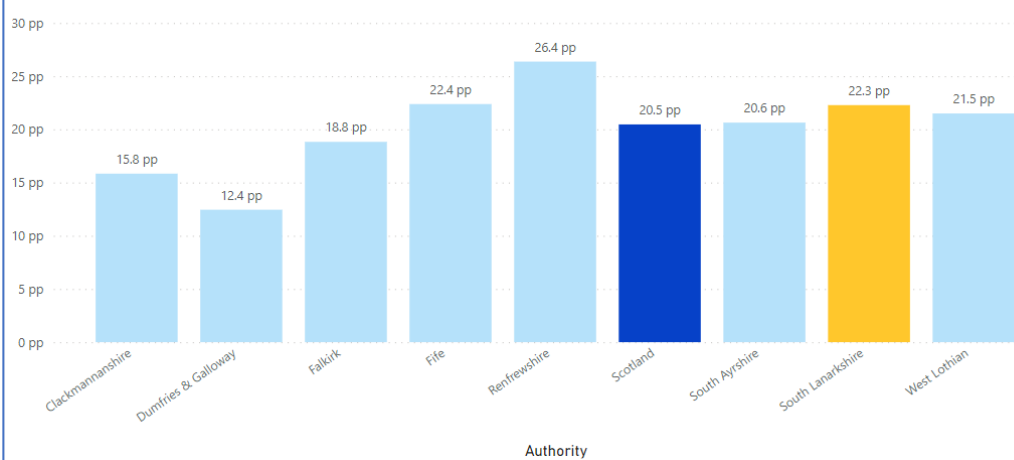
**CHN10 - Proportion of Adults Satisfied with Local Schools**



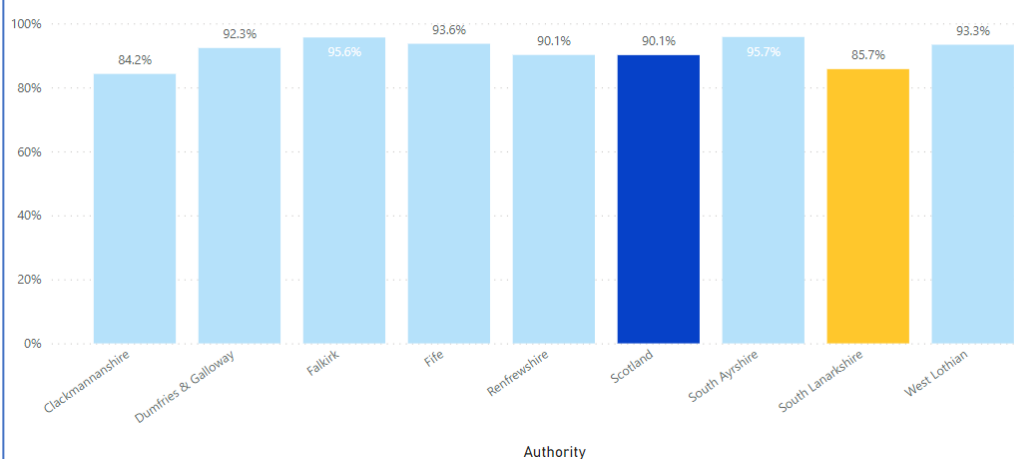
**CHN14a - Literacy Attainment Gap (P1,4,7 Combined)**



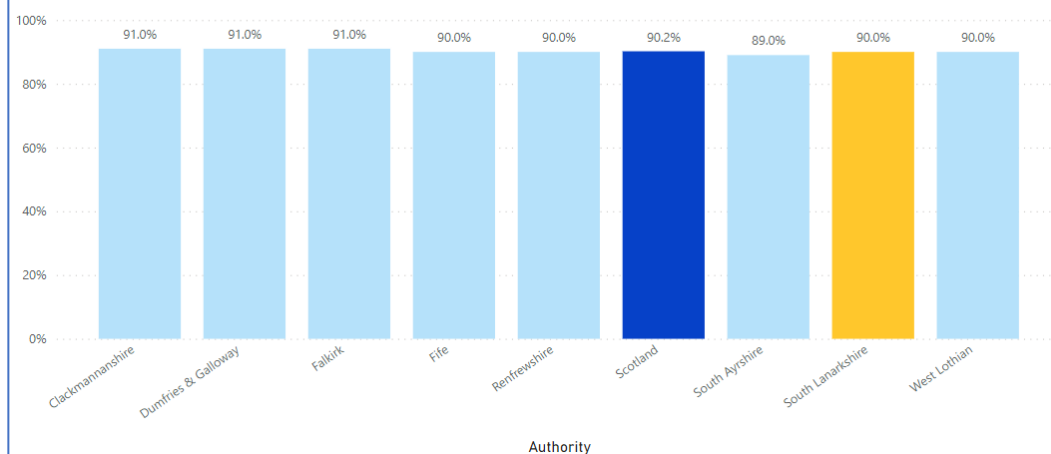
**CHN14a - Literacy Attainment Gap (P1,4,7 Combined)**



**CHN18 - Proportion of funded early years provision which is graded good/better**

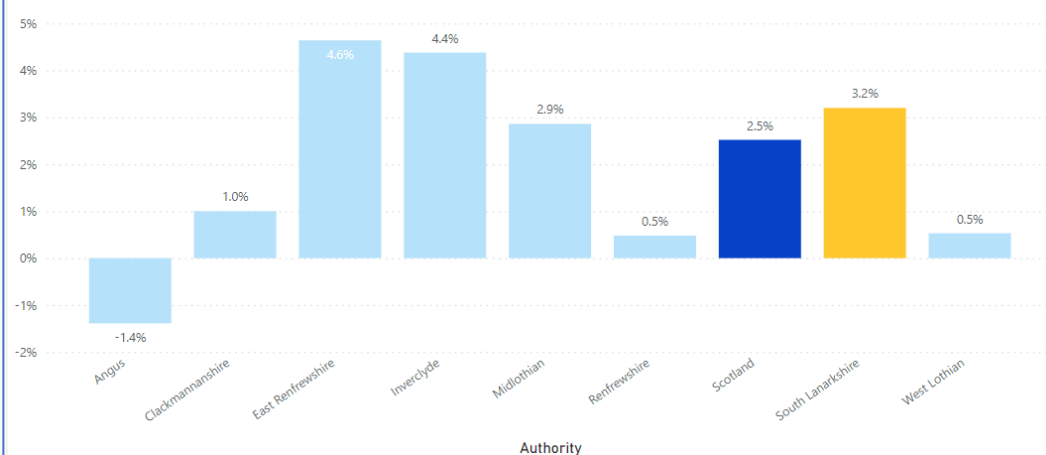


**CHN19a - School attendance rates (per 100 pupils)**

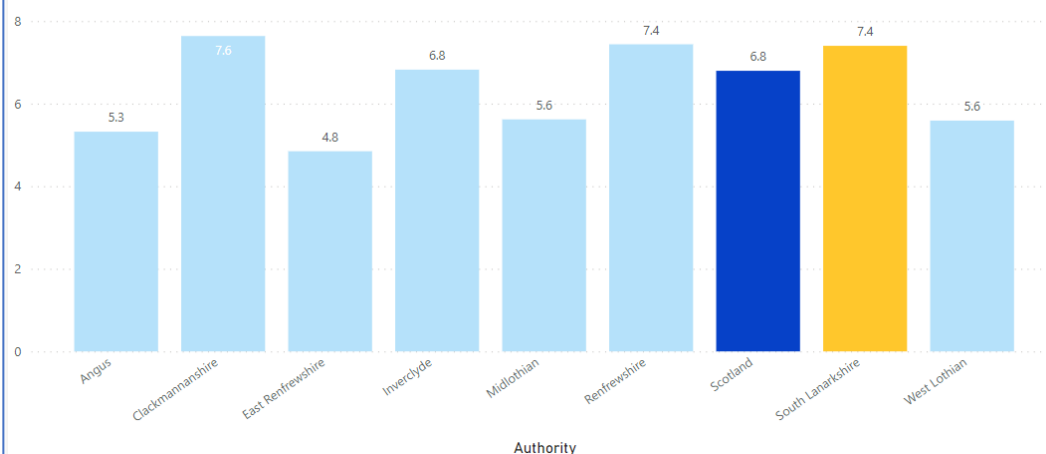


## Finance and Corporate Resources

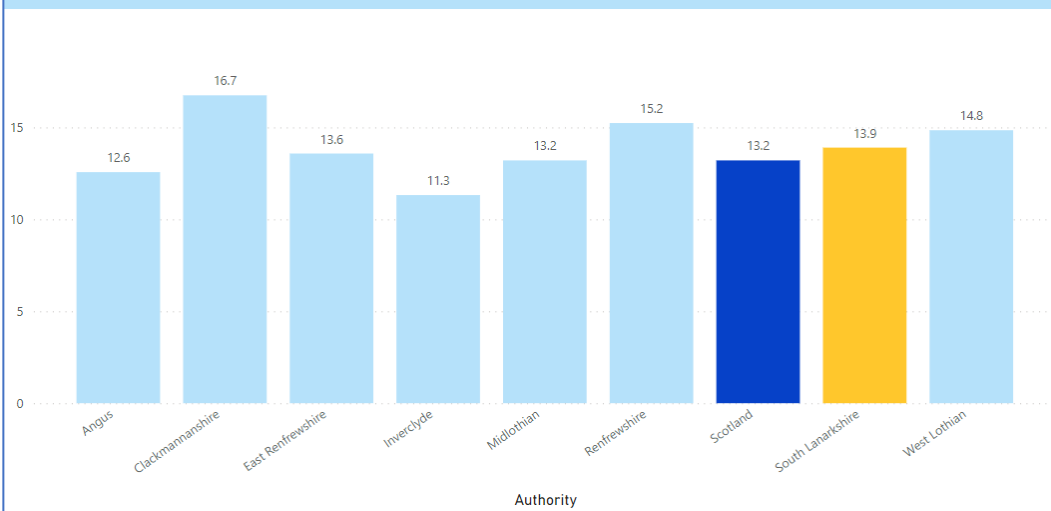
**CORP03c - Gender pay gap (%)**



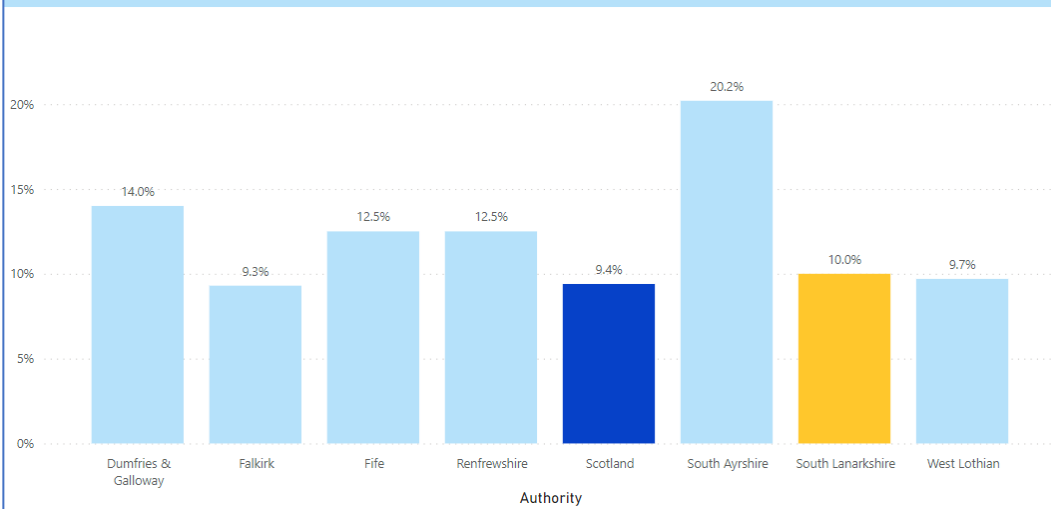
**CORP06a - Sickness Absence Days per Teacher**



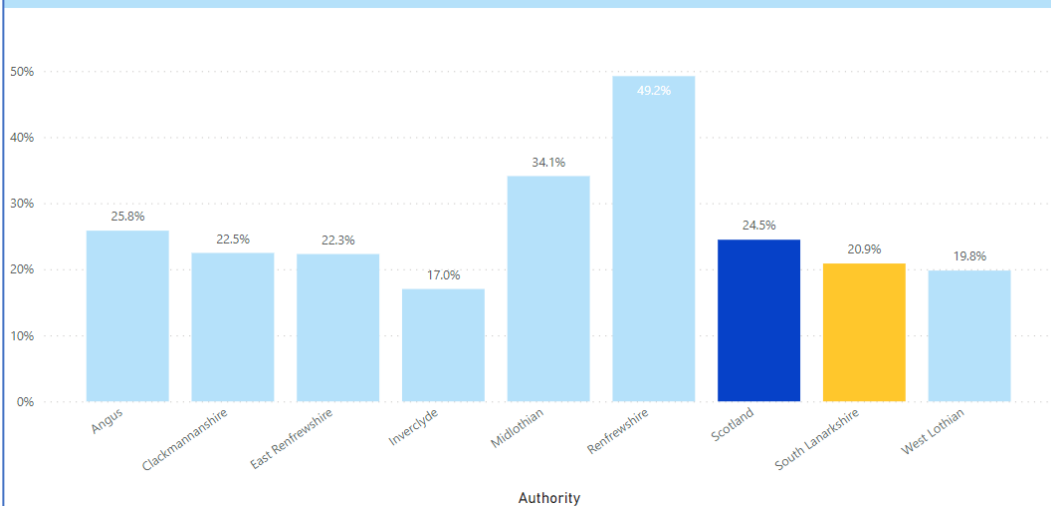
**CORP06b - Sickness Absence Days per Employee (non-teacher)**

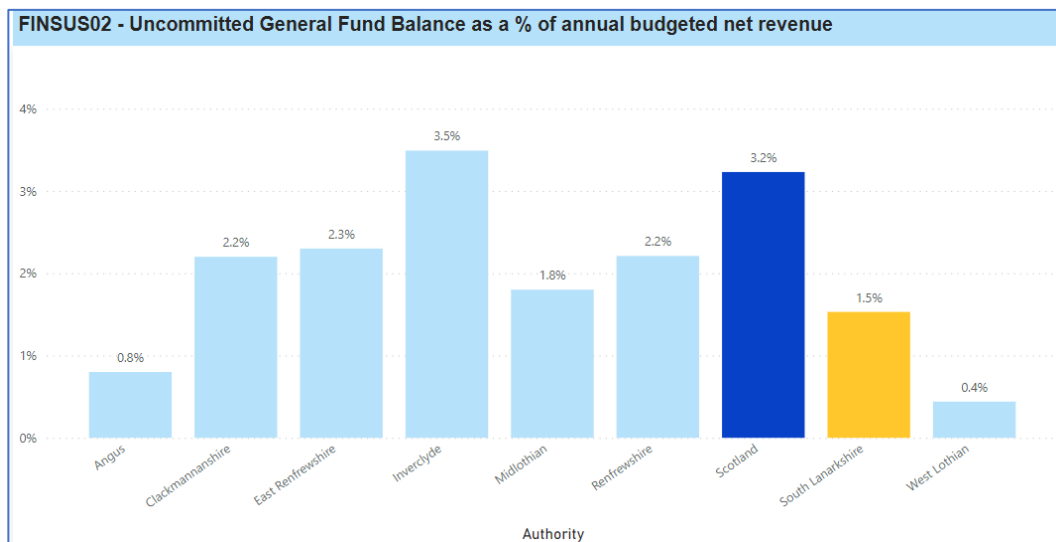


**ECON07 - Proportion of people earning less than the living wage**

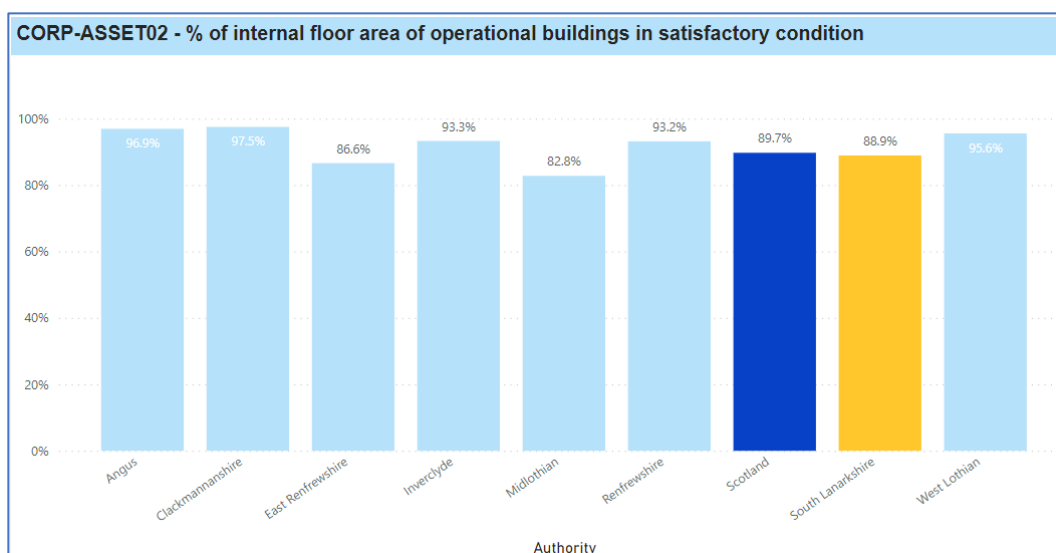
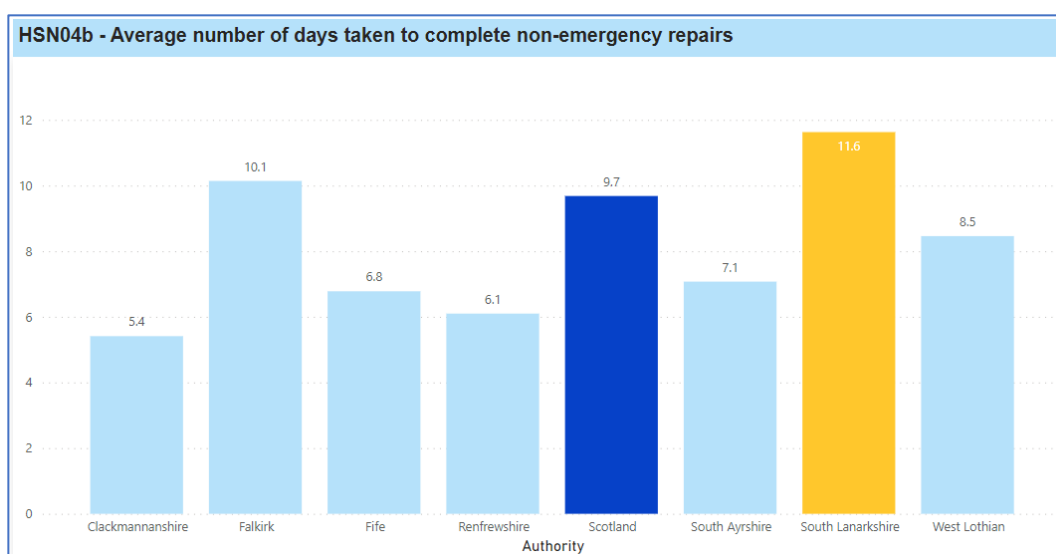


**FINSUS01 - Total useable reserves as a % of council annual budgeted revenue**

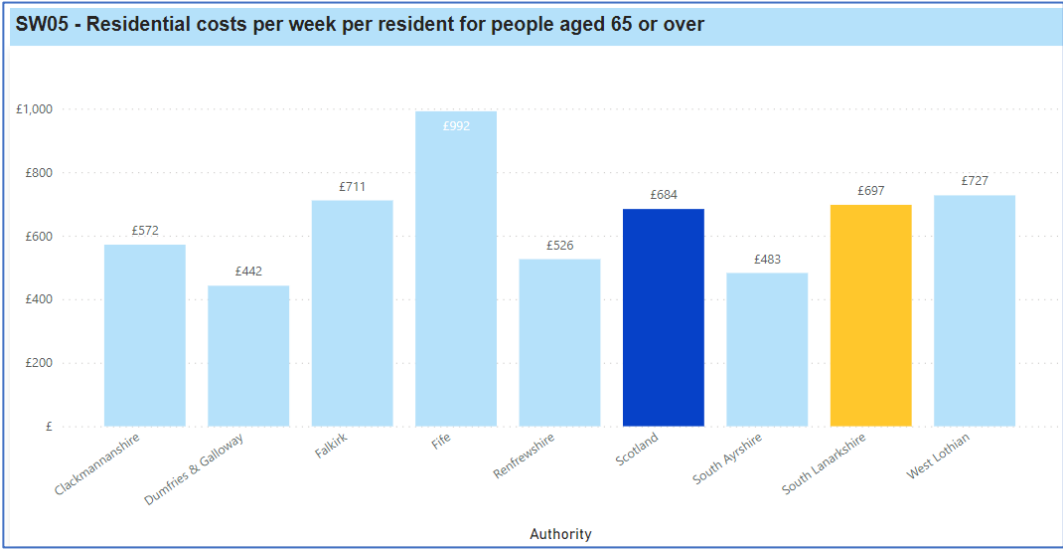
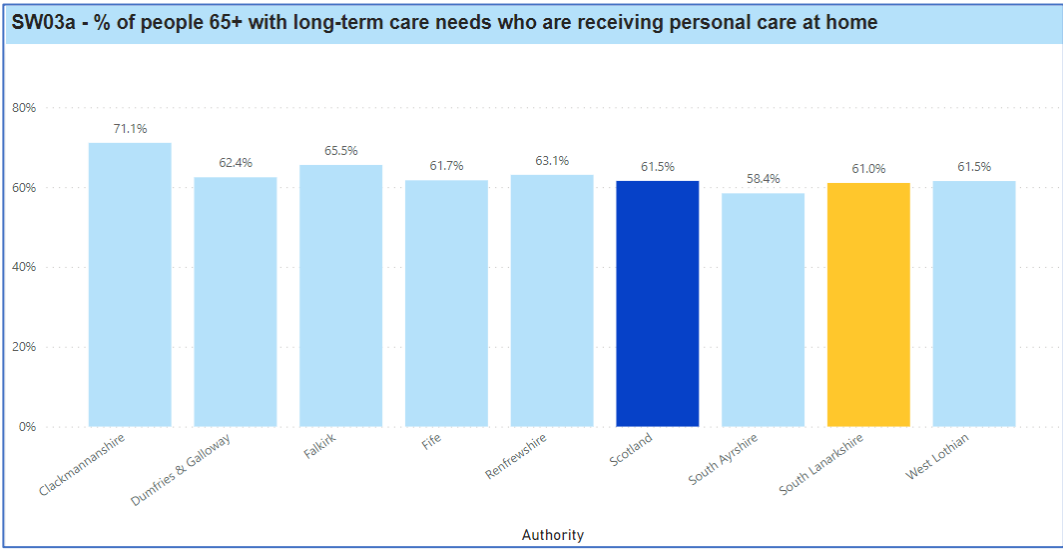
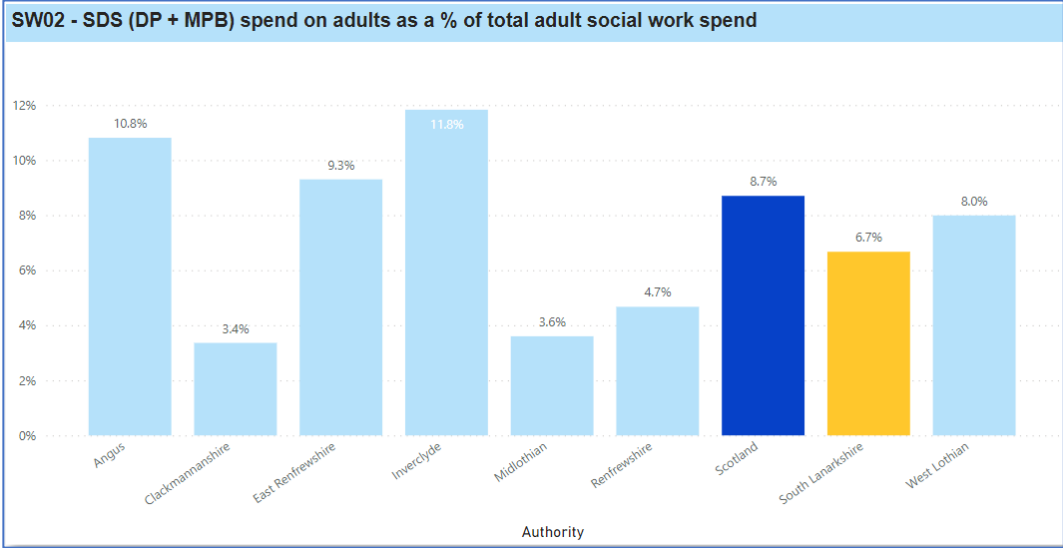




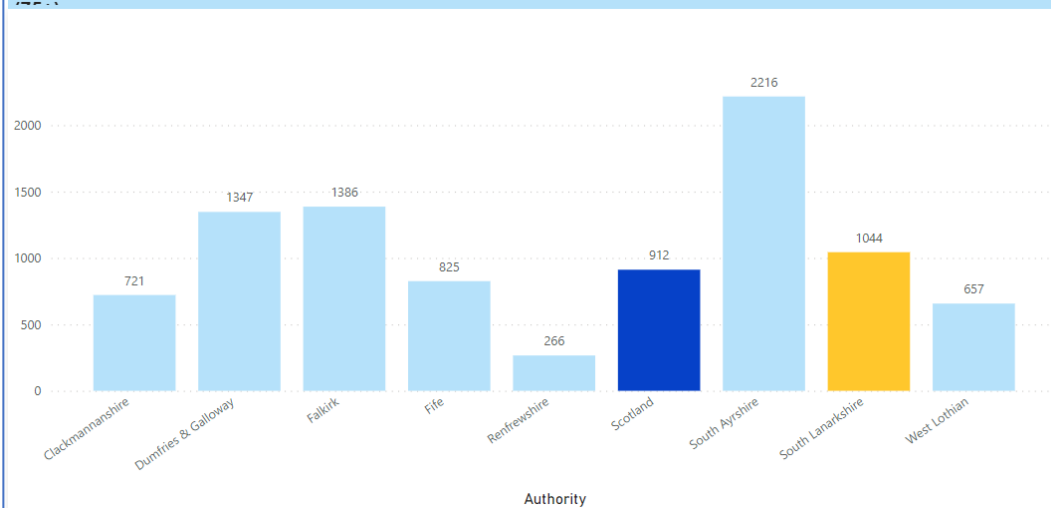
## Housing and Technical Resources



Social Work Resources



SW08 - Number of days people spend in hospital when they are ready to be discharged, per 1,000 population





# Report

5

Report to:	<b>Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>19 March 2024</b>
Report by:	<b>Chief Executive</b>

Subject:	<b>Best Value in Scotland</b>
----------	-------------------------------

## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ present a summary of the recent Audit Scotland report, Best Value in Scotland, which reflects on 20 years of auditing Best Value and next steps for Best Value reporting in Scottish Councils

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Forum is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the key messages within the report be noted.

## 3. Background

3.1. The Best Value (BV) in Scotland report, published in September 2023, provides a summary of how the BV audit approach has evolved and assesses its impact in driving improved performance, better governance, better use of public money and use of resources since its introduction in 2003.

3.2. This report summarises the key messages and areas for further work identified by the Accounts Commission.

## 4. Best Value Audit in Scotland

4.1. BV was first introduced by the United Kingdom (UK) Government in 1997. Although BV was a UK-wide development with very similar underlying principles in Scotland, England and Wales, the approaches taken are distinct. In Scotland, councils have a statutory duty to demonstrate BV, introduced in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003.

4.2. Audit Scotland began auditing BV in November 2003. Over the period 2004 to 2008, a BV audit report was published on each of the 32 Scottish councils.

4.3. In 2007, an independent review of the BV audit process was undertaken. The overall conclusion of the report was that the BV audit process had been effective in broad terms, reinforcing the value of external scrutiny. The review noted that the focus on councils' corporate activities was highly valued and that the BV audits had a significant impact on local authority corporate performance, on council leaders, and in stimulating action to improve poorly performing councils.

- 4.4. In 2008, the Accounts Commission adjusted the approach to be more risk based and balanced to reflect the individual context and issues for each council. This new approach was known as “BV2” and the first audits under this approach began in 2010.
- 4.5. Due to the proportionate and risk-based approach for BV2, 19 councils received a BV audit report during BV2. The Commission was provided assurances on the progress against BV through the Annual Audit Reports (AARs) for the 13 councils that did not receive a BV audit during BV2. South Lanarkshire Council was one of those that did not receive an audit under BV2.
- 4.6. In 2015, the Commission undertook a further review of its approach to auditing BV and a revised approach began in October 2016, with the first BV Assurance Report (BVAR) being published in June 2017. Between October 2016 and September 2022, 32 BVARs were completed – South Lanarkshire Council’s being published in 2018.
- 4.7. Since September 2022, a new approach has been implemented which revolves around the publication of Controller of Audit Reports (CoA) on selected councils each year, with all councils being covered by CoA reports within a 5-year cycle.
- 4.8. The first messages emerging from the new approach are the subject of separate papers to this Forum.

## **5. Key Messages**

- 5.1. Reflecting on the lessons learned over 20 years of auditing BV, the report picks out several key messages:-
  - ◆ The introduction of Best Value (BV) in 2003 was a substantial change for many councils and they have responded well to their BV duties, implementing and embedding BV and delivering efficiency improvements and savings through a period of considerable change. They have faced major wider policy developments, reducing resources and budget constraints along with the impacts of changing demographics and increasing demands.
  - ◆ The Accounts Commission’s BV approach has had a crucial role in holding local government to account, shining a spotlight on what is working and what needs to improve. Councils use BV audit findings to drive improvement which is monitored through the annual audit process and through specific follow-up work in individual councils. The Commission has recognised, through consultation with stakeholders, areas for improvement with the BV approach, enabling the process to continually mature and develop. The BV process will continue to evolve and remains the foundation of the Commission’s work in local government, assessing how individual councils are securing and delivering BV, as well as reporting nationally on specific themes.
  - ◆ BV has driven significant improvements in local government, including performance management, partnership working and community engagement. However, there are areas where progress has been made, but not fast enough, including strategic and collaborative leadership, public performance reporting, workforce planning, medium to long-term financial planning, scrutiny and the pace and depth of continuous improvement. These are areas where we will continue to focus our attention.

- ◆ Looking forward, councils need to make some difficult decisions on what their future priorities will be and how they will deliver services. They will need to challenge old ways of doing things and take urgent action to reform. BV is about more than good governance and managing resources effectively. It is also about improvement, change and delivering services that improve the outcomes for local people.
- ◆ Councils will not be able to respond to all the challenges they face by themselves – to succeed a whole system approach to change is needed involving partners and communities.

## 6. Areas Where Further Progress is Required

6.1. BV audits have had a positive impact on local government, but have also identified some recurring themes of BV that require further progress. Some of these will feed into the annual thematic work which will be undertaken under the new approach to the Audit of BV.

**Table 1: areas requiring further progress**

<b>Strategic Direction</b>	
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Councils need to make difficult decisions on what their priorities will be in the future and on how they deliver services. Effective leadership by councillors and senior officers will be crucial to setting clear priorities and robust planning to deliver them.</li> <li>◆ Councils need to make difficult decisions on what their priorities will be in the future and on how they deliver services, to deliver the best possible outcomes for local people.</li> </ul>
Governance and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Councils' governance arrangements need to ensure that elected members have sufficient information to support effective scrutiny and decision-making to deliver BV.</li> </ul>
<b>Use of Resources</b>	
Performance management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Councils will need to make difficult choices about what their service and performance priorities are. Strengthening the use of data and consulting and involving communities, especially the experience of service users, will be critical to informing these decisions. Councils need to improve performance monitoring and reporting on outcomes. Councils will need to seek innovative ways to deliver services to maintain or improve service performance.</li> </ul>
Financial management and planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Councils need to set out medium to long-term financial plans that detail:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how they will make recurring savings and reduce reliance on reserves to fill budget gaps</li> <li>• how council resources are targeted to achieve their long-term policy and performance priorities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Councils need to improve workforce planning to effectively develop and deploy their existing workforce. This includes:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• building the capacity, skills, strategic thinking and comprehensive workforce data needed for effective workforce planning</li> <li>• updating workforce plans to reflect new models of service delivery and ways of working.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<b>Workforce innovation is the focus of the Commission's annual BV thematic work for 2023/2024.</b>
Asset management	♦ The delivery of councils' capital programmes form a necessary component of modernising services to deliver improved outcomes for local communities. Good strategic medium to long-term asset management planning is essential for how council assets will be used to deliver improved outcomes for local communities.
Information	♦ Councils should have a clear plan for strengthening their use of data to understand needs, make decisions and direct resources. This includes equalities data and learning from those with lived experience.
<b>Partnership Working</b>	
Community Planning and wider partnership working	♦ Councils need to maximise the potential of collaboration by demonstrating they are working with other councils, the wider public sector and the third sector to redesign and provide services. Councils must now rethink how they work together, and with local partners and communities, to provide financially sustainable services whilst tackling national issues such as climate change, child poverty and inequalities. Few councils provide services jointly or share support services across different councils.
Communities	♦ Councils continue to be at the forefront of supporting people and mitigating the impact of inequalities across communities, they should be more transparent with the public about scale of service demand, the extent of backlogs and changes to eligibility criteria necessary to ration access to services and any impact this has on unmet need. Councils need to involve service users and local communities in the redesign of services and support communities to improve local outcomes.
<b>Continuous Improvement</b>	
Transformation and reform	♦ Councils need to challenge old ways of doing things and take urgent action to reform. BV is about more than good governance and managing resources effectively. It is also about a focus on improvement, on change, on delivering services that improve the lives of local people.

## **7. Next Steps and Recommendations**

- 7.1. Officers of the Council will continue to review Accounts Commission publications as they are published to learn any lessons for the Council. Reports on any significant findings and key messages will be brought to the Forum for information.

## **8. Employee Implications**

- 8.1. There are no direct employee implications.

## **9. Financial Implications**

- 9.1. There are no direct financial implications.

## **10. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications**

10.1. There are no implications for climate change, sustainability or the environment in terms of the information contained in this report.

## **11. Other Implications**

11.1. Considering the detail of the report and identifying actions as appropriate contribute towards effective risk management.

## **12. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

12.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and therefore no impact assessment is required.

12.2. There is no requirement for consultation on the content of the report.

**Paul Manning**  
**Chief Executive**

29 February 2024

## **Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes**

- Ambitious, self-aware and improving

## **Previous References**

- None

## **List of Background Papers**

- None

## **Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Tom Little, Head of Communications and Strategy

Ext: 4904 (Tel: 01698 454904)

E-mail: [Tom.Little@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:Tom.Little@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)



# Report

6

Report to:	<b>Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>19 March 2024</b>
Report by:	<b>Chief Executive</b>

Subject:	<b>Accounts Commission New Approach to the Audit of Best Value – Initial Reports</b>
----------	--

## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise the Forum of key messages and recommendations from recent reports published under the Accounts Commission's new approach to auditing Best Value

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Forum is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the key messages and recommendations within the report be noted.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. With the publication of the Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) report on Comhairle nan Eilean Siar in September 2022 (reported to the Forum on 29 November 2022), the Accounts Commission concluded its programme of Best Value (BV) audits which was initiated in 2018.
- 3.2. On 21 March 2023, a report to the Forum advised of the Accounts Commission's new approach to the audit of Best Value. This report summarises the audits carried out so far under the new approach and highlights key messages which might be relevant to South Lanarkshire.

## 4. New Approach

- 4.1. Auditors are required to report progress against previous Best Value audit reports and Commission findings. Part of the new approach is a requirement for the Controller of Audit to report on every council across the audit appointment round, covering the period October 2023 to August 2027.
- 4.2. Unlike the previous approach where Best Value Assurance Reports were based on a separate piece of audit work, the new approach consists of brief Controller of Audit (COA) reports accompanied by and reflecting on published annual audit reports. As with the current approach, these Controller of Audit reports are considered by the Commission in public and reported publicly.
- 4.3. The COA reports are intended to offer a BV-focused reflection on the council's annual audit report. To date, controller of audit reports have been published on South Ayrshire Council (2 November 2023), Dundee City Council (30 November 2023), Dumfries and Galloway Council (11 January 2024) and Orkney Islands

Council (30 January 2024). The remaining two councils in the 2023 tranche are North Lanarkshire Council and Moray Council.

- 4.4. In line with the previous practice of bringing BVAR findings to the Forum to highlight good practice and place our own activities in context, the findings from the recent COA reports are summarised below.

## **5. South Ayrshire Council**

- 5.1. The South Ayrshire report highlights several areas of concern, including the pace of improvement since the BVAR in 2021; the transformational programme; performance management and performance reporting; self-evaluation; and public performance reporting. On the plus side, it is noted that the council has effective financial management processes and an effective approach to medium and long term financial planning.

- ◆ This report is the first to reflect the Commission's new approach to Best Value. It is fully integrated into annual audit work, reported in Annual Audit Reports, and includes detailed work each year on a national theme. For 2022/2023 the national theme is leadership.
- ◆ We are pleased to see that the council has effective financial management processes in place, has delivered balanced budgets, and has met its savings targets. We also welcome the council's approach to medium- and long-term financial planning. However, given the large budget gaps identified in its financial planning, we believe there should be clear alignment between the council's budget and its strategic priorities for the 2024/2025 financial year.
- ◆ We note the progress that the council has made in addressing the recommendations in our 2021 Best Value Assurance Report. We are concerned, however, that the pace of improvement has been slow. We acknowledge that external factors, including financial pressures and changes in political leadership, have contributed to this but these factors are not unique to the council.
- ◆ We are also concerned about the council's transformation programme and the lack of progress since our 2021 report, particularly given the reliance on this to address the financial and service delivery challenges the council is experiencing. We note that the transformation programme has been refocused, and the number of projects reduced, but we now urge the council to move at pace to establish the expected cashable benefits and baseline activity for the programme.
- ◆ Linked to this, we have wider concerns around performance management and performance reporting within the council. The council should ensure that it has clear measures of progress against its key priorities, and that future performance reporting to elected members is transparent and balanced.
- ◆ There is also a lack of a corporate approach to self-evaluation, and we urge the council to progress this as a priority. We encourage the council to make use of comparative analysis with its peer organisations and consider support from other bodies with expertise in this area.
- ◆ We were disappointed to note that public performance reporting needs to improve, to ensure compliance with the Commission's Statutory Performance Information Direction. We note that work is under way to address this and look forward to seeing the refreshed approach in place as soon as possible.
- ◆ We recognise that the council has sought to address our previous findings on leadership, and we commend the council for the clear intent around the new senior management structure, to ensure that there is sufficient leadership capacity. We look forward to seeing the impact of these changes and evidence of a culture of continuous improvement within the council.

- ◆ The actions identified from the audit will be followed up in future annual audit reports to the council, and the Commission asks the Controller of Audit to monitor the council's progress and report back to the Commission with any concerns if she deems it necessary.

5.2. The commission puts forward the following action points for South Ayrshire Council:-

- ◆ Decisive and focused leadership is now needed if the council is to achieve its priorities and improve outcomes for citizens. Over the course of the audit appointment auditors will monitor the effectiveness of this revised structure.
- ◆ Plans to reintroduce a corporate self-evaluation tool need to be progressed.
- ◆ The first performance report on the new Council Plan is currently scheduled for November 2023 and auditors will report on the effectiveness of this framework in future years.
- ◆ The council is in the process of updating its dedicated public performance reporting webpage. This is required to ensure compliance with the Statutory Performance Information Direction.
- ◆ The council is due to present its updated medium to long-term financial plan to members towards the end of 2023. This should be transparent about the scale of service demand and pressures and demonstrate how the council's finances align with the priorities set out in the new Council Plan.
- ◆ Achievement of the refocused strategic change programme is key to future service delivery and financial sustainability. The council should calculate the expected cashable benefits and ensure the leadership focus to deliver the required transformation.
- ◆ The council will need to consider the skills and capacity required to deliver its integrated impact assessments as well as set measures to monitor progress in reducing inequalities and addressing climate change.

## 6. Dundee City Council

6.1. Dundee received a positive report with particular strengths noted in relation to clarity of vision; fair and balanced public performance reporting; community empowerment and engagement; and the approach to continuous improvement.

- ◆ Overall, we commend the council for the progress it has made since the Best Value Assurance Report in September 2020, and are pleased to note that it has implemented all our recommendations.
- ◆ It is clear that the effective leadership provided by officers and elected members is an area of strength for the council. This is demonstrated in the clarity and coherence of the council's vision and planning, its alignment of resources with its priorities, and its fair and balanced public performance reporting, which we welcome.
- ◆ We are also impressed by the commitment to community empowerment and engagement that comes through strongly in the Council Plan and by the evidence of how this is being delivered in practice.
- ◆ We recognise that there are high levels of deprivation and child poverty in Dundee, and long-standing challenges around educational attainment and drug deaths. The Commission is assured that the council is taking action in response to these issues, as in other areas of policy.
- ◆ The council's financial management and planning is sound and again should be commended. We note that challenges remain around delivery of the capital programme, but that this is also showing signs of progress.

- ◆ We welcome the council's commitment to continuous improvement, and encourage elected members and officers to share their approach to this with other councils. It will be essential to sustain this year on year and we look forward to following the council's progress in future Annual Audit Reports.

6.2. The commission puts forward the following action points for Dundee City Council:-

- ◆ The council should consider what more can be done to encourage and support increased community ownership.
- ◆ The council is not yet achieving its participatory budgeting target of one per cent and should identify further areas where participatory budgeting can be used effectively.
- ◆ The council's long-term financial strategy needs to be updated to show how resources will be targeted towards priority areas over the next ten years.
- ◆ Management should continue to monitor the affordability and deliverability of the five-year capital plan and clearly report to members on emerging overspends, or slippage against key milestones and completion dates.
- ◆ Management should ensure that draft internal reports are cleared and reported in a timely manner so that recommendations for improvement can also be actioned within an appropriate timescale.

## 7. **Dumfries and Galloway Council**

7.1. The report for Dumfries and Galloway identifies clear vision and priorities backed up by financial plans, an annual delivery plan and performance management arrangements. However, work needs to be done to develop measures to track progress against outcomes and the council needs to improve how it reports its performance to the public and elected members. Specific mention is made of climate change plans and the lack of clarity about whether the council is still working towards its net zero targets.

- ◆ The Commission is pleased to see the evidence of the council leadership's commitment to Best Value. The collaborative approach to strategic planning and financial management by members and senior officers is commended. The council plan clearly sets out its vision and priorities, and the council has agreed a three-year budget, underpinned by detailed change and savings options.
- ◆ The council plan is aligned with its annual delivery plan and performance management arrangements. It is important that the council now publishes a focused suite of high-level measures to track progress against its agreed outcomes.
- ◆ The council's financial plans rely increasingly on transformation to new service models, and these will need to be delivered to meet the levels of savings required. An update of the council-wide workforce plan is also required to align with these plans. The council has a good track record of delivering savings targets, but it cannot underestimate the challenges it faces to address future funding gaps. The Commission encourages the council to continue to ensure that its reserves are used effectively and to support its transformation plans, where appropriate.
- ◆ The Commission is pleased to note that six of the seven actions from our 2018 Best Value Assurance Report have been fully addressed. However, more needs to be done to make information about council performance clear and accessible to the public. To comply with the Commission's Statutory Performance Information Direction, the council needs to publish a summary of its performance, including comparisons with other councils, on its website. The council should also ensure that this data is reported to elected members and is used as a learning opportunity to help improve its services.

- ◆ The council demonstrates an effective approach to community engagement, and the Commission encourages it to share this good practice.
- ◆ The council has ambitious plans on climate change, but it remains to be seen how achievable these are and whether there is the commitment and resources to realise them. The Commission is surprised to note that the current council plan does not include information on whether the council is still working towards its net zero target.

7.2. The commission puts forward the following action points for Dumfries and Galloway Council:-

- ◆ The council's leadership needs to sustain its pace of improvement and demonstrate that its arrangements are effective in driving delivery of its new strategic outcomes.
- ◆ The council has said it will review and report on the effectiveness of the revised structure by the end of 2025. Auditors will report on the outcome of that review in future years.
- ◆ The council needs to prioritise agreeing its focused suite of measures for the Council Plan. Auditors will report on the effectiveness of the council's performance framework in future years.
- ◆ The council has committed to a review of its website, to ensure compliance with the Statutory Performance Information Direction. It will reintroduce reporting of Local Government Benchmarking Framework data.
- ◆ The council has agreed to update the council-wide Workforce Plan to align with the Council Plan 2023-2028 and develop an Asset Management Plan for all built assets.
- ◆ Delivery of the change and savings programme will be key to maintaining future financial sustainability and supporting priority services.
- ◆ The council should clearly set out its net zero emissions target and how it plans to achieve it. It has committed to reporting recommendations for future targets for net zero emissions to the Cross-Party Working Group on Climate Change by March 2024.

## 8. Orkney Islands Council

8.1. Orkney receives a broadly positive report, however, there are concerns about the gap between the council's ambitious transformation plans and its ability to deliver on them, as well as a lack of a strategic approach to delivering savings sustainably. The Commission finds that there is also a lack of clarity about the approach to tackling climate change, including whether it is on track to meet its net zero targets.

- ◆ The council has effective strategic planning and performance reporting, with clear priorities set out in the Council Plan, supported by a Delivery Plan and subject to regular monitoring. The council also shows good compliance with the Commission's Statutory Performance Information Direction.
- ◆ We recognise that, as an islands authority, Orkney faces particular challenges, including in relation to staffing and capacity. At the same time, the council has potential opportunities offered by its wide range of responsibilities, abundant natural resources, and its positive relationship with the local community.
- ◆ However, the Commission believes there is a significant gap between the council's future transformation plans and ambitions and its ability to deliver on them. A greater sense of urgency is needed from the council in a range of areas, including medium-term financial planning, management of capital projects, and its approach to tackling climate change.

- ◆ We note the scale of the council's reserves and its stated intention to use those reserves in a sustainable manner. However, the council is projecting a very large budget shortfall over the coming years and has relied on use of its reserves rather than achieving significant savings to close previous budget gaps. We agree with the Controller that it needs to develop and implement detailed operational service plans to put its finances on a more sustainable footing over the next three years. We also urge the council to review its strategy for the sustainable use of its strategic reserve fund earlier than its target date of March 2025.
- ◆ The council has seen slippage in the delivery of capital projects over a number of years. Related to this, the Commission is not clear on whether the council is on track to achieve its ambitious target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030. The council must provide more clarity on when it will publish a revised climate change strategy and action plan.
- ◆ While the council's undertaking of a review of its community consultation and engagement is to be welcomed, the Commission would like to see this concluded sooner. We look forward to seeing the outcomes of this review, as well as any wider actions the council intend to take to ensure it maintains regular, structured engagement with residents throughout the year.

8.2. The following action points are identified for Orkney Islands Council:-

- ◆ The council agreed its new workforce plan in June 2022. It approved a Digital Strategy Delivery Plan in September 2023 and has property asset plans in place. However, its asset plans are now due for review and will require alignment with the new Council Plan.
- ◆ The council should ensure it keeps performance related information on its website up-to-date.
- ◆ The council should carry out a root cause analysis to monitor service performance, particularly in areas aligned to council priorities.
- ◆ The council is undertaking a Community Consultation and Engagement review and as part of this should consider how it can ensure regular and structured consultation throughout the year, and seek stakeholder views on the proposed and implemented approach.
- ◆ The council should ensure that up-to-date equalities impact assessments are readily available on its website.
- ◆ The council should develop delivery plans with specific inequality related performance measures to support its equalities outcomes.
- ◆ The council should continue to develop its climate related strategies and associated delivery plans and include financial impacts in its future budgets and the medium-term financial plan.
- ◆ The council needs to develop and implement detailed operational service plans to bridge the potential funding gap of £27.1m identified across 2023-2028. In doing so, it should ensure that it undertakes equality impact assessments, including Island Communities Impact Assessments where applicable.
- ◆ The council should carry out detailed analysis to develop a strategy for the sustainable use of the Strategic Reserve Fund taking into account its longer-term plans and commitments.

## 9. Next Steps and Recommendations

- 9.1. Officers of the council will continue to review the Controller of Audit reports as they are published to learn any lessons for the council. Reports on any significant findings and key messages will be brought to the Forum for information.

- 9.2. The scheduling of South Lanarkshire Council's COA report has yet to be confirmed, however, the Council does not appear on Audit Scotland's provisional programme of COA reports for 2024 and 2025, suggesting 2026 at the earliest for the South Lanarkshire Council audit.

**10. Employee Implications**

- 10.1. There are no direct employee implications.

**11. Financial Implications**

- 11.1. There are no direct financial implications.

**12. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications**

- 12.1. There are no implications for climate change, sustainability or the environment in terms of the information contained in this report.

**13. Other Implications**

- 13.1. Considering the detail of the report and identifying actions as appropriate contribute towards effective risk management.

**14. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 14.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and therefore no impact assessment is required.

- 14.2. There is no requirement for consultation on the content of the report.

**Paul Manning**  
**Chief Executive**

29 February 2024

**Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes**

- Ambitious, self-aware and improving

**Previous References**

- None

**List of Background Papers**

- None

**Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Tom Little, Head of Communications and Strategy

Ext: 4904 (Tel: 01698 454904)

E-mail: [Tom.Little@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:Tom.Little@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

