

Local government benchmarking framework report.

The Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) represents a joint commitment by SOLACE (Scotland) and COSLA to develop better measurement and comparable data to target resources and drive improvement. Over the past ten years, this approach has been successful in supporting all 32 Scottish councils to work and learn together.

COVID-19 has altered the landscape and fundamentally affected Local Government services and the lives of the communities it serves. Stirling Council has been at the forefront of the initial and ongoing response; creating new services at pace, working in partnership with communities as well as the third and private sectors, helping to protect those who are vulnerable, and maintaining community wellbeing.

Communities were affected by the pandemic in different ways and councils' responses to COVID-19 have exemplified the importance of local solutions to local needs and issues. Lack of uniformity is an inevitable function of local democracy reflecting the different needs and priorities of local communities. Each council has developed the structure and service arrangements it believes are the most appropriate and cost-effective to support its local community.

Stirling council does however report our performance locally within locally developed and agreed public reporting frameworks, which draw upon LGBF information. This information is available to all citizens and users of council services so that they can hold councils to account for what is achieved on their behalf and ask questions of Local Government to promote improvement.

Given the pressures we face as we emerge from the pandemic, it will be more important than ever for councils to work together to evaluate and learn from their response to inform the future design, delivery and shape of services. The evidence base provided by the LGBF will be key in helping authorities explore and understand the impact of different ways of working and models of delivery, and to help ensure we do not lose the learning and innovation which has emerged during these exceptional times.

The driving force behind this work is, and will always be, to improve the lives of people in communities across Scotland. We believe that effective public services contribute to both individual and community quality of life and the LGBF is an increasingly important element of the local intelligence necessary to achieve this vision. With the financial pressures, growing demand on services, and now the profound effects of COVID-19, there has never been a greater requirement for working with and learning from each other.

