

Policy and Sustainability

10.00am, 30 August 2022

Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2020/21 - Edinburgh Overview

Item number
Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

That the Policy and Sustainability Committee note the report setting out the detailed analysis of the LGBF benchmarking framework dataset for the 2020/21 financial year.

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Report

Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2020/21 – Edinburgh Overview

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides an overview analysis of the 2020/21 benchmarking data provided by the Scottish Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) and reflects the impact of the first year of Covid-19.
- 2.2 In summary, the report shows the impact of Covid-19 across services in Edinburgh during 2020/21.

3. Background

- 3.1 Led by [SOLACE](#), with the support of the [Improvement Service](#), the Local Government Benchmarking Framework aims to provide a benchmarking toolkit for local government.
- 3.2 The publication and use of this data forms part of the Council's statutory requirements for public performance reporting as directed by the Accounts Commission.
- 3.3 It should be noted that LGBF data is always retrospective, and the framework provides benchmarking data and national rankings for services that were delivered in the financial year 2020/21. In comparison, the current Annual Performance Report refers to the financial year 2021/22.
- 3.4 This is benchmarking data for all Scottish Local Authorities and, where the data is relevant, can present a useful analysis of us in comparison to others.
- 3.5 Currently the dataset holds 2020/21 data for 88 out of the 101 indicators.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The Local Government Benchmarking Framework [National Benchmarking Overview Report 2020/21](#) was published by the Improvement Service in March 2022. The report introduces data from 2020/21 and provides a picture of the impact of the first year of Covid-19 on local government services and the lives of their communities.
- 4.2 In addition, an online toolkit on the [My Local Council](#) website has been created to help councils benchmark with other councils.
- 4.3 The framework allows local authorities to compare their performance across a suite of indicators of efficiency (unit cost), outputs and outcomes, covering all areas of local government activity.

- 4.4 This year's LGBF data highlights the effort and achievements delivered across local government during the first full year of Covid-19. The workforce has adapted quickly to meet new demands, maintain essential services, and implement new ways of working.
- 4.5 The significant upheaval resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic has introduced new complexity in relation to the 2020/21 LGBF dataset and so judgements on comparative rankings should be viewed with caution as each Council made service decisions on local factors, priorities, and resources.
- 4.6 This dataset provides information ranking Edinburgh with the other councils as well as timeseries data for each of the indicators for Edinburgh.
- 4.7 The Local Government Benchmarking Framework is not a comprehensive summary of all the performance of the Council in 2020/21 rather, the data complements and informs the Council's own Corporate Performance Framework.

High level Overview

- 4.8 The latest figures show that overall Edinburgh's ranking is in the top two quartiles (so above the national average) for 59% of the indicators (52 out of 88).
- 4.9 In terms of overall ranking Edinburgh compares favourably with the other three most comparable cities of Aberdeen, Dundee, and Glasgow:
 - Edinburgh has the highest number of indicators above the Scottish average at 52, compared to Aberdeen with 40 indicators, Dundee with (36 indicators) and Glasgow (38 indicators).
 - Edinburgh has the fewest indicators in the bottom quartile at 10, with Aberdeen having 21, Dundee 32 and Glasgow 28.
- 4.10 The Appendix provides an overview of Council benchmarking performance in 2020/21 under the framework's nine themes, namely:
 - Children's Services
 - Adult Social Care Services
 - Environmental Services
 - Culture and Leisure Services
 - Housing Services
 - Corporate and Asset Management Services
 - Economic Development (including Planning)
 - Financial Sustainability
 - Tackling Climate Change
- 4.11 Each theme section gives an overview of the impact of Covid-19 on services, how services have responded and how that is reflected in the 2020/21 data. In the appendices a comparative overview of Edinburgh's five year trend data with the Scotland wide average, and the cities of Aberdeen, Dundee, and Glasgow is shown for each indicator.

- 4.12 In addition to the Local Government Benchmarking Framework, the Council also participates in several other benchmarking and service development groups. These include the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE), Scotland's Housing Network and Keep Scotland Beautiful.
- 4.13 Along with the Local Government Benchmarking Framework, these allow the Council to share best practice and provide a focus for service improvement initiatives.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2020/21 data analysis will be used to inform Senior Management Team discussions and the Council Planning and Performance Framework.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There is no financial impact associated with this report.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The publication and use of the benchmarking data forms part of the Council's statutory requirements for public performance reporting, [as directed by the Accounts Commission](#).

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [LGBF National Overview Report 2020/21](#) published by the Improvement Service in March 2022.
- 8.2 [My Local Council](#) website.

9. Appendices

Appendix A: 2020/21 Edinburgh Overview

Appendix B: LGBF report Appendix 1a – 1l

Appendix A: 2020/21 Edinburgh Overview

LGBF 2020/21 summary

1. This analysis of the most recent Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) data provides:
 - a. a summary of Edinburgh's comparative ranking and indicator performance compared to the previous year, 2019/20
 - b. indicator data and the national ranking position for all LGBF indicators
 - c. urban cities and Scotland average comparative data
 - d. an overview of national performance trends and local factors.

National picture

2. This year's LGBF data highlights the effort and achievements delivered across local government during the first full year of Covid-19. The workforce has adapted quickly to meet new demands, maintain essential services, and implement new ways of working.
3. However, the evidence also highlights that the impacts of the pandemic on our communities have been, and are likely to continue to be, borne unequally. LGBF data from 2020/21 reveals growing levels of poverty, financial hardship, and inequalities. This is evidenced, for example, in the widening attainment gap in literacy and numeracy for primary pupils, and in positive destinations; increasing rent arrears and reducing Council Tax payments; and increasing levels of benefit claimants, particularly in the 18 - 25 year old age group.
4. The significant upheaval resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic has introduced new complexity in relation to the 2020/21 LGBF dataset and so judgements on comparative rankings should be viewed with caution as each council made service decisions on local factors, priorities, and resources. Impacts include the significantly altered delivery and operating landscapes during this period; data timeliness issues; methodological breaks and data gaps; and the impact of Covid-19 related inflation on expenditure patterns.

Edinburgh – summary

5. While the impact of Covid-19 makes analysing this dataset more challenging, it is still valuable to consider what the data shows about how Edinburgh responded to the impacts of Covid-19.
6. Throughout the various changes in restrictions and guidance during 2020/21, Edinburgh has focused on ensuring that services continued to be delivered, wherever possible, while keeping residents and staff safe. Alongside this we quickly put in place additional services to support our most vulnerable residents and businesses with the impact of Covid-19. We supported over 28,000 people through our resilience centres, paid 68,000 school meal payments, distributed over 3,500 iPads and over 1,000 data packs, awarded over £5.5m Scottish Welfare grants to individuals and over £250m grants to businesses and issued over 10.5m PPE items to frontline staff.

7. The focus on supporting our most vulnerable residents and businesses alongside delivery of services has continued in 2021/22 as services continued to reopen or started to return to full capacity.

Edinburgh - ranking

8. Compared to last year (2019/20) we have improved our ranking in 43 of the indicators and maintained our ranking in 12 of the indicators. Our comparative ranking position compared to other councils, has declined in 33 of the indicators. This is summarised in the chart and the table below:

Chart 1: Edinburgh ranking by theme - 2020/21, 2019/20 & 2018/19

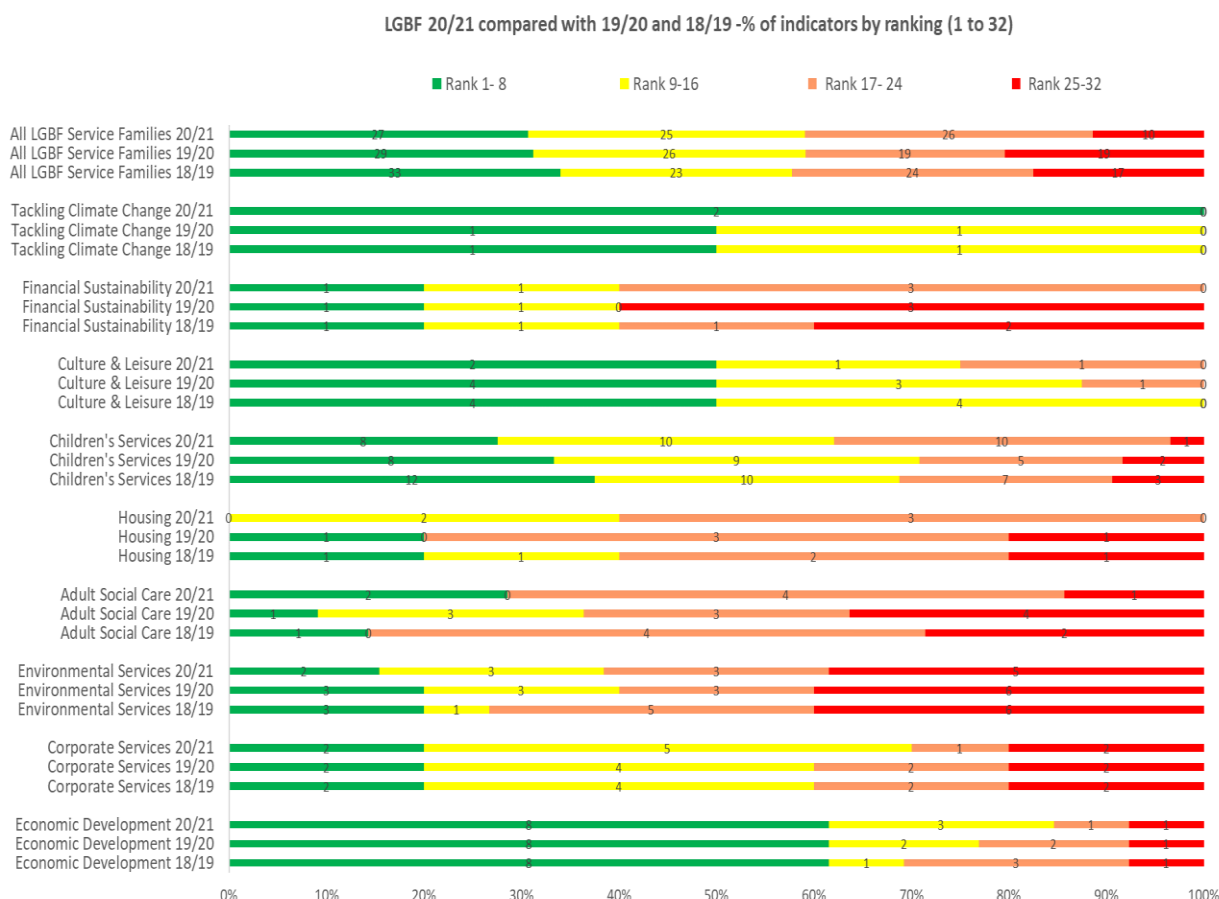
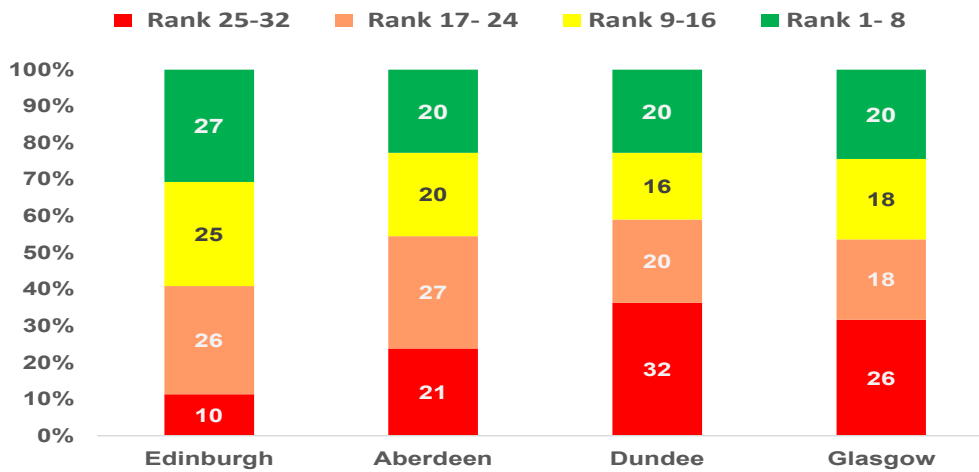


Table 1: Summary of ranking positions 2019/20 compared to 2020/21

Ranking 20/21	Education	Corporate	Adult Social Care	Environmental	Housing	Econ Dev	Culture & Leisure	Financial Sustainability	Tackling Climate Change	Total	%
Improved	14	5	5	6	2	4	1	4	2	43	49%
Declined	14	3	1	6	3	4	1	1		33	38%
Maintained	1	2	1	1		5	2			12	14%
Total	29	10	7	13	5	13	4	5	2	88	100%

9. Edinburgh compares favourably when considering overall rankings to the three most comparable urban cities, Aberdeen, Dundee and Glasgow. Edinburgh shows the highest number of indicators in the top two quartiles and the fewest in the bottom quartile of the four cities. The chart below shows the number of indicators that are ranked in each quartile for the four cities.

Chart 2: 2020/21 Ranking quartiles for Edinburgh with three comparable urban cities



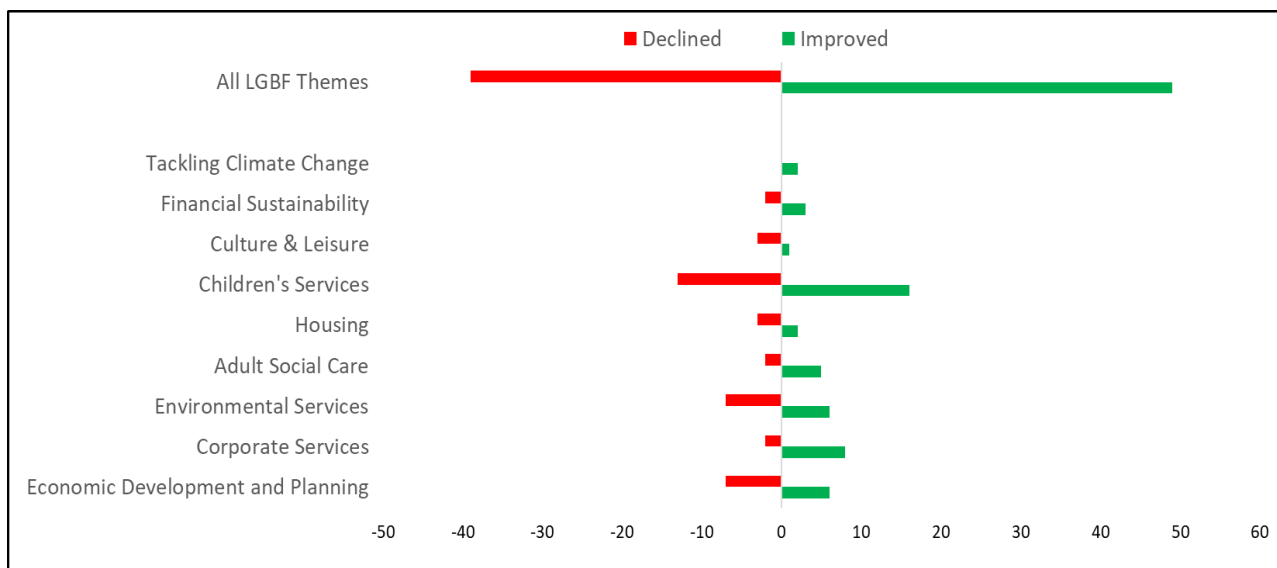
Edinburgh - performance

10. Compared to last year (2019/20) we have shown improvement in 49 of the indicators. However, our relative performance has declined in 39 of the indicators. This is summarised in the chart and the table below:

Table 2: Summary of relative indicator values 2019/20 compared to 2020/21

Performance 20/21	Education	Corporate	Adult Social Care	Environmental	Housing	Econ Dev	Culture & Leisure	Financial Sustainability	Tackling Climate Change	Total	%
Improved	16	8	5	6	2	6	1	3	2	49	56%
Declined	13	2	2	7	3	7	3	2	0	39	44%
Maintained	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	29	10	7	13	5	13	4	5	2	88	100%

Chart 3: Performance improvement or decline – LGBF 2020/21 compared with 2019/20



11. The following sections of the report provide an overview of the 2020/21 data by the LGBF themes: Education; Adult Social Care; Environmental; Culture and Leisure;

Housing; Corporate and Asset Management; Economic Development; Financial Sustainability; and Tackling Climate Change.

12. Under each theme there is an overview of Edinburgh's response to Covid-19 and how this is reflected in the data.
13. For each indicator, charts showing a five-year trend as well as a comparison with the national and 3 other cities figures are included within appendices.

Children's Services

14. There are 32 indicators in the LGBF that relate to the efficiency and effectiveness of Children's Services.
15. It should be noted that data is missing for:
 - a. 2 indicators – data to be published later on this year
 - b. 1 new indicator – data to be published later on this year
 - c. 1 indicator – data was not collated due to Covid-19 and so will not be available.

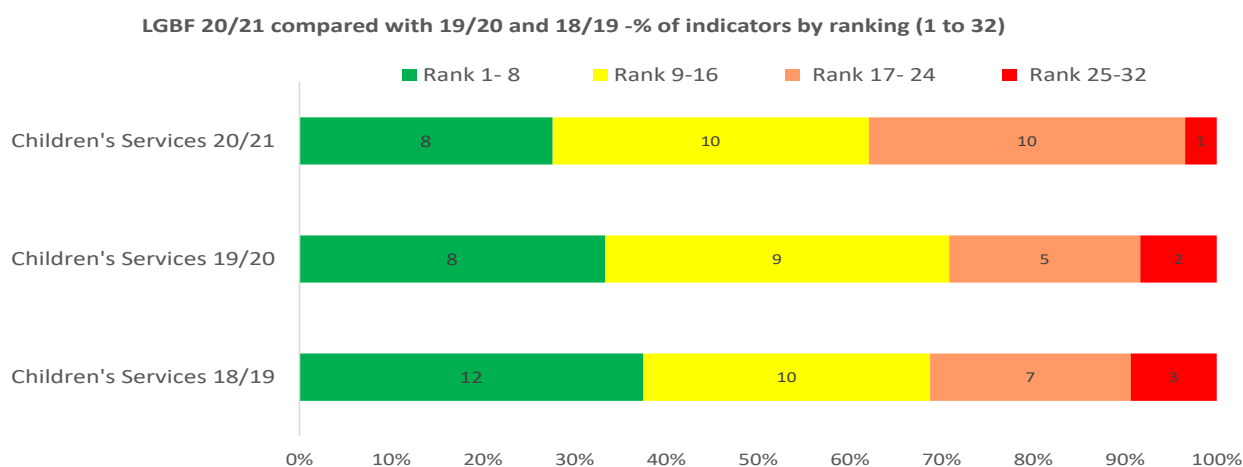
Children's Services - national context

16. Covid-19 and the resulting lockdowns have had a significant impact on learning for children, and it is likely that the closure of schools has had a negative effect on some pupils' progress and attainment, with socio-economically deprived children amongst those who may have been most negatively affected. While it is difficult to interpret the trends in the senior phase due to the different assessment methods during Covid-19, clear evidence of impact is emerging in relation to primary achievement levels, school attendance rates, and positive destinations.

Children's Services – 2020/21 Edinburgh

17. The number of Education indicators that are ranked in the top two quartiles (so above the national average) increases from 2019/20 as shown in the chart below.

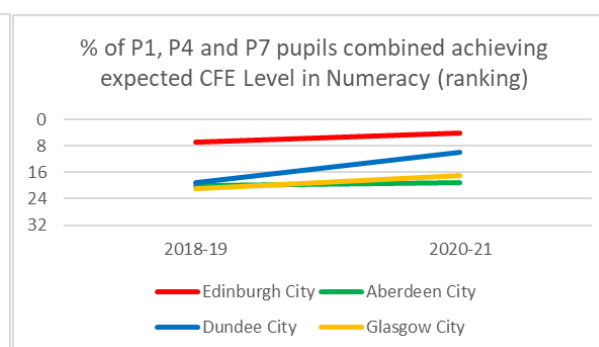
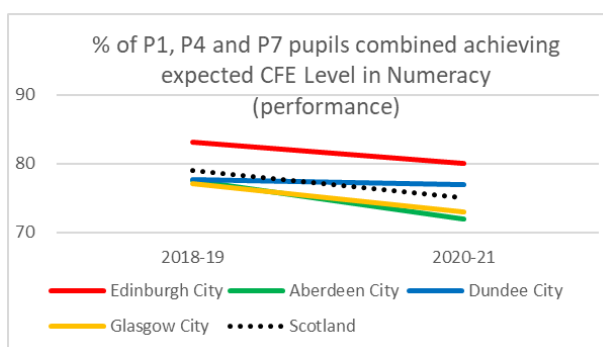
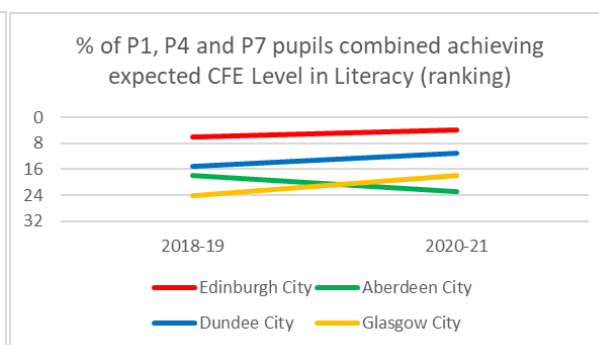
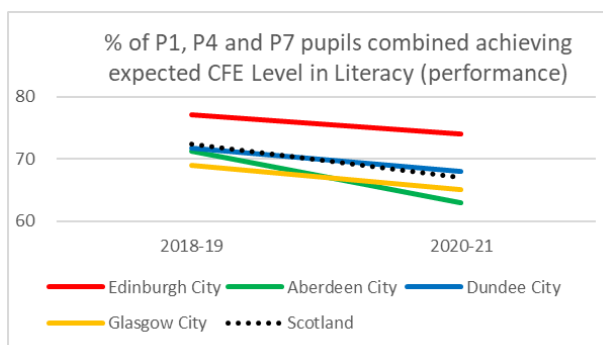
Chart 4: 2020/21 Ranking quartiles for Edinburgh compared to previous 2 years



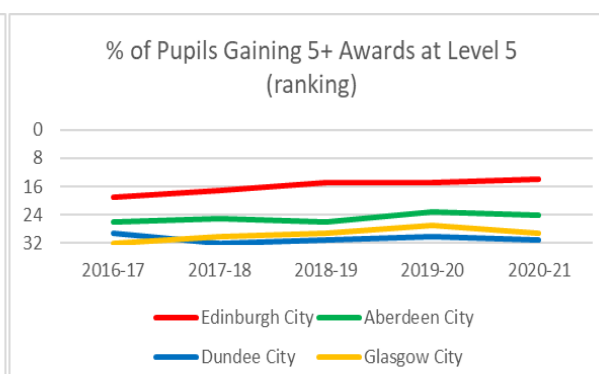
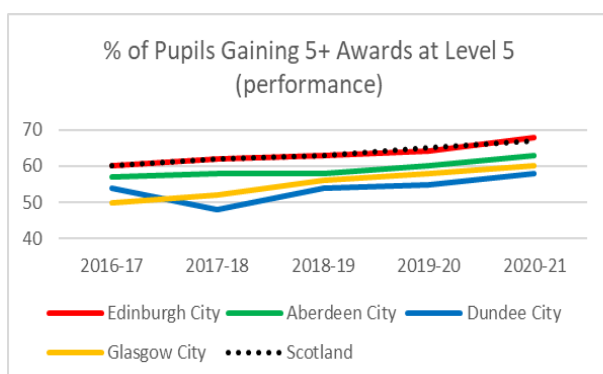
18. Edinburgh schools and services for vulnerable young people, like all other councils, had to adapt how they provided services throughout 2020/21 as Covid-19 restrictions changed.
19. In Edinburgh, our shift to online learning, rollout of iPads (and data) to vulnerable families and ensuring that provision of in-school learning for care experienced children and children from deprived areas was available throughout were all ways in which we looked to provide equality of access to learning for all pupils and mitigate against Covid-19 impacts.
20. Our support for care experienced young people also had to be adapted including maintaining safe care for those care experienced living in residential accommodation and managing Covid-19 cases as they arose as well as ensuring

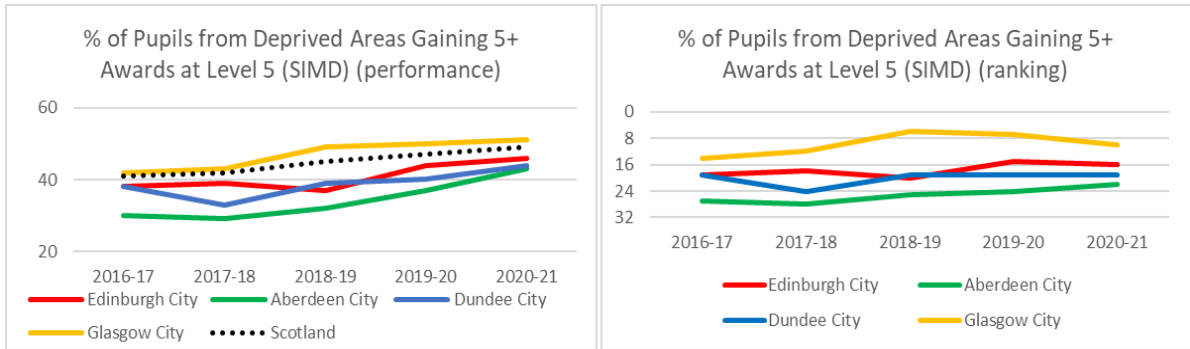
that contact with vulnerable children living at home was maintained and risks managed.

21. However, while Edinburgh's performance shows similar changes to the national picture, as seen in charts in Appendix 1a, there are some indicators where Edinburgh's performance is of note.
22. Edinburgh's decrease in primary pupil attainment measures was less than the national average. While Edinburgh had a 3.3% decrease in literacy and a 2.8% decrease in numeracy; there was an average 4.4% decrease nationally for literacy and an average decrease of 5.4% nationally for numeracy.



23. While increases in secondary pupil attainments measures may reflect the alternative methods of assessments used rather than actual increases in attainment, it should be noted that the increase in attainment across all pupils (% of Pupils Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5 rose from 64% to 68%) is larger than the increase in attainment for pupils from deprived areas (% of Pupils from Deprived Areas Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5 (SIMD) rose from 44% to 46%) and so the attainment gap has widened.





24. Closing the attainment gap continues to be a focus for us and various actions have been put in place which aim to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on all learners with a particular focus on the poverty related attainment gaps including:
- a. additional Covid-19 recovery funding has been allocated to enable the appointment of Transition teachers to support children and young people, with an identified gap in learning, across P5-S3
 - b. appointment of a Senior Development Officer (SDO - Equity and Closing the Gap) to support schools in effective use of Finance for Equity and to share effective practice proven to close the poverty-related attainment gap
25. The full set of charts for all Children's Services indicators can be found in Appendix 1a.

Corporate and Asset Management Services

26. There are 10 indicators in the LGBF that relate to the efficiency and effectiveness of Corporate and Asset Management Services.

Corporate and Asset Management Services - national context

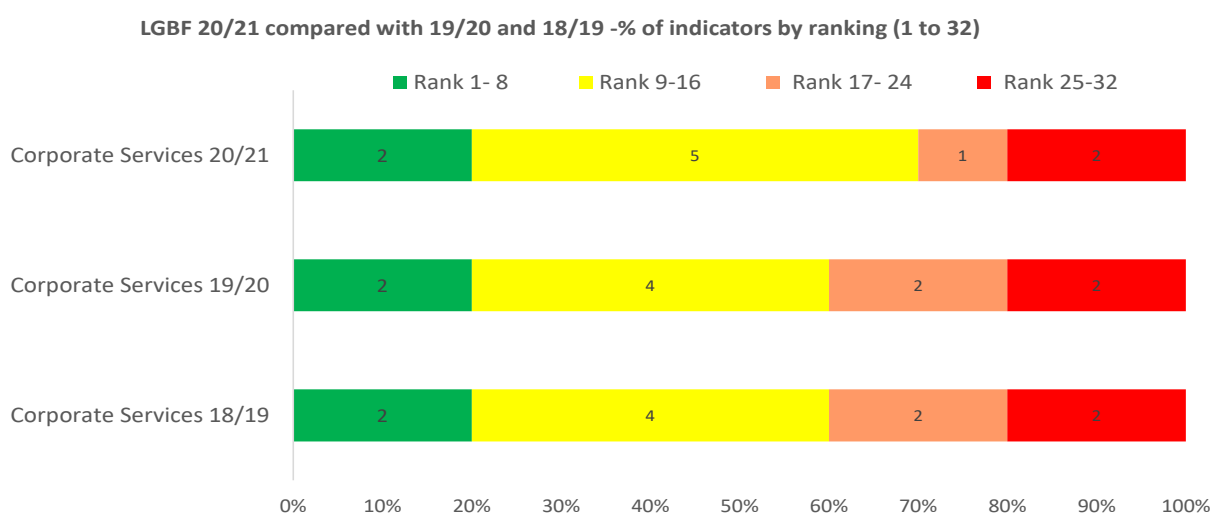
27. Covid-19 has had a significant impact on how Corporate Services were delivered in 2020/21. Councils had to manage significant levels of staff absence for Covid-19 reasons as well as shift their staff to home working, wherever possible.

28. During this time, councils purposefully stepped down Council Tax collection follow-up activities in recognition of the financial challenges facing communities. Councils serving the most deprived communities reported a sharper reduction in collection rates in 2020/21 (-1.2% compared to -0.9% in the least deprived communities).

Corporate and Asset Management Services – 2020/21 Edinburgh

29. The proportion of Corporate indicators that are ranked in the top two quartiles (so above the national average) has slightly increased on the last two years as shown in the chart below.

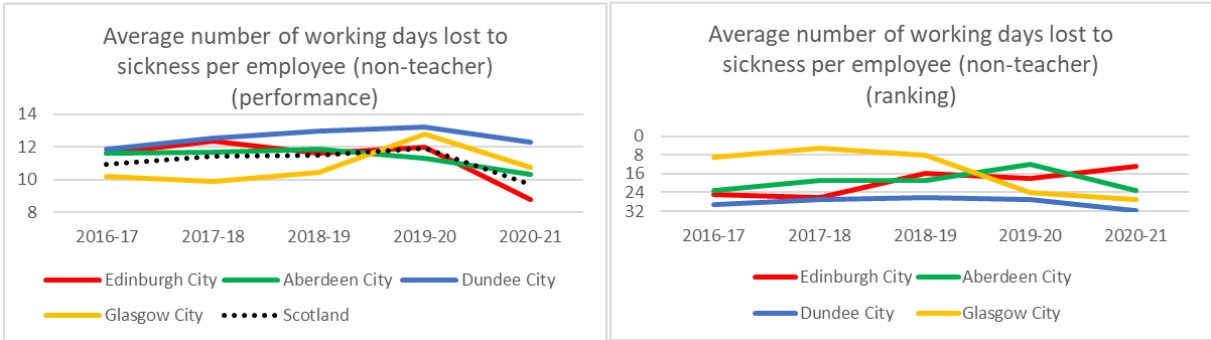
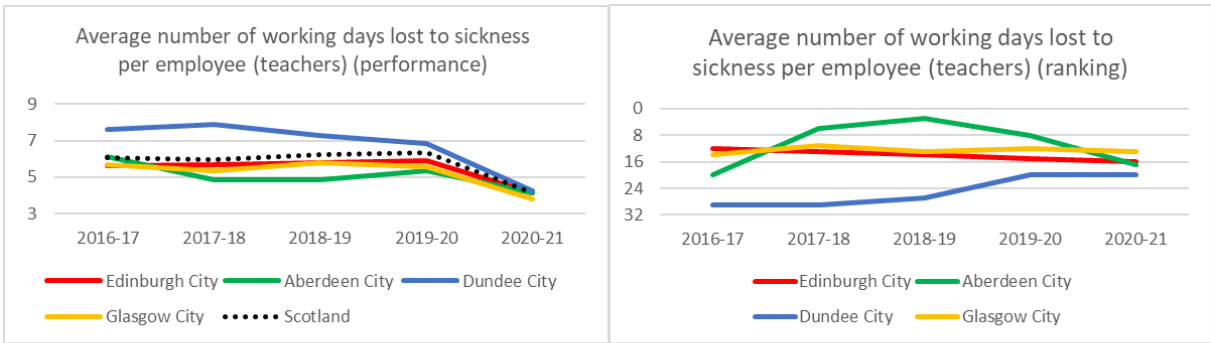
Chart 5: 2020/21 Ranking quartiles for Edinburgh compared to previous 2 years



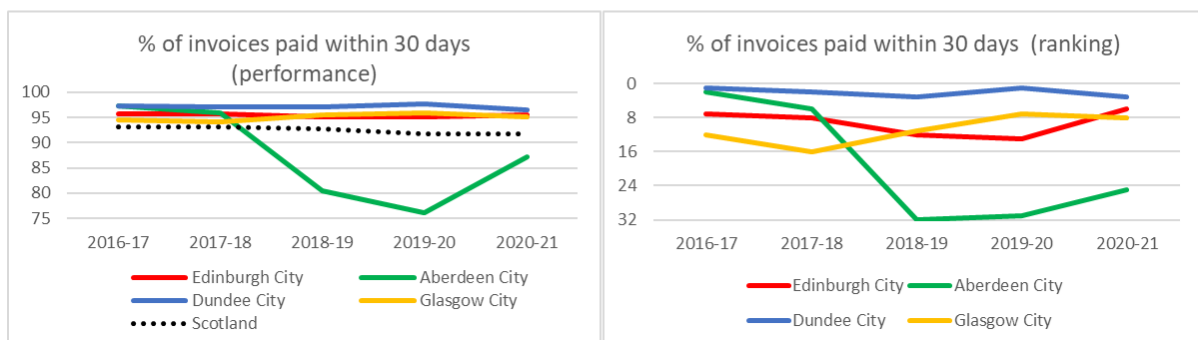
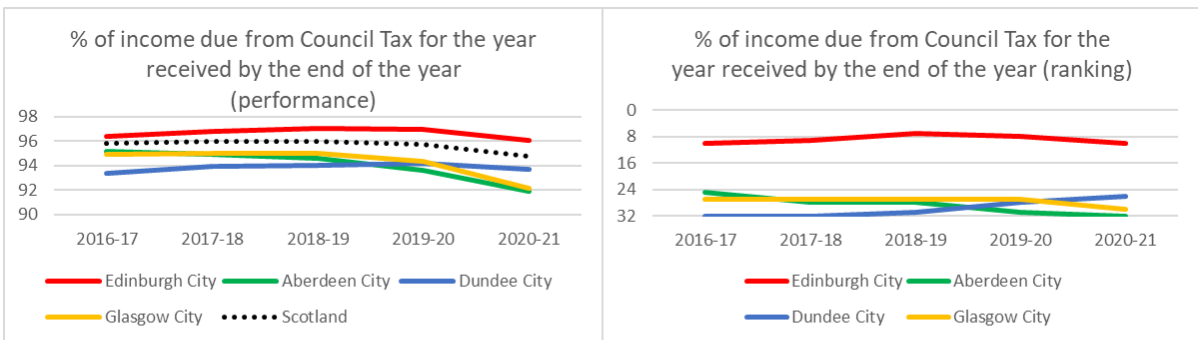
30. Our Corporate Services, like other councils, were impacted by the Covid-19 restrictions in 2020/21, with the setting up of new supports for vulnerable residents and businesses; as well as managing staff Covid-19 absences while maintaining business as usual for our regular processes where possible.

31. In Edinburgh, our workforce had to adapt by moving to working from home; adapting to new working practices and Covid-19 staff absence pressures for routine service delivery; re-tasking staff to other departments to support service pressures and the rapid implementation of new services to support the most vulnerable and businesses. These actions are shown through the following indicators.

32. While sickness absences (non Covid-19) may have reduced in 2020/21, our services had to manage a significant level of Covid-19 related absences and mitigate against lower staffing levels on service delivery.



33. Customer Contact and Business Support teams were key in the setting up of new Covid-19 support services to ensure that vulnerable residents and businesses had easy access to various Covid-19 support services e.g. helplines for those needing Covid-19 advice or access to food/medicine deliveries, and access to welfare funding and business grants. This required reallocation of staff to support pressured areas as required.
34. Like other councils, Edinburgh stepped down Council Tax collection follow ups shown through decreases in income from Council Tax and gave businesses a business rate breaks. However, we also ensured that our business as usual processes were maintained e.g. continued to pay invoices quickly.



35. The full set of charts for all Corporate and Asset Management Services indicators can be found in Appendix 1b.

Adult Social Care

36. There are 11 indicators in the LGBF that relate to the efficiency and effectiveness of Adult Social Care.
37. It should be noted that data for four indicators is biennial and that no survey was run in 2020/21 and the next data will be for 2021/22.

Adult Social Care - national context

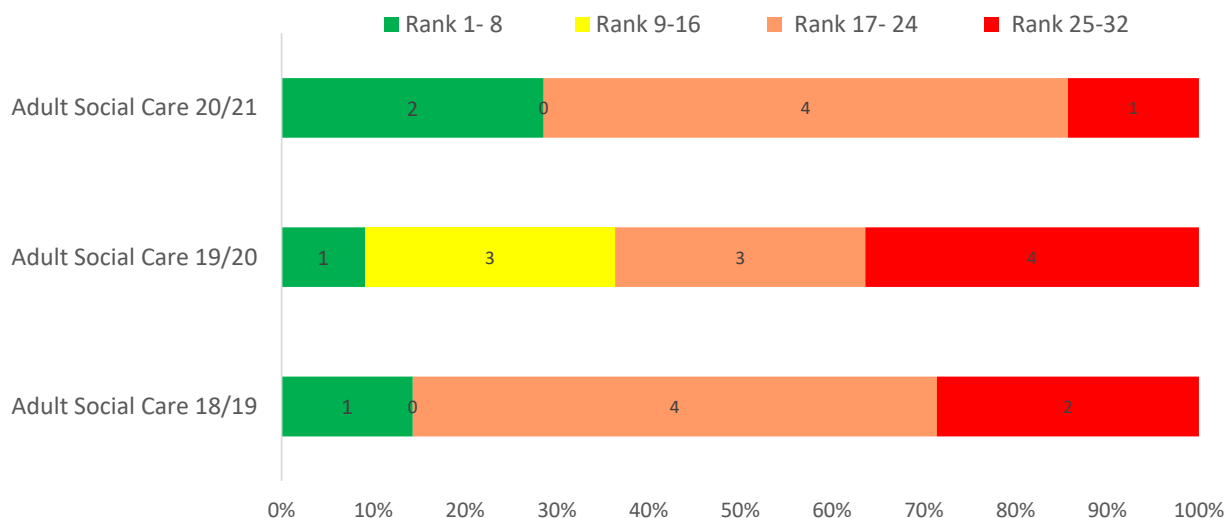
38. The impact of Covid-19 within health and social care has been significant and will continue across 2021/22. Key areas affected include the fragility of the care home sector, a frontline workforce that has been under tremendous pressure to maintain the same level of care, increased demands on mental health and wellbeing services, pressure on unpaid carers and families who provide much needed support to some of our most vulnerable citizens; and the way that services such as adult day services have had to adapt and change.
39. The partnership approach within Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs) has been more important than ever as services continue to respond to the pandemic and work together to plan the route for recovery.

Adult Social Care – 2020/21 Edinburgh

40. The proportion of Adult Social Care indicators that are ranked in the top quartile has increased on last year and the number in the bottom quartile has decreased as shown in the chart below. The figures for 2019/20 include the four biennial indicators and therefore the totals show differ to the other two years shown.

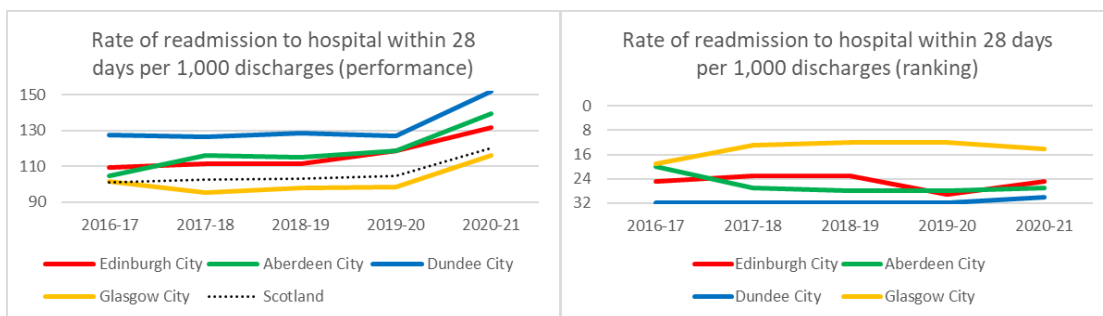
Chart 6: 2020/21 Ranking quartiles for Edinburgh compared to previous 2 years

LGBF 20/21 compared with 19/20 and 18/19 -% of indicators by ranking (1 to 32)

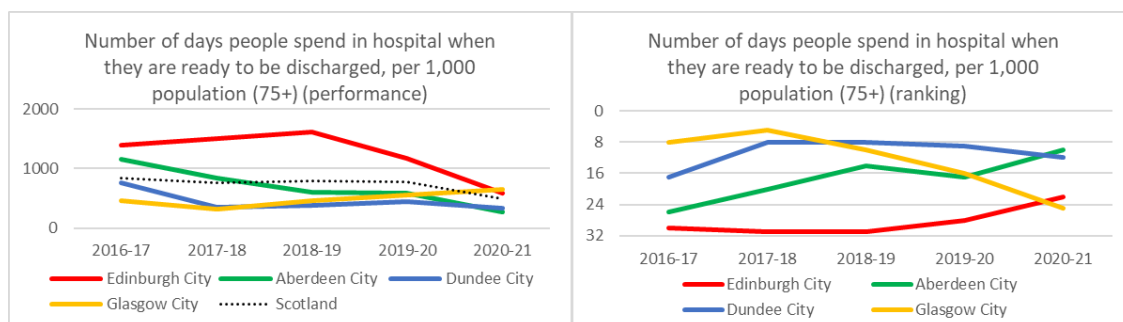


41. In Edinburgh, services dealt with additional pressures in hospitals; adapted how personal care was delivered across all services to ensure both staff, the person being cared for, and family were kept safe; managed Covid-19 cases and outbreaks as they arose in care homes; and dealt with the additional pressures resulting from staff Covid-19 absences including re-assigning staff to other services.
42. The impact from Covid-19 on social care services, both for Edinburgh and nationally, which is shown in the following indicators.

43. The rate of readmissions within 28 days in Edinburgh saw an increase to 131.65 per 1,000 discharges in 2020/21, which is similar to the national increase, and is largely due to a significant reduction in the denominator (the total number of discharges) resulting from cancelled or delayed elective activity and people avoiding hospital during the Covid-19 pandemic rather than a real change in performance.
44. However, Edinburgh remains above the national average and work is ongoing to better understand the reasons behind this high rate of readmissions and look at how we can target improvements in this area.



45. Likewise, in Edinburgh, the rate of days people spend in hospital when they are ready to be discharged was 578.98 days per 1,000 population (75+) in 2020/21, continuing the decrease seen in 2019/20. The 2020/21 figures will be affected by the pandemic due to the lower number of people being admitted to hospital and the focus on this area to free up beds to increase hospital capacity. However, between 2019/20 and 2020/21, this figure decreased by 51% in Edinburgh (compared to 37% for Scotland) and so may reflect the ongoing success of the Home First model, which was accelerated during the pandemic.



46. As expected, this measure has increased again during 2021/22 as services remobilise and pressures on capacity increases following the removal of restrictions.
47. The full set of charts for all Adult Social Care indicators can be found in Appendix 1c.

Environmental Services

48. There are 15 indicators in the LGBF that relate to the efficiency and effectiveness of Environmental Services.
49. It should be noted that data is missing for two indicators – the data from the Scottish Household Survey has not been released at local authority level.

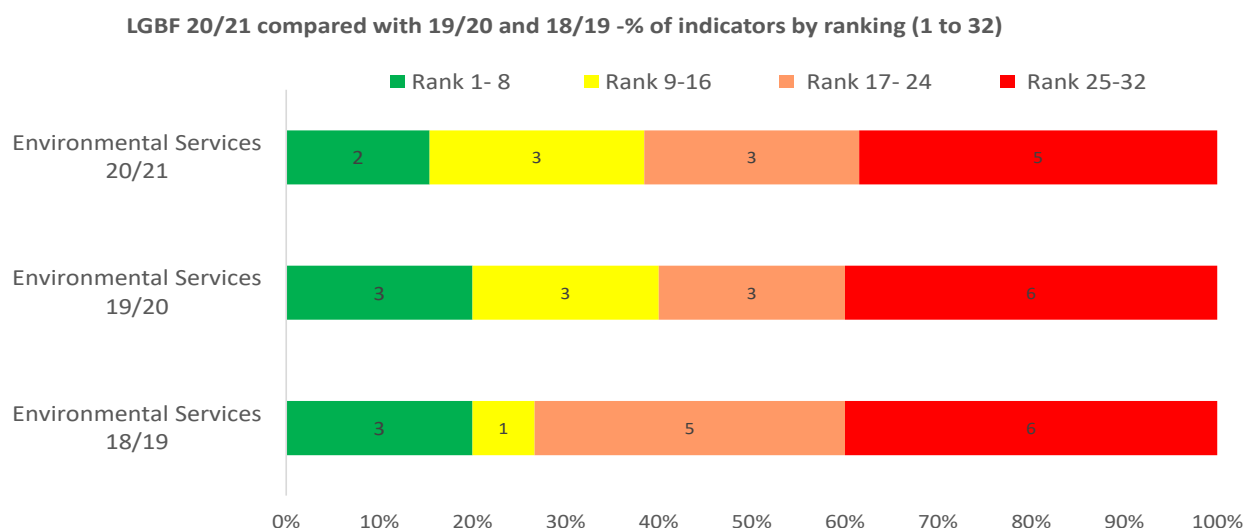
Environmental Services - national context

50. Covid-19 restrictions had impacts across Environmental Services. Local authorities reported more waste produced from households than normal, as lockdowns kept families at home, coupled with an increase in fly tipping responses. Additionally, the impact of lockdown on roads services has resulted in a reduction in planned work and a reliance on reactive repairs of defects to keep road networks safe, and this will inevitably lead to a backlog of repair work and a reduction in overall network condition and satisfaction. Considerable demands have been placed on regulatory services (environmental health and trading standards) to enforce Covid-19 public health measures and meet the demand for business support. The initial impacts of these Covid-19 related pressures can be observed within the LGBF 2020/21 data, and it will be vital to monitor these areas closely in the coming period to understand the medium to longer-term impacts.
51. In street cleansing, streets assessed as 'clean' saw a decrease in 2020/21, resulting from councils pausing litter picking services, alongside the closure of recycling centres and the reported increase in fly tipping during the year. Urban and more deprived council areas report significantly lower scores compared to rural and more affluent areas (87% in urban compared to 93% in rural; 89% in more deprived areas compared to 95% in more affluent areas).

Environmental Services – Edinburgh 2020/21

52. The proportion of Environmental Services indicators that are ranked in the top two quartiles (so above the national average) is similar to last year as shown in the chart below.

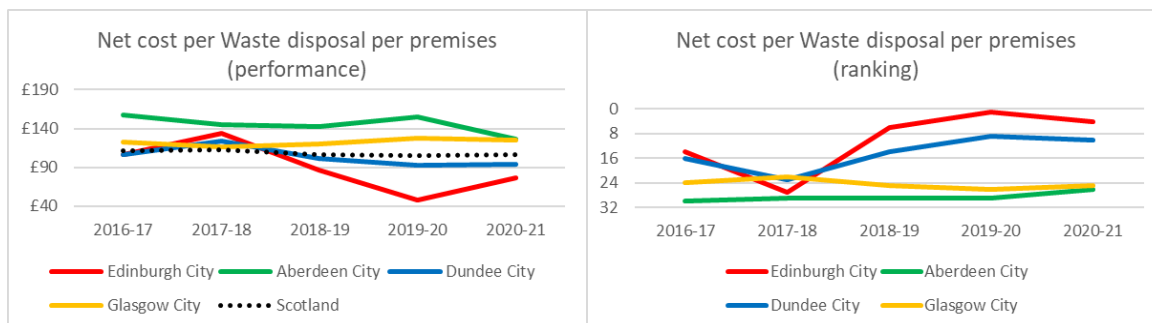
Chart 7: 2020/21 Ranking quartiles for Edinburgh compared to previous 2 years



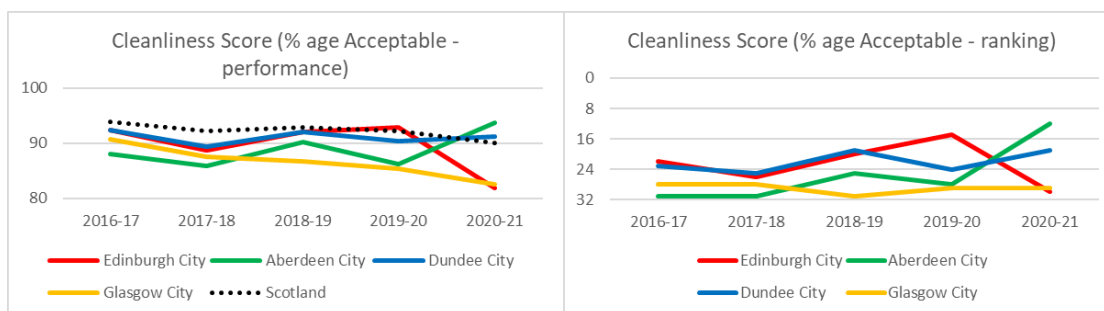
53. In Edinburgh, we adapted how we collected bins to ensure that our staff worked in Covid-19 safe ways. During the first lockdown we paused blue box (glass) and

brown bin (garden waste) collections, as well as closing recycling centres for a short period to focus on our residual waste collections. We also redeployed some staff to support areas of pressure such as moving street cleansing staff into waste collection. The Covid-19 impact can be seen in the indicators below.

54. Following our investment in the Millerhill Recycling and Energy Recovery Centre, our waste disposal costs remain low, and we sit within the top quartile for the last three years. The increase in costs seen in 2020/21 was in part due to Covid-19 and the use of haulage and agency staff.



55. The Cleanliness of the City score reduced in 2020/21 and is partially due to some staff being redeployed during the Covid-19 pandemic to assist other waste services. Feedback from Keep Scotland Beautiful suggests there was a high prevalence of domestic waste in high density residential areas. Across the LGBF dataset, urban council areas report significantly lower scores compared to rural and less deprived areas (87% in urban compared to 93% in rural).



56. This figure has started to improve in 2021/22 as our waste cleansing service has focused on returning our service to normal but we are continuing to progress several actions in 2022/23 to ensure this improvement continues.

57. The full set of charts for all Environmental Service indicators can be found in Appendix 1d.

Housing

58. There are 5 indicators in the LGBF that relate to the efficiency and effectiveness of Housing.

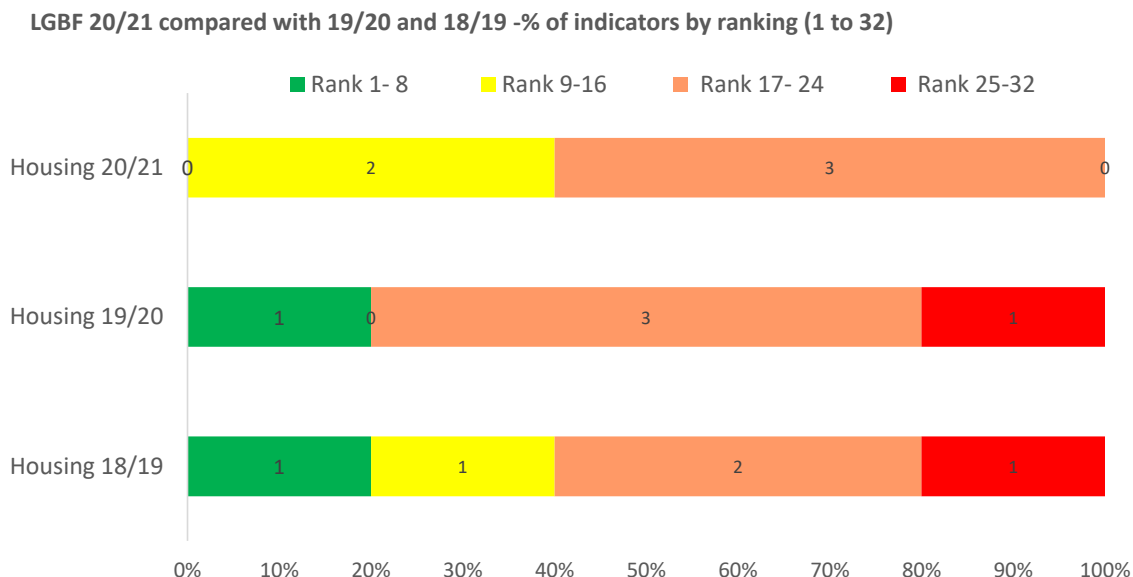
Housing - national context

59. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on councils' ability to deliver housing services as normal. The pandemic affected landlords' ability to deliver core services such as repairing homes, letting empty homes, assisting people experiencing homelessness, and a range of other services. Landlords have had to curtail their planned investment programmes, including those to build new homes and to achieve the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and the Energy Efficiency Standard in Social Housing. Furthermore, the economic impact of Covid-19 will create direct challenges for the housing sector in relation to rental income. The increase in unemployment, along with fears of universal credit delays may create a significant 'bump' in rent arrears and may lead to long-term arrears for many. Less rent coming in to the Council means less money for capital works programmes, which may have long term implications for stock quality.

Housing - Edinburgh 2020/21

60. The proportion of Housing indicators that are ranked in the top two quartiles (so above the national average) has risen in the last year, but no indicators are in the top quartile as shown in the chart below.

Chart 8: 2020/21 Ranking quartiles for Edinburgh compared to previous 2 years

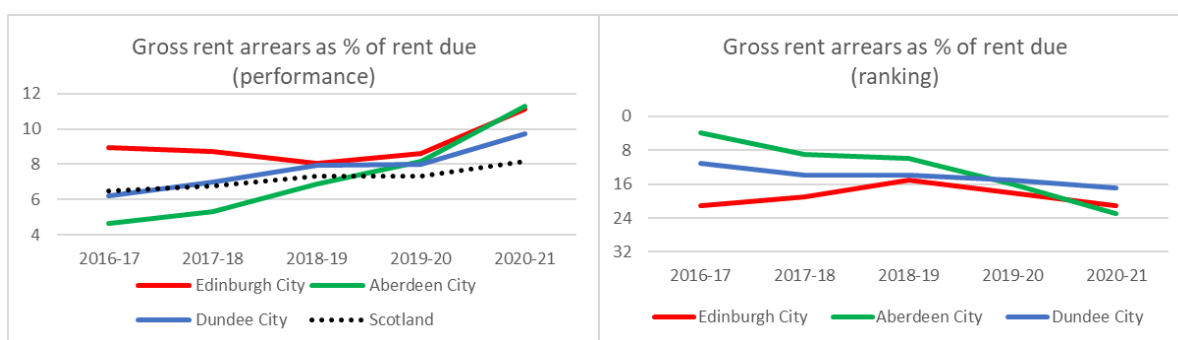


61. Our housing services, like other councils, had to adapt how they provided services throughout 2020/21 as Covid-19 restrictions changed. In response to Covid-19, we adapted our working practices to keep our tenants and staff safe through responsive, coordinated, and localised service delivery. This included a new service model for repairs, beginning with critical repairs and then expanding to the essential repairs, taking individual tenant circumstances into account to ensure tenant and staff safety at all times.

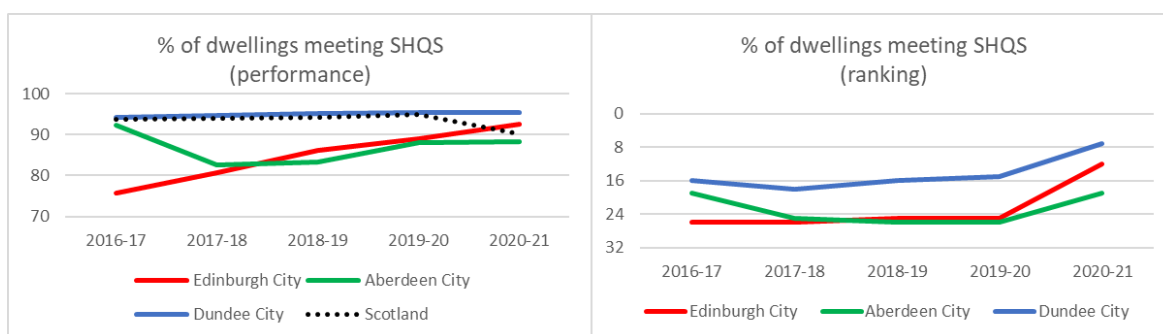
62. Our focus over this period has been to maintain as many services as possible to support tenants, to repair and let homes and to maintain collection of Housing

Revenue Account (HRA) income. We proactively contacted tenants on an ongoing basis, carrying out regular wellbeing check-ins with tenants over the phone and to make them aware of where to get information on the range of advice and assistance that has been available, including foodbank referrals, self-isolation grants and support for tenants who were shielding.

- 63. We also maintained our rent service throughout lockdown with early intervention, advice and support continuing to be provided to help tenants to meet their rent payment responsibilities and avoid getting into debt.
- 64. One indicator of note is the proportion of rent arrears. While Edinburgh’s increase in rent arrears in 2020/21 is higher than the national average, it is in line with the other two cities with Housing Services. This rise reflects an increasing number of households with financial pressures, and this is not expected to change as the cost of living crisis follows the Covid-19 impact.



- 65. One other indicator to note is the dwellings meeting SHQS. It should be noted that there has been a change to SHQS standards which will impact levels of compliance going forward. Revised figures for 2020/21 have been submitted by Edinburgh and some other Local Authorities and we are awaiting updated data for this indicator to appear in the LGBF dataset. This change will result in a reduction in compliance which will be reflected in lower scores.



- 66. The full set of charts for all Housing indicators can be found in Appendix 1e.

Economic Development and Planning

67. There are 13 indicators in the LGBF that relate to the efficiency and effectiveness of Economic Development.
68. It should be noted that there are 3 new indicators:
- d. Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita (data not available until late 2022)
 - e. Claimant Count as a % of Working Age Population
 - f. Claimant Count as a % of Working Age Population

Economic Development and Planning - National context

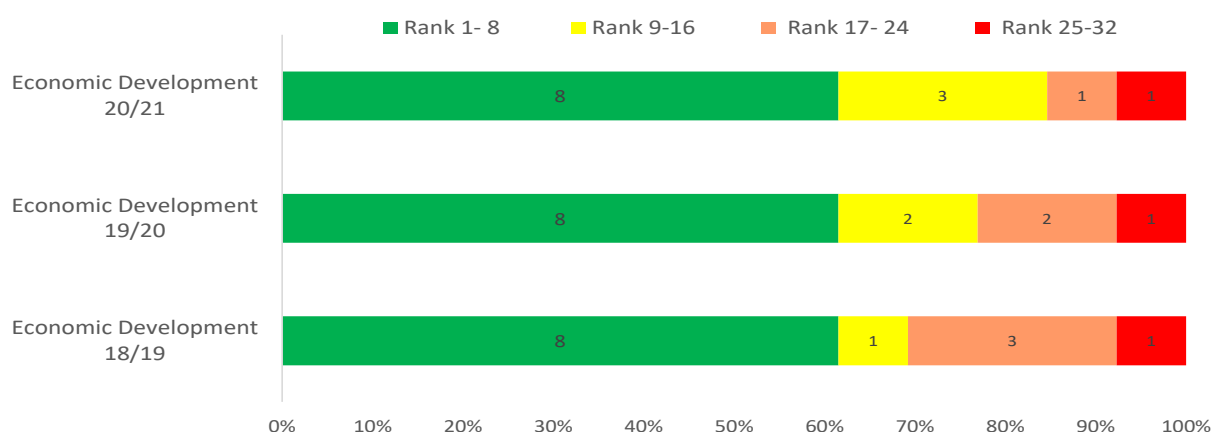
69. During 2020/21, although there are local variations, Economic Development services across Scotland have been working at maximum capacity to deliver Covid-19 grant schemes on behalf of the Scottish Government. Despite high demands and enquiry levels, local authorities have successfully awarded millions of pounds to businesses allowing them to stay afloat until such time they can resume normal operations. These awards have been a real lifeline for thousands of businesses and the failure rate would be far higher if it were not for these awards.
70. As restrictions ease and businesses look to recover to previous levels of activity, local authorities will focus recovery efforts on areas which are strategically important and require the most support. Town centres, tourism, and rising unemployment are particular areas of concern. No One Left Behind, the local employability model launched in April 2019, will be critical in shaping local government's response to increasing unemployment and poverty levels in the wake of Covid-19.

Economic Development – Edinburgh 2020/21

71. The proportion of Economic Development indicators that are ranked in the top two quartiles (so above the national average) increases in the last two years as shown in the chart below.

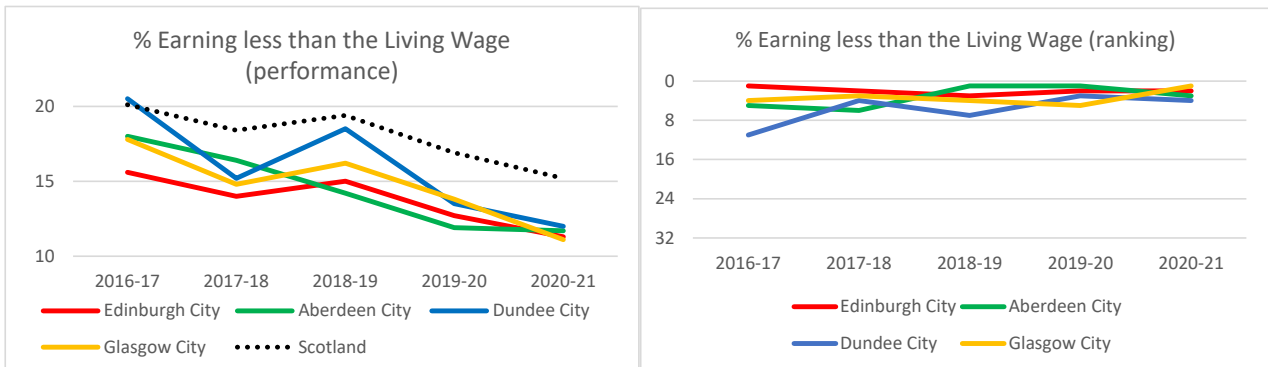
Chart 9: 2020/21 Ranking quartiles for Edinburgh compared to previous 2 years

LGBF 20/21 compared with 19/20 and 18/19 -% of indicators by ranking (1 to 32)



72. The economic impact of Covid-19 on businesses in Edinburgh, as nationally, was significant. Businesses were required to continue to adapt how they worked to ensure that they complied with changing regulations throughout the year so that customers and staff were kept safe. At the same time adjusting to changing demand from their customers.

73. In Edinburgh, we set up support services quickly to ensure that access to Covid-19 business grants were accessed quickly for those businesses that needed support and over £250m of grants were awarded. We continued to deliver services during 2020/21 by shifting our business gateway service online for businesses seeking advice. We also adapted how we worked with individuals engaged with our employability services ensuring they continued to participate.
74. All indicators in this theme show a similar pattern in Edinburgh to nationally such as:
- decreases in those assisted into work
 - increases in claimant counts
75. One indicator that continues to show a positive shift is the proportion of people earning less than the living wage and both Edinburgh and nationally this continues to fall.



76. The full set of charts for all Economic Development indicators can be found in Appendix 1f.

Culture and Leisure Services

77. There are 8 indicators in the LGBF that relate to the efficiency and effectiveness of Culture and Leisure.

78. It should be noted that data is missing for four indicators – the data from the Scottish Household Survey has not been released at local authority level.

Culture and Leisure Services - National context

79. Culture and Leisure services were exceptionally impacted by Covid-19 and face significant challenges in terms of their survival and ability to contribute to the health and wellbeing of Scotland’s communities. While the impacts have been significant for all areas, variation in local Covid-19 restrictions and in local staff redeployment strategies will provide important context in relation to the data observed.

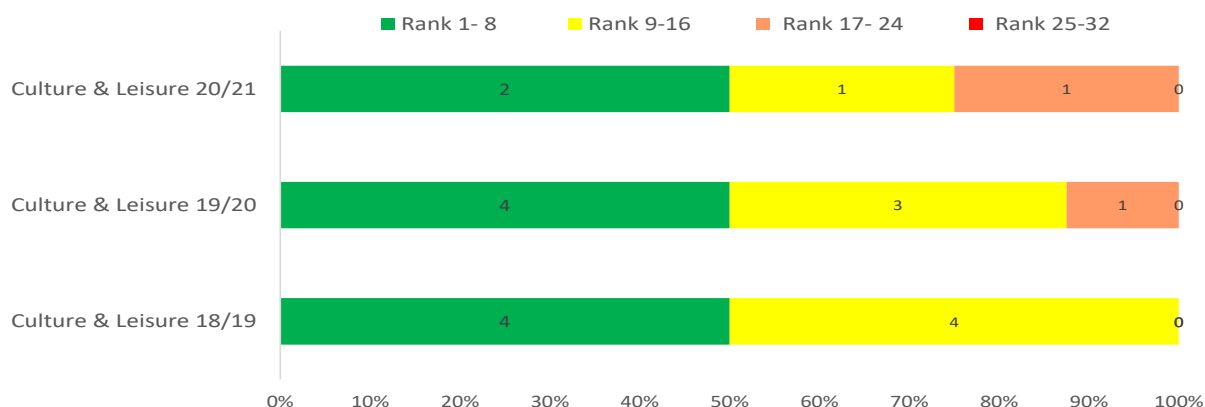
80. Due to the closure of buildings as part of Covid-19 lockdowns, the number of visits to culture and leisure services dropped significantly in 2020/21 but running costs of these services remained the same. This has skewed the data for 2020/21 and is shown in the indicators by significantly higher unit costs compared to previous years.

Culture and Leisure Service – Edinburgh 2020/21

81. Almost all the Culture and Leisure indicators continue to be ranked in the top two quartiles (so above the national average) as shown in the chart below.

Chart 9: 2020/21 Ranking quartiles for Edinburgh compared to previous 2 years

LGBF 20/21 compared with 19/20 and 18/19 -% of indicators by ranking (1 to 32)



82. Culture and Leisure services in Edinburgh, as with all council areas, saw significant disruption due to Covid-19 restrictions.

83. In Edinburgh, where possible, we adapted our Culture and Leisure services to offer online alternatives. For example, libraries services expanded their online offering, which resulted in 10,451,254 digital downloads in 2020/21 as people accessed reading material online and Edinburgh Leisure offered exercise classes online. Furthermore, both libraries and sports centres supported Edinburgh’s response to Covid-19 by providing venues for NHS testing and vaccines centres.

84. Parks and open spaces were used by many to get outdoors during Covid-19 lockdowns and the 2020/21 LGBF data shows that Edinburgh continues to provide the most cost effective of all the four cities and at £7,699 remains less than half the Scottish average (£19,112). The quality of our parks is assessed by Keep

Beautiful Scotland using Green Flag Award criteria and in 2020/21 Edinburgh, with 34 parks with Green Flags awards, has almost half of the Green Flag Awards in Scotland.

85. The closure of museums in 2020/21 in response to Covid-19 restrictions leads to a skewed dataset for the cost per museum visit (as counts of visits dropped significantly while the service costs were maintained). This shows as an artificial large increase cost per visit and so comparison either to previous years or other local authority figures is not appropriate.
86. The full set of charts for all Culture and Leisure indicators can be found in Appendix 1g.

Financial Sustainability

87. There are 5 indicators in the LGBF that relate to the efficiency and effectiveness of our Financial Sustainability.

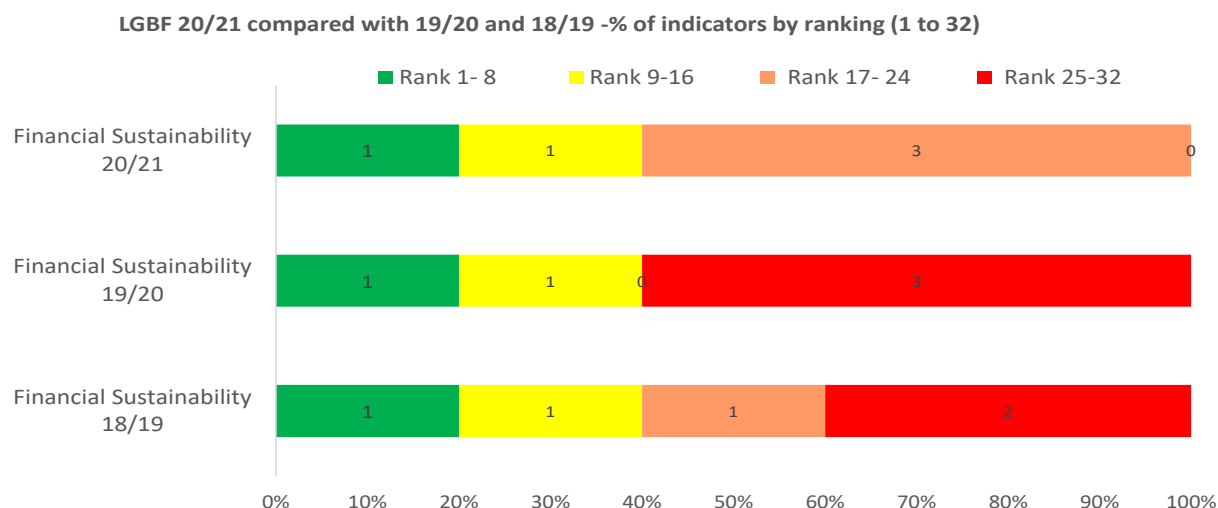
Financial Sustainability – National context

88. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on councils' finances within 2020/21 and beyond. The impact and the ability to deal with the pressures varies across councils and the measures that have been developed provide an indication of the financial resilience of each council. Loss of income is a significant challenge and the reliance on this funding source is dependent on the level of budgeted income within each council. The ability to deal with the impact is also dependent on decisions that councils have taken in the past in relation to level of reserves and the changes to service delivery linked to budget savings. This is a complex area and there are different factors to be considered when considering the financial resilience of councils. The inclusion of these measures provides an opportunity to compare the financial sustainability of councils, however caution needs to be exercised in the initial conclusions that are drawn from doing so.

Financial Sustainability – Edinburgh 2020/21

89. The proportion of Financial Sustainability indicators that are ranked in the top two quartiles (so above the national average) remains the same over the last three years as is shown in the chart below.

Chart 10: 2020/21 Ranking quartiles for Edinburgh compared to previous 2 years



90. The impact of Covid-19 across council services and on our finances was unprecedented in 2020/21 and regular monitoring and reporting was undertaken throughout the year. However, despite cumulative pandemic-related expenditure and income impacts of some £85m, following the confirmation of additional in-year funding for local authorities, a balanced overall position was achieved for 2020/21.
91. Three indicators (Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a % of council annual budgeted net revenue; Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream; and Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream - Housing Revenue Account) in the bottom quartile in 2019/20 have improved in 2020/21 and moved into the second bottom quartile.

92. The full set of charts for all Financial Sustainability indicators can be found in Appendix 1h.

Tackling Climate Change

93. There are 2 indicators in the LGBF that relate to CO2 emissions.
94. There is a lag time for this data to be available for the new data published for these indicators, as part of the LGBF 2020/21 dataset, refers to 2019/20.
95. Edinburgh continues to show a decrease in CO2 emissions in both indicators which is similar to the downward trend seen nationally. Both indicators are currently in the top quartile.

