

Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 4 June 2024

Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2022/23 – Edinburgh Overview

Executive/routine
Wards

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee note the report setting out the analysis of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) dataset for the 2022/23 financial year.

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Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2022/23 – Edinburgh Overview

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides an overview of the 2022/23 benchmarking data provided by the Scottish Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) allowing comparison over time as well as with other local authorities.
- 2.2 This summary report is a companion to the suite of detailed analysis reports covering the eight LGBF themes which are submitted to the relevant executive committee for scrutiny.

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 for services that were delivered in the financial year 2022/23
- 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 2022/23 data for 82 out of the 108 indicators.
- 3.6 This report provides an overview of performance compared to the other local authorities. More detailed reports, one for each LGBF theme, will be submitted to the relevant executive committee as requested following a motion at the Policy and Sustainability committee meeting of 23 May 2023 which requested that 'The report should be subdivided and provided to the relevant service area Executive Committees to allow greater scrutiny of performance and the actions required to instil a culture of continuous improvement, learning lessons from the better performance in Family Group Councils.'

4. Main report

- 4.1 An online toolkit on the [Improvement Service dashboard](#) has been created to help councils benchmark with other councils.
- 4.2 The framework allows local authorities to compare their performance across a suite of indicators of efficiency (unit cost), outputs and outcomes, covering a wide range of local government activity.
- 4.3 This dataset provides timeseries data for each of the indicators for Edinburgh alongside the other councils for comparison. Significant upheaval can be seen in the data as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and this has added new complexity in relation to the LGBF dataset. Judgements on comparisons with other local authorities should be viewed with caution as each Council continues to make service decisions based on local factors, priorities, and resources.
- 4.4 The Local Government Benchmarking Framework is not a comprehensive summary of all Council performance in 2022/23 rather, the data provides an additional perspective on how the Council is performing and it complements and informs the Council's own Planning and Performance Framework.

High level Overview

- 4.5 The latest figures show that overall Edinburgh's relative position is in the top two quartiles (so above the national average) for 58% of the indicators (48 out of 82) and less than a fifth sit in the bottom quartile (11 indicators).
- 4.6 In terms of performance, compared to 2021/22, we have shown an improvement in 38 of the indicators (46.3%). However, our relative performance has declined in 42 of the indicators and maintained for 2.
- 4.7 Appendix A provides an overview of Council benchmarking performance in 2022/23.
- 4.8 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.
- 4.9 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 2022/23 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. Equality and Poverty Impact

7.1 There is no equality or poverty impact arising from the analysis of this data.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

8.1 There are no climate or nature emergency impacts arising from the analysis of this data.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

9.1 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.

10. Background reading/external references

10.1 [LGBF National Overview Report 2022/23](#) published by the Improvement Service in March 2024.

10.2 [Improvement Service Explore the Data](#) website.

11. Appendices

11.1 Appendix A: 2022/23 Edinburgh Overview

11.2 Appendix B: LGBF Family groups

Appendix A: 2022/23 Edinburgh Overview

LGBF 2022/23 summary

1. This analysis of the most recent Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) data provides:
 - a. a summary of Edinburgh's comparative position and indicator performance compared to the previous years, 2020/21 (mid-Covid) and 2021/22 (post-Covid)
 - b. an overview of national performance trends and local factors.
 - c. brief analysis of performance and comparative position for the eight LGBF themes.
2. This summary report is a companion to the suite of detailed analysis reports covering the eight LGBF themes which are submitted to the relevant executive committee for scrutiny.
3. This report covers the 82 indicators with updated data since the previous LGBF 2021/22 release. The full dataset contains 108 indicators. Data for the remaining indicators will be released as it becomes available during 2024.

National picture

4. The latest Accounts Commission report 'Local government in Scotland Overview 2023' highlighted that Budget constraints and increasing cost pressures are putting councils' finances under severe strain. An increasing proportion of funding is ringfenced or directed for national policy initiatives. While this is important to help deliver national priorities, it prevents councils from making decisions about how funds can be used at a local level, to meet local need. Councils have had to make significant savings to balance their budgets. Increasingly difficult choices about spending priorities and service provision are having to be made.
5. Looking forward, councils continue to plan for an increasingly challenging financial landscape. This includes pressures resulting from underfunding, demographic change and increased demand for services, inflation, workforce shortages, as well as the continuing financial impacts of the Covid pandemic and cost-of-living crisis.
6. It is within this context that the LGBF 2022/23 data for Edinburgh needs to be considered.

Edinburgh – summary

7. Like the national picture, Edinburgh continues to deliver local priorities and national initiatives at the same time as experiencing increasing cost and demand pressures.

8. Analysis is presented comparing the current year to last year (2021/22) and the previous year (2020/21, where most of the impact of Covid on services and this dataset is seen). This provides an overview of the recovery from Covid, as well as ongoing pressures and longer-term trends across a range of Council services.

Edinburgh – relative position

9. Overall Edinburgh’s relative position is above the national average (so in the top two quartiles) for more than half of the indicators in each of the last three years as shown in the table and chart below.

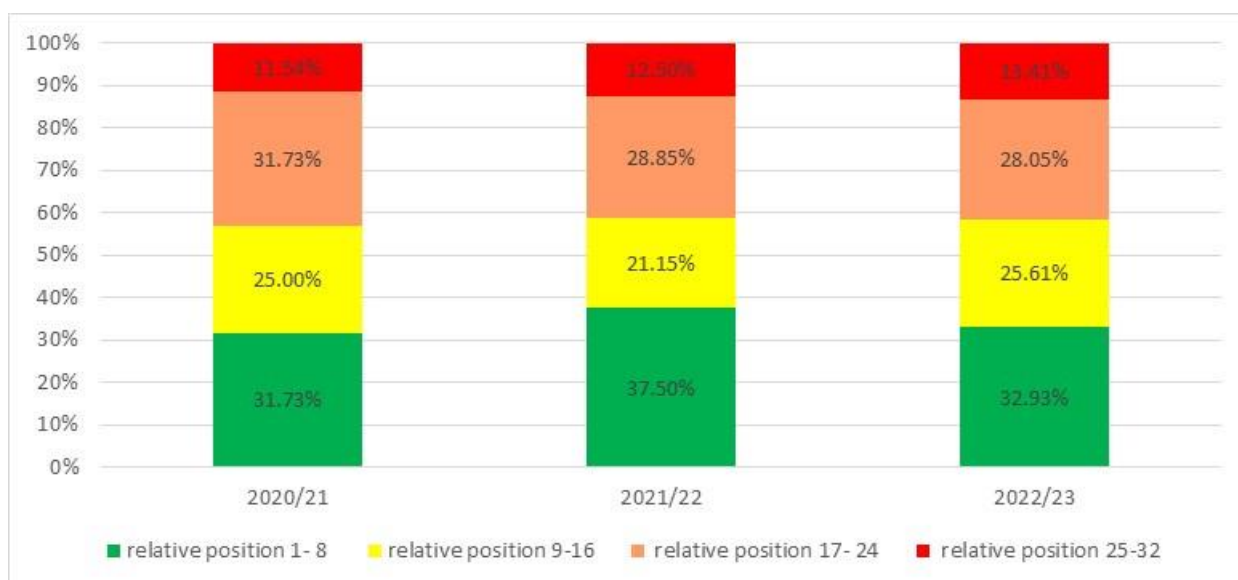
10. **Table 1: Count of indicators by quartile**

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Relative Position 1 - 8	33	39	27
Relative Position 9 - 16	26	22	21
Relative Position 17 - 24	33	30	23
Relative Position 25 - 32	12	13	11
Total	104	104	82

11. The reduction in numbers of measures across all quartiles in 2022/23 is due to this being a partial dataset (with data available 82 out of 104 measures). As data is released for the remaining measures later on in 2024, these counts will rise.

12. To allow a comparison of 2022/23 data with previous years, the chart below shows the proportions of indicators sitting in each quartile. The three years shown reflect similar proportion of indicators sitting in each quartile, with more than 50% in the top two quartiles each year.

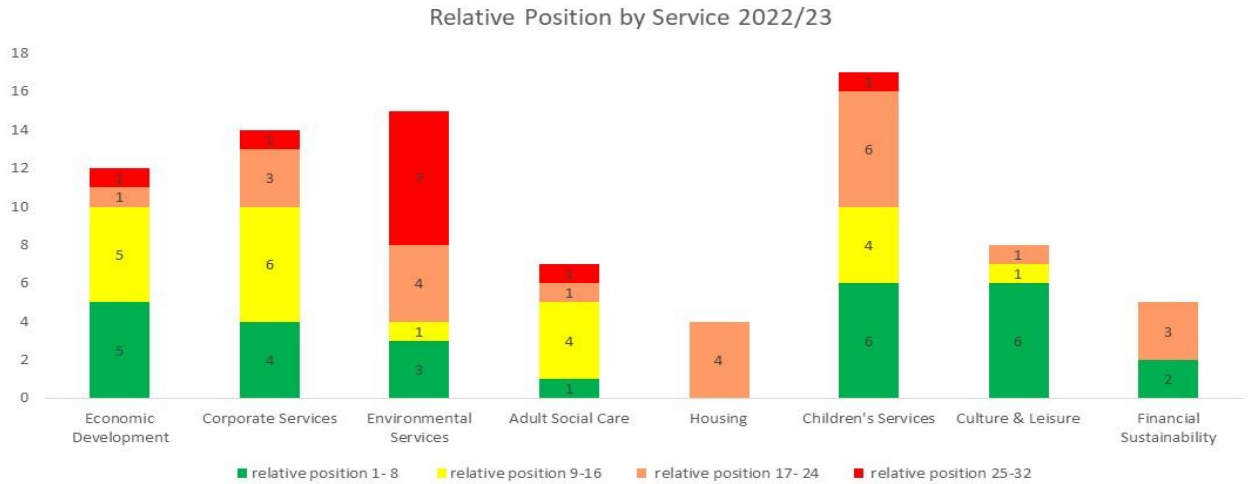
Chart 1: Percentage of Edinburgh relative position by quartile



13. Compared to last year (2021/22) we have improved our relative position in 35 of the indicators and maintained our relative position in 10 of the indicators. Our comparative relative position compared to other councils, has declined in 37 of the indicators.

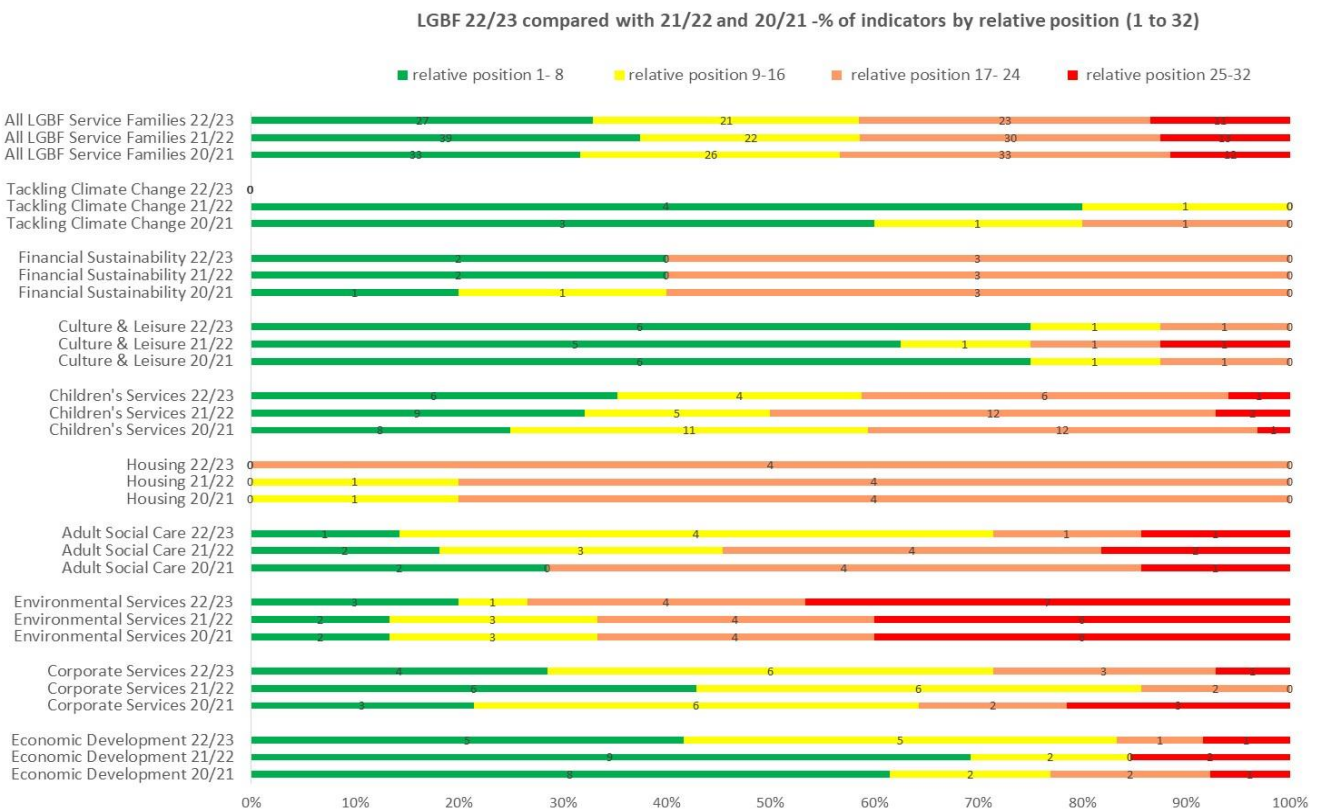
14. The LGBF dataset is split into eight themes: Tackling Climate Change, Children's Services, Environmental Services, Corporate Services, Economic Development, Adult Social Care, Housing and Financial Sustainability. The chart below shows the proportion of measures within each quartile for each theme. All themes except housing show measures both above and below the national average. The four housing measures sit in the second bottom quartile (so just below the national average).

Chart 2: Count of Edinburgh relative position by quartile for each LGBF theme



15. The changes in relative position in 2022/23 compared to the last two years are shown by theme in the chart below:

Chart 3: Edinburgh relative position by theme -



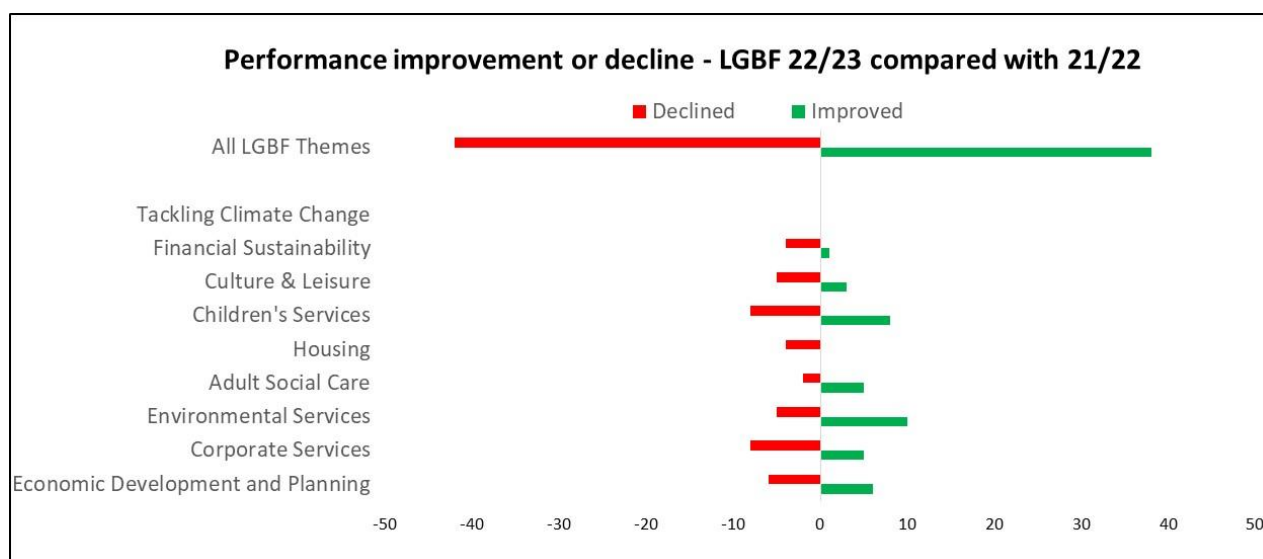
Edinburgh - performance

16. Compared to last year (2021/22) we have shown improvement in 38 of the indicators. However, our performance has declined in 42 of the indicators and maintained for 2.
17. Except for the housing theme, all themes show a mix of improving and declining performance as shown in the table and chart below.

Table 2 Summary of relative indicator values 2022/23

Relative position 22/23	Children's Services	Corporate	Adult Social Care	Environmenta I	Housing	Econ Dev	Culture & Leisure	Financial Sustainability	Tackling Climate Change	Total	%
Improved	9	5	4	8	0	4	5	0	0	35	43%
Declined	7	7	2	4	4	6	2	5	0	37	45%
Maintained	1	2	1	3	0	2	1	0	0	10	12%
Total	17	14	7	15	4	12	8	5	0	82	100%

Chart 4: Performance improvement or decline – LGBF 2022/23 compared with 2021/22



18. In the more detailed themed reports, we have included the national average, a 'family group' average and an average of the other three urban cities (Aberdeen, Dundee and Glasgow) to allow comparisons across different perspectives.
19. Below we set out a summary of each of the themed reports.

Tackling Climate Change

20. While there is a lag in data for the Tackling Climate Change measures, the latest data (2021/22) for Edinburgh shows we continue to perform well when compared to the other local authorities. Three new indicators have been added to the dataset this year covering emissions from transport, electricity and gas. Previous year's data for these new indicators has been included to show longer term trends.
21. We are consistently in the top quartile for three indicators: Area wide CO2 emissions, Local Authority CO2 emissions, and CO2 emissions from transport. We are in the second top quartile for CO2 emissions for electricity and for gas. The LGBF Tackling Climate Change report was considered at Policy and Sustainability Committee on 28 May.
22. Looking to the future, the national report states that councils are facing challenges to making progress towards Net Zero targets. Local government has a crucial role to play in delivering a sustainable low carbon future and is tasked with a growing number of

legislative and policy requirements which require funding and resources. In particular, the impact of rising cost pressures on capital programmes and shortages in construction materials will present risks to current and future large scale infrastructure projects to adapt to extreme weather events (e.g. flooding and high temperatures) which could affect progress towards Net Zero targets.

Childrens Services

23. Childrens Services performance shows a mixture of performance across this wide ranging dataset. The proportion of our measures in each of the quartiles remains fairly static if we compare the 2022/23 data with the two previous years with 58.8% (10 out of 17) in the top two quartiles (above the national average).
24. We continue to focus on recovering from the longer-term impacts of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis on our children and young people, and are working hard to target support where the impacts are greater, such as for children living in areas of deprivation.
25. The LGBF Children's Services report will be considered at Education, Children and Families Committee on 03 September.

Culture and Leisure

26. Edinburgh is consistently performing well across the culture and leisure services for both cost and satisfaction; the impact of covid significantly skews all the cost indicators in 2020/21 but satisfaction remains steady and high throughout the last five years. The LGBF Culture and Leisure report was considered at Culture and Communities Committee on 16 May.

Economic Development

27. Edinburgh is consistently performing well or showing improvement across the Economic Development and Planning services. The one measure which continues to be a challenge is the number of business gateway start-ups per 10,000 population which has remained in the bottom quartile for the last 4 years. The LGBF Housing and Economic Development report was considered at Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on 14 May.

Environmental Services

28. Environmental services relative position is above the national average (so in the top two quartiles) for 27% of the indicators (4 out of 15), four indicators sit in the second bottom quartile and seven indicators sit in the bottom quartile. This is fairly consistent with the quartile split seen in the last two years. The LGBF Environment Services report was considered at Transport and Environment Committee on 23 May.
29. The national report does point out that while some service areas have had budgets protected over the longer term, some nonprotected service areas such as environmental services have seen budget reductions continue throughout the pandemic years, including a 2.2% reduction in 2022/23.

Finance and Resource Services

30. We show fairly consistent performance for the Finance and Resource Services measures with over 63% (12 out of 19) sitting in the top two quartiles (so above the national average) in 2022/23. Six indicators sit in the second bottom quartile and one indicator is in the bottom quartile.
31. This section includes measures for a range of areas include sickness absence, condition of our buildings and processing times for grants and invoices. It also contains four financial sustainability indicators which provide an indication of the financial resilience of each council and show different ways in which councils are managing their finances and dealing with the current pressures while ensuring future resilience.
32. The LGBF Finance and Resource Services report will be considered at Finance and Resources Committee on 25 June.
33. The national report comments that Councils are currently facing multi-faceted workforce capacity pressures, including challenges of recruitment, retention, staff absence, and an ageing workforce. The scale of the problem is growing and spans a wide range of skills, professions and occupations, with councils struggling to find and to keep the staff needed to provide the complex and pressured services local communities rely upon.
34. In 2022/23, council staff absence levels reached the highest level ever reported. Absence levels for all staff, excluding teachers, have continued a long-term upward trend, reaching an all-time high of 13.2 days in 2022/23, which is an 8% increase from 2021/22. Meanwhile, teacher absence levels also increased sharply in 2022/23, rising by 17% to reach a historic high of 6.8 days.

Housing

35. All our Housing indicators continue to show the challenges Edinburgh is facing with delivering our Housing Service. The latest figures show that overall Housing Services relative position is in the second bottom quartile for all indicators. The LGBF Housing and Economic Development report was considered at Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on 14 May.
36. A Housing Emergency was declared in November 2023 and our [Housing Emergency Action Plan](#) sets out our approach to start to meet these challenges. This Improvement Plan was approved by Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee 27 February 2024.
37. Edinburgh is not the only local authority to face challenges and the national report sets out that wider picture. Firstly it states that the level of rent arrears remains highest in those council areas serving communities with lower overall levels of deprivation (11.3% compared to 8.9% for the most deprived areas). It may be that households in the most deprived areas are more likely to receive full rent costs, and therefore face less challenge in their affordability compared to those who are receiving support but working.
38. Furthermore the national reports widens out their narrative from the immediate impact on some individuals and families to the continued increase in arrears will also result in the loss of rental income for councils. As councils also face future reductions in their capital budgets, this further loss of income may have a significant impact on capital

works programmes, including long-term implications for future investment in affordable housing, a key anti-poverty measure. This follows on from curtailed planned investment programmes during Covid and could further undermine efforts to meet local and national targets for affordable housing at a time when a number of councils have declared a housing emergency amid mounting pressures on homelessness services.

Adult Social Care

39. Adult Social Care relative position is above the national average (so in the top two quartiles) for 71.4% of the indicators (5 out of 7). There has been a gradual improvement in relative position over the last three years. The LGBF Adult Social Care report will be considered at the IJB Performance and Delivery Committee on 5 June.

Appendix B LGBF Family Groups

The People family group reflects delivery of services to residents only, with comparison to other Local Authorities with similar wealth and deprivation.

People (relative deprivation and affluence)
Children, Social Care, Housing
Family Group 1
Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, City of Edinburgh , East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Orkney Islands, Perth & Kinross, Shetland Islands

The Urban family group reflects the density of population and delivery of services to **all** residents, visitors and businesses.

Other (Urban)
Corporate, C & L, Environmental, Econ Dev, Fin Sus, Tackling Climate Change
Family Group 4
Aberdeen City, City of Edinburgh , Dundee City, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, Glasgow City, North Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire