

Local  
Government  
Benchmarking  
Framework

# Local Government Benchmarking In Scotland

## **Bench-PA Final Conference**

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Sala Ajace - Udine

  
improvement **service**

# Scottish Local Government

- 32 unitary/ multipurpose authorities
- Population range 20,000 – 600,000
- Geographical area 67Km<sup>2</sup> – 32,211 Km<sup>2</sup>
- 1223 elected politicians

## The Improvement Service

- 2004 – 2007: partnership between the Scottish Government & local government; funded by SG
- 2007 – present: partnership between COSLA & SOLACE; funded through LG
- Company limited by guarantee

# Local Government Benchmarking In Scotland

## Purpose

- To support SOLACE (Scotland) to drive improvement in Local Government performance
- To develop a comparative performance support framework for Scottish Local Government
- To support councils in targeting transformational/ change resources to areas of greatest impact – efficiency (costs)/ productivity/ outcomes
- Focus on major service areas plus corporate services

# Local Government Benchmarking In Scotland

## Operating Principles

- Consensus – agreement by all councils
- Can openers – raise issues/ focus attention on differences & to support councils to collaborate in exploring reasons behind differences
- Comparability – similar councils/ services on key performance criteria

# Local Government Benchmarking In Scotland

## The Starting Point

- Project initiated summer 2010
- Develop service grouping for managing the analysis – Children's Services; Corporate Services; Social Work; Culture & Leisure: Environmental; Housing; Corporate Asset Management
- Indicator criteria: comparable across councils/ services; materially help improve performance

### Sub criteria:

- relevant
- unambiguous
- timely data
- accessible
- consistent
- cost effective to collect
- statistically robust

# Local Government Benchmarking In Scotland

## The Outputs

- 55 indicators where data is available, reliable & consistent
- Focus on cost/ outputs/ customer satisfaction
  - Children's Services
  - Corporate Services
  - Social Work
  - Culture and Leisure Services
  - Environmental Services
  - Housing
  - Corporate: Assets & Property

# Local Government Benchmarking In Scotland

## Data

- 2010/ 11 base year plus 2011/12 to support interpretation - Scottish mean & median figures
- Local Financial Return (LFR) core finance data component plus other 'quality' / performance data sources
- Service support costs was an area of data weakness - corporate & service based support costs; corporate services (assets & ICT)



# Local Government Benchmarking In Scotland

## 'Family' groupings

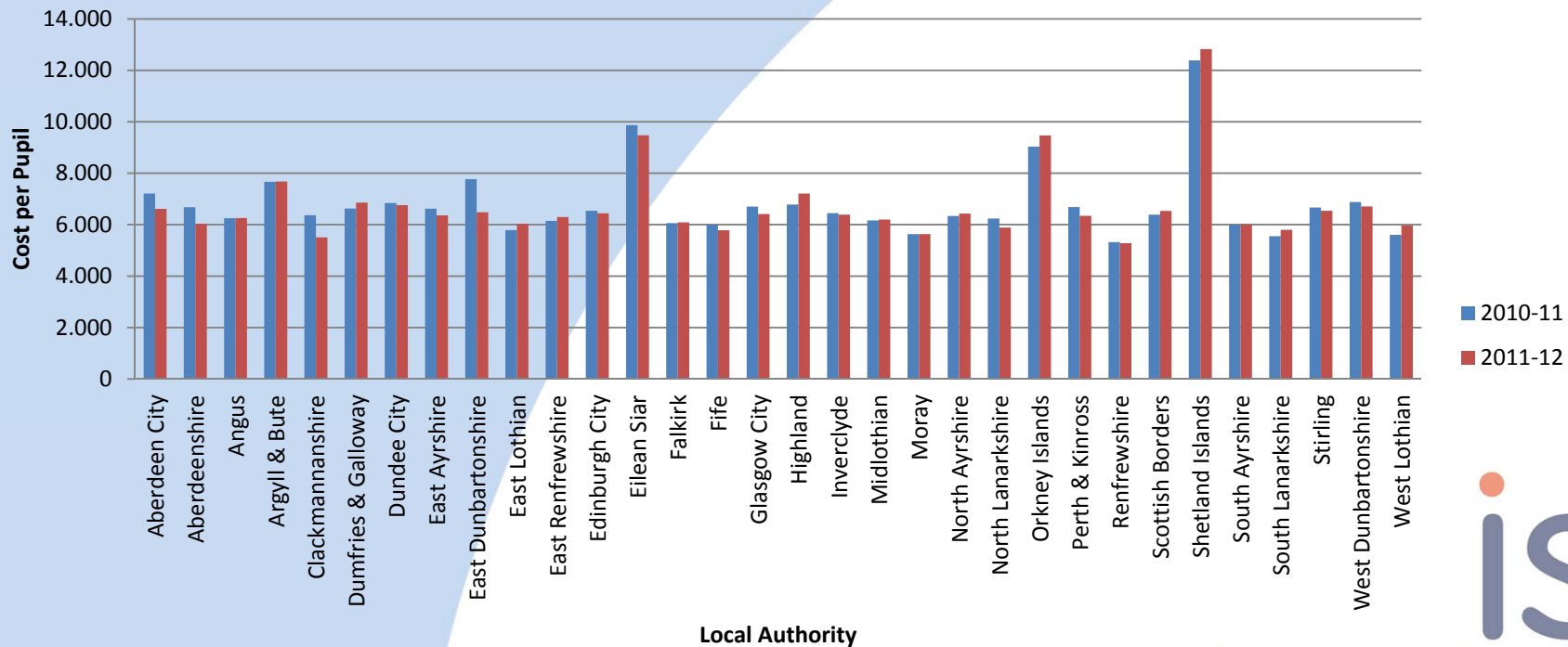
- Need to get beneath data - 'like for like' comparisons
- Examined existing methodologies for grouping councils elsewhere in UK
- Core categories - socio economics: population dispersal
- Core family groups agreed April 2013

# Local Government Benchmarking In Scotland

## Data Analysis/ Interpretation/ Improvement

- Standard reporting format – data tables plus histograms

**Cost per Secondary School Pupil  
2010-11 & 2011-12**



# Local Government Benchmarking In Scotland

## Data Analysis/ Interpretation/ Improvement

- Standard reporting format – data tables plus histograms
- Developing an overarching narrative interpretation
- Highlighting ‘factors of production’ & how councils vary at this level
- Avoiding simplistic league tables – sensitivities to media/ public reading of information
- Data in the round - unpicking cost & ‘outcome’ performance relationships
- Build in local knowledge & link outputs to service improvement processes

<http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/>

# Local Government Benchmarking In Scotland

## Next Steps

- Development Plan approved in May 2013

Governance: dedicated project board

Delivery: task groups of local government officers to support on going developments

# Local Government Benchmarking In Scotland

## Forward Priorities

- Reviewing/ improving the existing indicators
- Family Groups – Drill down & Output capture templates
- Public Performance Reporting
- Link to Self Assessment & Improvement Planning
- Learning Resources
- Customer satisfaction
- Public service partnerships

# Local Government Benchmarking In Scotland

## Reflections

- Focus on improvement not just data
- Engage key stakeholders across councils (municipalities) – politicians; finance & service managers; citizens
- Help build understanding through analysis – narrative as well as data matters
- Publish your outputs

## Contact

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