- A keyword cloud generated from the +5000 metrics monitored by local authorities in the East Midlands; the bigger the font, the greater the prevalence of that word or theme within performance frameworks.

Benchmarking across the East Midlands
Lee Whitehead

Project Details:

The project was initiated by East Midlands Councils (EMC) and funded by the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP). The East Midlands Performance Network (EMPN) informed the scope and project brief. The work was carried out by Lee Whitehead, a Principle Analyst (Nottingham City Council) seconded to lead the project for a contracted period of 20 non-consecutive days.

Contact details: Lee.whitehead@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Further contact: Kirsty.lowe@emcouncils.gov.uk

Background

Within any organisation having access to benchmarking data can provide managers with an advantage; what better way to gage performance and understand service delivery than to place it within the context of peers? Benchmarking also offers a cost effective and efficient tool for organisations to identify best practice and pinpoint innovation. These advantages are perhaps magnified when benchmarking is utilised effectively by publicly funded organisations, as these bodies operate with similar budgetary constraints and provide an identical range of statutory services to a similar client base.

Until recently benchmarking for local authorities was a relatively simple process, with all authorities having ready access to a range of benchmarking data via national databases supported by central government. Crucially, all this data was directly comparable, as authorities worked to strict definitions defined by the Audit Commission in the shape of the National Indicator Set (NIS). Between 2008 and 2010, this one set of 198 indicators underpinned the performance framework of all local authorities and many government agencies. Prior to the NIS, all authorities worked to a similar framework and used Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) to monitor and compare performance.

Like BVPI's before it, the NIS was a rigid framework that facilitated and simplified performance recording, this ensured that benchmarking was simple, as such it became common practice to benchmark when monitoring performance and setting targets. However, the NIS as a benchmarking tool was not without its weaknesses. The first criticism was that, despite detailed guidance, datasets could be incomplete, as not all organisations were immediately in a position to capture the relevant metrics. Secondly, data was not always timely, with many metrics being collected only yearly or quarterly. These delays meant that information could be outdated at the time of publication, thus limiting the value of any benchmarking exercise.

In recent times gaining access to a complete set of benchmark data has become more difficult and increasingly time consuming. In October 2010 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) announced that the NIS would be decommissioned and replaced by a Single Data List (SDL). This signified the end for the national datahub that housed the NI data, no longer would all top tier data be available in one central location, despite the fact that many statutory data returns still submitted to central government contained the necessary data to calculate the NI's.

The demise of the NIS meant that authorities had the freedom to move away from a prescriptive performance framework. Authorities were free to monitor and measure what they wished and free to define how and when information was collected. Initially, many authorities stayed close to NI's and BVPI's, but as time progressed many relabelled and redefined their local indicators, they then began to develop new indicators and move further and further away from the NIS.

As the NI's began to vanish and performance frameworks grew more disparate, benchmarking became less common and a valuable performance tool is now in danger of being lost.

Aims

This sea change in the national performance framework presents a number of problems for any prospective benchmarker. Firstly, there is no longer a definitive source for benchmark data, certain metrics can be found within the annual publications of various government departments, but access and collation can be time consuming and data is often outdated. Encouragingly, this gap is soon to be plugged by a new datahub developed by the Local Government Association (LGA). This new datahub, called LG Inform[1] is set to launch in Spring 2013 and will pull together the remaining statutory indicators collected via the SDL. However, data will still be historic and the bespoke metrics developed by authorities will not be stored, although there exists an opportunity for groups of authorities to agree benchmark clubs and manually upload data to a secure section of the website.

The second barrier for those aiming to benchmark is that many metrics monitored by authorities are no longer uniform and authorities no longer work to identical definitions. As such, there is a reduced opportunity to benchmark, as metrics monitored by some authorities may be entirely unique, even if authorities share a metric, the onus is with the benchmarker to satisfy themselves that - given the varying definitions - valid comparisons can still be made.

The final problem faced by those hoping to benchmark is knowing where to look. It is no longer clear what authorities are measuring, there is no directory that simply lists all the metrics collected by each authority. As such, even identifying a benchmarking opportunity can be a difficult and lengthy task.

The East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (IEP) acknowledged these issues and recognised that the practice of benchmarking was becoming less and less common. Two projects were initiated to help address these issues:

- Firstly, to develop and maintain an East Midlands database that would plug the gap left by the national datahub. This new database would allow authorities to upload regular performance information for a small number of statutory indicators; This database went live in Summer 2012 and is viewed as a temporary solution until LG Inform is online.
- Secondly, to identify any common shared metrics that still exist within the East Midlands region, with a view to uploading regular performance data to LG Inform.

This report concerns the second of these projects and provides an overview of the findings. The remit of this part of the project is to catalogue metrics and identify where they are shared. However, the ultimate aim of the larger workstream is to seize the opportunity to utilise LG Inform and create a benchmarking agreement within the region; this phase of the project marks the start of that journey.

In addition, the project also allows authorities to add to their evidence base for sector-led improvement. By engaging with this work, authorities show a willingness to challenge and push for continuous improvement, thus demonstrating an understanding that central government should no longer be the only body expected to offer close scrutiny.

---

[1] More information about LG Inform can be found here: http://www.local.gov.uk/about-lginform

Scope and Method

The majority of local authorities are likely to monitor hundreds and possibly thousands of performance measures, in order to prioritise and make the project meaningful and achievable within the time constraints, only corporate and departmental measures were collected and reviewed. These measures covered the entire range of local authority business and no subject area was ruled out of scope.

- **Metrics within Scope:** Only the top two tiers of the performance framework were collected. To prevent misinterpretation, authorities were provided with brief guidance as to the projects scope.
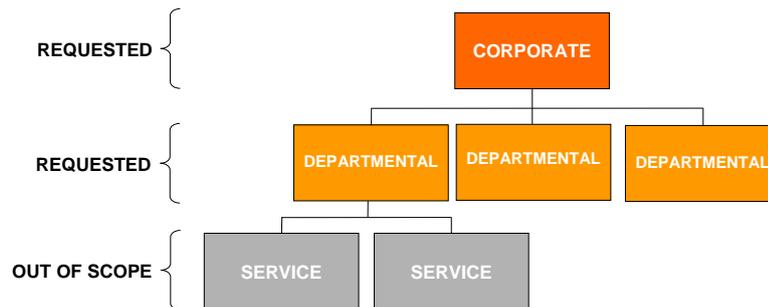
All local authorities in the East Midlands were provided with an opportunity to engage in the project, with performance leads being asked to share details of the metrics within their prospective reporting frameworks. It was recognised that the greatest risk to the project was a failure for authorities to engage. To combat this, communications were detailed but brief and every opportunity was taken to remove any bureaucratic burden from prospective respondents. The response rate was very encouraging with 34 (of a possible 45) authorities providing a return (a 76% engagement rate).

The following authorities submitted information:

- Amber Valley Borough Council
- Ashfield District Council
- Bassetlaw District Council
- Blaby District Council
- Bolsover District Council
- Boston Borough Council
- Broxtowe Borough Council
- Charnwood Borough Council
- Chesterfield Borough Council
- Corby Borough Council
- Daventry District Council
- Derby City Council
- Derbyshire County Council
- East Lindsey District Council
- East Northamptonshire District Council
- Gedling Borough Council
- Harborough District Council

- High Peak & Staffordshire Moorlands
- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
- Leicester City Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- City of Lincoln Council
- Lincolnshire County Council
- Mansfield District Council
- Melton Borough Council
- Newark and Sherwood District Council
- North West Leicestershire District Council
- Northamptonshire County Council
- Nottingham City Council
- Nottinghamshire County Council
- Peak District National Park Authority
- Rushcliffe Borough Council
- South Derbyshire District Council
- Wellingborough Borough Council

The information returned was cleaned and collated, with metrics then being grouped into broad themes to reveal which authorities share common measures and priorities.

In the early stages of the project it became apparent that - given the amount of detailed information collected - there were further opportunities to facilitate benchmarking and share innovation, as such the project extended past the initial aim of identifying a small number of shared headline metrics and endeavoured to:

- Identify, collate and match every single bespoke measure.
- Provide authorities with a user-friendly metric directory.

It is hoped that this work will go on to form the foundation of phase two of the project; an agreement to work to common definitions with a view to uploading regular (non-statutory) performance data to LG Inform.

Findings

Despite an intention to limit the number of metrics fed into the project there were still over 5,000 metrics retuned in total, with some authorities retuning over 200 and others returning less than 50, on average an authority listed around 145 corporate and departmental measures. The difference in the number of metrics perhaps reflects the varying size of performance frameworks within county, unitary, district and borough authorities.

The final collation of the various metrics resulted in more than 40,000 matches. Given the volume of information generated, it isn't possible to provide a detailed picture of the scope of this work within the confines of a written report. To truly understand the findings and the depth of the work, the tools and databases developed during the project must be examined. Given these constraints, a general overview of the findings are presented within this document.

From a detailed analysis of the metrics it was apparent that there are a number of common themes shared across the region. The table below provides an overview and illustrates the number of authorities collecting information pertaining to these themes along with the approximate number of unique measures.

- **Emerging Themes:** An overview of key themes and the volume of interest in monitoring these issues.

Theme	Number (%*) of Authorities Monitoring	Total Unique Metrics Relating to Theme
Internal Facing E.g. Workforce, finance, value for money, IT, etc.	34 (100%)	351
Public Opinion E.g. Satisfaction, complaints, compliments, etc.	33 (97%)	595
Planning E.g. Application processing, building, etc.	33 (97%)	237
Refuse E.g. Recycling, waste processing, etc.	32 (94%)	116
Benefits and Tax E.g. Claim processing, collection, etc.	31 (91%)	199
Environmental Cleanliness E.g. Litter, graffiti, detritus, etc.	30 (88%)	140
Amenity Utilisation and Tourism E.g. Leisure centres, theatres, attractions, etc	27 (79%)	134
Homelessness and Poverty E.g. Rough sleepers, prevention/intervention, etc	26 (76%)	57
Employment and Training E.g. Unemployment, training engagement, etc.	25 (74%)	73
Child Welfare and Safeguarding E.g. Child Protection, social care referrals, etc.	24 (71%)	248
Education E.g. Attainment, absence, etc.	24 (71%)	154
Crime and Anti Social Behaviour E.g. Crime and incident levels, public safety, etc.	23 (68%)	79
Property Letting E.g. Letting and re-letting.	19 (56%)	27
Repairs and Maintenance E.g. Cost, timescales, demand, etc.	17 (50%)	60
Transport E.g. Public transport, etc.	14 (41%)	44
Web Presence E.g. Website hits, Facebook, Twitter, etc.	12 (35%)	22

* The percentage is based on the total number of authorities returning information and not the number of authorities in the regions. Therefore 100% is equal to 34.

As the table shows, sitting below these themes are tens and sometimes hundreds of unique metrics. The screenshot below provides an insight into the sheer variety of ways in which authorities are cataloguing this information, it also demonstrates the challenge authorities face

when attempting to make like-for-like comparisons. As can be seen, almost all authorities collect information concerning public opinion; however the vocabulary, definition, depth and frequency of collection vary significantly.

- **An Extract from the Collation Database:** Some of the authorities and metrics collected in relation to '*Public Opinion*'.

Matching Reference	Metric	Authority	Public Opinion	melessness and Po	Refuse	An
BBOLSOVER11	% Respondents who feel well informed about how to complain about Council services	BOLSOVER	BOLSOVER			
CDERBYSHIRE34	% satisfaction with the last contact with the Council	DERBYSHIRE	DERBYSHIRE			
BBLABY12	% satisfied with how public land is kept clear of litter and refuse	BLABY	BLABY		BLABY	
BAMBERVALLEY32	% satisfied with parks/ open spaces	AMBERVALLEY	AMBERVALLEY			
BAMBERVALLEY33	% satisfied with parks/open spaces	AMBERVALLEY	AMBERVALLEY			
BBLABY13	% satisfied with public services in dealing with crime and anti social behaviour	BLABY	BLABY			
BAMBERVALLEY34	% satisfied with sports/leisure facilities	AMBERVALLEY	AMBERVALLEY			AMB
BBOLSOVER14	% Stage 3 complaints responded to in 20 working days	BOLSOVER	BOLSOVER			
CDERBYSHIRE35	% strongly disagree / agree that Council works well with other agencies to provide services	DERBYSHIRE	DERBYSHIRE			
BEASTNORTHAMPTONSHIRE107	% Wellingborough customers satisfied or better with ICT service	EASTNORTHAMPTONSHIRE	EASTNORTHAMPTONSHIRE			
BBLABY20	% who are satisfied with access to employment opportunities	BLABY	BLABY			
BBLABY21	% who are satisfied with facilities for children	BLABY	BLABY			
BBLABY22	% who are satisfied with facilities for teenagers and young people	BLABY	BLABY			
BBLABY23	% who are satisfied with how their council tax is spent	BLABY	BLABY			
BBLABY24	% who are satisfied with how they are informed about services in their local area	BLABY	BLABY			
BBLABY25	% who are satisfied with local public transport	BLABY	BLABY			
BBLABY26	% who are satisfied with the availability of affordable housing	BLABY	BLABY			
BBOLSOVER17	% written complaints responded to in 20 working days	BOLSOVER	BOLSOVER			
BAMBERVALLEY36	48% of people either very or fairly satisfied with Heanor as a place to live	AMBERVALLEY	AMBERVALLEY			
BCORBY5	Active People Survey (APS 5) Participation, Volunteers & Satisfaction: Total participation	CORBY	CORBY			
BCORBY6	Active People Survey (APS 5) Participation, Volunteers & Satisfaction: Total satisfaction	CORBY	CORBY			
BCORBY7	Active People Survey (APS 5) Participation, Volunteers & Satisfaction: Total volunteers	CORBY	CORBY			
CNOTTINGHAMSHIRE10	Agree the council provides 'value for money'	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE			
CNOTTINGHAMSHIRE11	Annual customer satisfaction visitor surveys for Sherwood and Rufford Country Parks	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE			
BNWLEICESTERSHIRE10	Average Cultural Services Satisfaction Rates	NWLEICESTERSHIRE	NWLEICESTERSHIRE			
ULINCOLN31	Average end to end time for complaints (cumulative data)	LINCOLN	LINCOLN			
BNWLEICESTERSHIRE14	Average no of days to resolve stage 1 complaints	NWLEICESTERSHIRE	NWLEICESTERSHIRE			
ULINCOLN41	Average satisfaction with the audit service	LINCOLN	LINCOLN			
BASHFIELD14	Average time to resolve complaints	ASHFIELD	ASHFIELD			
BNEWARKANDSHERWOOD64	Avg. score for Legal Commissioner/user satisfaction index	NEWARKANDSHERWOOD	NEWARKANDSHERWOOD			
UDERBY55	Better levels of satisfaction with Council services	DERBY	DERBY			
BBROXTOWE13	Bramcote Leisure Centre Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey (APSE)	BROXTOWE	BROXTOWE			BR
ULEICESTER48	Business satisfaction with Regulatory services	LEICESTER	LEICESTER			
CDERBYSHIRE83	Children and young peoples satisfaction with parks and play areas	DERBYSHIRE	DERBYSHIRE			
BBROXTOWE14	Chilwell Olympia Leisure Centre Annual Customer Satisfaction Surveys (APSE)	BROXTOWE	BROXTOWE			BR
ULINCOLN47	Citizens Panel Satisfaction with Public Toilets	LINCOLN	LINCOLN			
BBLABY38	Complaints - new formal complaints received this month	BLABY	BLABY			
BEASTLINDSEY37	Complaints processed within corporate timescales	EASTLINDSEY	EASTLINDSEY			
CNOTTINGHAMSHIRE20	Complaints settled at earliest stage (stage 1)	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE			
BHARBOROUGH14	Customer (applicant) Satisfaction	HARBOROUGH	HARBOROUGH			
BBOLSOVER27	Customer satisfaction	BOLSOVER	BOLSOVER			
CDERBYSHIRE97	Customer satisfaction	DERBYSHIRE	DERBYSHIRE			
CLINCOLNSHIRE113	Customer satisfaction	LINCOLNSHIRE	LINCOLNSHIRE			
BCHESTERFIELD76	Customer Satisfaction - benefits	CHESTERFIELD	CHESTERFIELD			
BEASTLINDSEY45	Customer satisfaction - benefits service	EASTLINDSEY	EASTLINDSEY			

In terms of this report only the priority themes have been identified, but the database developed allows flexible interrogation and authorities with very specific interests can be isolated and identified. For example, broad themes such as "*Public Opinion*" can be further dissected into sub-themes, such as "*complaints*" and/or "*compliments*", these sub-themes can then be dissected further. As such, authorities are now in a position to identify and review any measures they share, they can then question if there is an appetite to develop a shared definition throughout the region.

The analysis and data has been made available to all performance managers in the region via EMC. An overview of the findings was presented at the East Midlands Performance Network meeting in January 2013[2].

---

[2] The PowerPoint presentation is available from EMC by request.

Additional Deliverables

In addition to delivering the primary aim of the project, a series of tools have been developed that are designed to facilitate benchmarking and overcome the barriers presented by the demise of the NIS.

1) Identifying ad hoc Benchmarking Opportunities

The first tool allows authorities to quickly view all the measures that they have in common with other authorities. Unlike the original project remit, the tool does not limit itself to merely identifying broad themes that authorities have in common, it lists every match, no matter how small.

As can be seen in the screenshot below, the tool lists an authority's local measure and then lists all the measures that are deemed to be similar. The tool provides an insight into how peers record data and how often data is collected. It is hoped that this information will form the basis of ad hoc benchmark requests, flag best practice and allow authorities to enhance their own performance framework. It will also encourage networking and allows authorities to work more efficiently, as benchmark requests will now be far more focused.

Every authority that took part in the project has been provided with a tool unique to their authority. The screenshot below is an extract from Ashfield District Council; there were 133 of Ashfield's metrics matched (198 metrics were submitted in total). The screenshot also serves to demonstrate the complex problems that the project has overcome, given the sheer variety and diversity in the wording of measures.

- **Local Metric Similarities:** A tool to help authorities quickly identify benchmarking opportunities.

Your Authority	Your Local Metric	Suggested Authority	Similar Metric (in another Authority)	Collection Frequency	Further Information	Similarity
B ASHFIELD	Number of jobs created	U NOTTINGHAM	Number of jobs created in key sectors	Biannual		90.8%
		C NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	Number of private sector jobs created/ safeguarded	Quarterly		89.0%
		U NOTTINGHAM	Number of jobs created in the construction industry for local people	Biannual		86.5%
		C LEICESTERSHIRE	Increase in number of new jobs created through inward investment activity	Annual		85.5%
		B GEDLING	Number of jobs created via Nottingham Business Venture (indicative measure)	Quarterly		85.4%
		U DERBY	Number of jobs created through projects where the Council has directly intervened	Quarterly		85.0%
		B CHESTERFIELD	Number of jobs created / safeguarded as a result of successful business inquiries dealt with via the Council's Land and Property Information Service	Quarterly	No.	83.0%
		C LINCOLNSHIRE	Jobs created & safeguarded	Monthly		72.1%
		B BROXTOWE	Total percentage of jobs completed within 7 days that have been logged as Priority C	Monthly		65.5%
		U NOTTINGHAM	Councils ranking compared to other Core Cities for more school leavers getting a job, training or further education	Biannual		58.8%
		C DERBYSHIRE	Number of new businesses created	Annually		56.8%
		B GEDLING	Number of Internships created	Annually		56.5%
		U NOTTINGHAM	Number of Social Enterprises created	Biannual		56.2%
		U LEICESTER	No: of apprenticeships created	Quarterly	Economic Regeneration	55.7%
B ASHFIELD	Number of long-term empty homes brought back into use - district	B AMBER VALLEY	Number of empty homes brought back into use		As per BVPI 64	93.6%
		B NW LEICESTERSHIRE	Number of empty homes brought back into use	Annually		93.6%
		B LINCOLN	Number of empty homes brought back into use	Annual		93.6%
		B DAVENTRY	Empty Homes			83.7%
		B MANSFIELD	Number of private sector empty homes brought back into use	Quarters		73.2%
		B DAVENTRY	Number of empty properties brought back into use by Actions of Council			60.0%
		B EAST LINDSEY	Empty properties returned to back in use within the private sector, through LA action	Quarterly		55.5%
B ASHFIELD	Number of long-term empty homes brought back into use - local	B AMBER VALLEY	Number of empty homes brought back into use		As per BVPI 64	94.2%
		B NW LEICESTERSHIRE	Number of empty homes brought back into use	Annually		94.2%
		B LINCOLN	Number of empty homes brought back into use	Annual		94.2%
		B DAVENTRY	Empty Homes			83.8%
		B MANSFIELD	Number of private sector empty homes brought back into use	Quarters		73.5%
		B DAVENTRY	Number of empty properties brought back into use by Actions of Council			60.3%
		B EAST LINDSEY	Empty properties returned to back in use within the private sector, through LA action	Quarterly		57.6%
		B CHESTERFIELD	Number of homes brought back into use, target 120 homes by 2015	Annual	Number	56.3%
B ASHFIELD	Number of missed bins reported	B NEWARK AND SHERWOOD	No. of missed bin collections not subsequently collected within 1 working day of being reported	Monthly		81.5%
		U DERBY	Missed bins: total	Quarterly		74.4%
		U DERBY	Missed bin: Percentage of missed bins collected within 2 working days of being reported to Waste Management as missed by Derby Direct	Quarterly		73.8%
		U LEICESTER	Number of missed bins and complaints	Quarterly	Environmental Health, Par	71.5%

2) Developing a Directory of Metrics

A further tool was developed that allows users to quickly search for keywords that appear in the performance measures of other authorities. This tool is not intended to provide a definitive benchmark search, it is more to help authorities quickly identify other authorities with an interest in certain topics.

As an example, if an authority is struggling to source comparable data for a bespoke measure such as "*website hits*", the tool could be quickly used to identify any authorities that are monitoring something similar. The tool can also be used to search for any metrics that an authority is planning to measure in the future; as a keyword search will provide users with an insight into existing measures which may assist future collaboration and idea sharing.

The screenshot below shows the results when the word "*litter*" is searched. The search has found 54 separate measures and lists the authorities that are collecting data and the name of the metric.

- **Keyword Search:** A tool devised to help authorities quickly identify other authorities with an interest in certain topics.

KEYWORD:	litter	TOTAL MEASURES MATCHING KEYWORD:	54

KPI Database (Jan 2010)   See Guidance

AUTHORITY:	MEASURE:
AMBERVALLEY	IMPROVED STREET AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS (LEVELS OF LITTER & DETRITUS) (NI 195)
AMBERVALLEY	INCREASED SATISFACTION WITH KEEPING LAND CLEAR OF LITTER AND REFUSE
ASHFIELD	NUMBER OF SERVICE REQUESTS FOR LITTER
BASSETLAW	IMPROVED STREET AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS (LEVELS OF LITTER, DETRITUS, GRAFFITI AND FLY POSTING): FLY-POSTING
BASSETLAW	IMPROVED STREET AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS (LEVELS OF LITTER, DETRITUS, GRAFFITI AND FLY POSTING): DETRITUS
BASSETLAW	IMPROVED STREET AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS (LEVELS OF LITTER, DETRITUS, GRAFFITI AND FLY POSTING): GRAFFITI
BASSETLAW	IMPROVED STREET AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS (LEVELS OF LITTER, DETRITUS, GRAFFITI AND FLY POSTING): LITTER
BLABY	IMPROVED STREET AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS (LEVELS OF LITTER)
BLABY	% SATISFIED WITH HOW PUBLIC LAND IS KEPT CLEAR OF LITTER AND REFUSE
BOLSOVER	REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF FLYTIPPING, DOG FOULING AND LITTERING BY 20%.
BOSTON	AMOUNT OF LITTER COLLECTED DURING ANNUAL BIG CLEAN UP
BROXTOWE	IMPROVED STREET AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS (LEVELS OF LITTER, DETRITUS, GRAFFITI AND FLY POSTING): DETRITUS
BROXTOWE	IMPROVED STREET AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS (LEVELS OF LITTER, DETRITUS, GRAFFITI AND FLY POSTING): GRAFFITI
BROXTOWE	IMPROVED STREET AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS (LEVELS OF LITTER, DETRITUS, GRAFFITI AND FLY POSTING): LITTER
BROXTOWE	IMPROVED STREET AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS (LEVELS OF LITTER & DETRITUS) (NI 195)
CHARNWOOD	PERCENTAGE OF RELEVANT LAND AND HIGHWAYS THAT IS ASSESSED AS HAVING DEPOSITS OF LITTER THAT FALL BELOW AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL
CHESTERFIELD	STREET CLEANLINESS LITTER - THE PERCENTAGE OF RELEVANT LAND AND HIGHWAYS THAT IS ASSESSED AS HAVING LEVELS OF LITTER THAT FALL BELOW AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL.
CHESTERFIELD	NUMBER OF FPNS FOR LITTER - NO. OF TICKETS ISSUED IN PERIOD
CHESTERFIELD	NO. OF COMPLAINTS FOR LITTER PICKING
CHESTERFIELD	PERCENTAGE OF SITES THAT IS SATISFACTORY FOR LITTER - % OF SITES THAT IS SATISFACTORY FOR LITTER (97%) BY MARCH 2015
CORBY	IMPROVED STREET AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS (LEVELS OF LITTER)
CORBY	NUMBER OF LITTER PROSECUTIONS
CORBY	NUMBER OF FPNS ISSUED IN RELATION TO LITTERING OFFENCES
CORBY	NUMBER OF FPNS ISSUED FOR NON COMPLIANCE OF STREET LITTER CONTROL
CORBY	PERCENTAGE OF LITTER FPNS PAID
CORBY	NUMBER OF PROSECUTIONS FOR NON-PAYMENT OF LITTER THAT WERE SUCCESSFUL
CORBY	NUMBER OF FAILED FPNS - PERSON CANNOT BE FOUND FOR LITTERING
CORBY	NUMBER OF NOTICES FOR STREET LITTER CONTROL
DAVENTRY	PERCENTAGE OF SITES INSPECTED THAT FAIL TO MEET ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS FOR LITTER
DERBY	IMPROVED STREET AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS (LEVELS OF LITTER, DETRITUS, GRAFFITI AND FLY POSTING): FLY-POSTING
DERBY	PERCENTAGE OF NEEDLES/DRUG LITTER REMOVED FROM ROADS/PAVEMENTS/ HIGHWAYS IN 2 HOURS (IF REPORTED BEFORE 5PM) OR THE NEXT WORKING DAY (IF REPORTED AFTER 5PM)
DERBY	PERCENTAGE OF GENERAL LITTER REMOVED FROM ROADS/PAVEMENTS/ HIGHWAYS IN 2 WORKING DAYS OF IT BEING IDENTIFIED OR REPORTED
EASTLINDSEY	IMPROVED STREET AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS (LEVELS OF LITTER)
EASTNORTHAMPTONSHIRE	IMPROVED STREET AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS (LEVELS OF LITTER, DETRITUS, GRAFFITI AND FLY POSTING): DETRITUS
EASTNORTHAMPTONSHIRE	% OF RESIDENTS PANEL WHO CONSIDER LITTER TO BE A FAIRLY OR VERY BIG PROBLEM
EASTNORTHAMPTONSHIRE	% OF FPN PAID OR PROSECUTED FOR LITTERING
EASTNORTHAMPTONSHIRE	% OF RESIDENTS PANEL WHO ARE SATISFIED OR BETTER WITH THE LITTER BINS
GEDLING	IMPROVED STREET AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS (LEVELS OF LITTER, DETRITUS, GRAFFITI AND FLY POSTING): GRAFFITI

The Next Steps

Throughout the project regular updates were provided to performance managers in the region and members of the East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership board (RIEP) were kept abreast of progress.

The direction of the project was discussed at a performance manager's network in October 2012. The overriding consensus during discussions was that further work should be commissioned to refine the measures identified in phase 1 of the project, with a view to negotiating and agreeing a set of common definitions across the region. Members of the RIEP endorsed this view at a board meeting in November and were keen to support the project as it moves forward.

The majority of the technical barriers associated with piecing together shared performance metrics have been overcome, and the East Midlands as a region now sits in a strong position to exploit the benefits of LG Inform. It is suggested that the views of performance managers are heeded and efforts are now firmly focused on utilising LG Inform to maximum effect. LG Inform is set to go live later in the year, so there exists an ideal window of opportunity to prepare for its launch. However, local performance frameworks continue to evolve and there is a real risk that the information collected as part of this project will gradually become outdated, so time is of the essence.

If this path is pursed, authorities must recognise that compromises must be made in the interest of collaboration. As the findings demonstrate, a number of authorities are already recording very similar metrics, and as we strive for a shared definition, only minor changes may be required. The advantages of accessing benchmarking data must be weighed against the disadvantages of amending local indicators.

For example, the data shows there are approximately 23 authorities currently monitoring the number of visits to leisure centres and swimming baths, however there are a variety of measures and subtle differences as to how visitor volume is monitored, such variations can dramatically skew and invalidate benchmark data. If authorities could work to develop a shared definition and agree a collection frequency, the information could be shared via LG Inform. This would then allow managers to compare and benchmark visitor numbers against similar facilities throughout the region, they would then understand if a facility is truly utilised. The next step would be to question why certain facilities appear to be more popular than others. This is just one example of what could be achieved if authorities move in unison.

In an age of tighter budgetary constraints and limited resources, benchmarking and collaboration should become increasing popular as it offers authorities a means to reduce costs and enhance service delivery. The true value of benchmarking is not in ranking an authorities relative position within a peer group, it is identifying best practice and learning from neighbours.