

Using data to manage and monitor contracts: Turning Benchmarking into Assurance

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Who we are and what we do

At ODS, we provide a range of Local Authority Statutory frontline services as well as undertaking commercial activity operations.

As a LATCO, we have a dual responsibility to:

- ✓ Deliver high-quality services for our customers.
- ✓ Provide assurance to Oxford City Council (shareholder)

Data is a powerful tool to achieve this especially when tracked consistently over time and benchmarked

Today I will share how ODS uses year-on-year benchmarking data to move beyond simply reporting performance and instead provide evidence-based assurance and support informed decision-making

Why data matters?

Everyone Collects Data...The Value Comes from What We Do With It

Benchmarking allows us to understand:

- ✓ Are our services improving? Are they declining?
- ✓ Are we delivering value for money?
- ✓ Are we performing better or worse than our peers?
- ✓ Are our improvement initiatives working?
- ✓ Can we evidence this to our shareholder?

Data → Insight → Action → Assurance

The challenge is turning it into meaningful insight. Performance monitoring alone is not enough.

Benchmarking provides context and tells us whether performance is good

Trend data tells the real story

A single year's performance data only provides a snapshot.

Trend data tells the real story

Year-on-year benchmarking allows us to understand:

- Direction of travel.
- Sustainability of performance.
- Impact of investment decisions.
- Emerging risks.
- And areas requiring intervention

**Transforms performance reporting from retrospective monitoring
into proactive management**

Using data to understand performance

Benchmarking helps us identify:

- ✓ Performance improvements
- ✓ Service pressures
- ✓ Cost drivers
- ✓ Areas requiring management attention



It is the detail behind the figures and the story the data tells you that is important

- Trends are often more important than isolated annual results
- Focus on understanding why performance changes

Benchmarking as a management tool

Better Questions Drive Better Decisions

- Rather than asking:
✗ Are we doing well?

Benchmarking helps us ask:

- ✓ Why are others achieving different results?
- ✓ What can we learn?
- ✓ What works elsewhere?
- ✓ What should we investigate further?



Benchmarking is not about league tables.

- The objective is learning and improvement
- Comparisons create opportunities for challenge and innovation

Supporting Contract Management

Data Provides Evidence - Benchmarking strengthens contract management by enabling:

- Objective performance discussions
- Evidence-based challenge
- Clear improvement targets
- Early identification of issues
- Monitoring of service outcomes



Whether internal or external contracts, benchmarking provides transparency.

Conversations become evidence-led rather than opinion-led.

As a local authority-owned company, shareholders need confidence that:

- Benchmarking provides independent evidence to support assurance

- It demonstrates accountability and assurance



Linking performance, Risk and Assurance

Connecting Three Important Disciplines

1. Performance

Are we achieving our objectives?

2. Risk

What could prevent success?

3. Assurance

How do we know our controls and decisions are working?

Benchmarking strengthens all three

Benchmarking helps demonstrate how performance data supports wider governance arrangements



Key Lessons learnt

1. Focus on Trends, Not Snapshots

- Single-year results rarely tell the full story

2. Use Benchmarking to Ask Better Questions

- Understand the reasons behind the numbers

4. Connect Data to Decisions and Assurance

- Data should inform action and investment
- Performance data should not sit in isolation



Evidence builds confidence with stakeholders

The Future of Data Insights

Where Data Can Take You Next

- Emerging opportunities
- Predictive analytics
- Real-time dashboards
- Risk indicators
- Integrated assurance reporting
- More informed shareholder reporting



Data maturity continues to evolve - data is invaluable. It provides the independent and validated data to defend and challenge.

Data → Insight → Action → Assurance

Benchmarking helps organisations:

- ✓ Understand performance trends
- ✓ Identify opportunities for improvement
- ✓ Support better decision-making
- ✓ Demonstrate value for money
- ✓ Provide assurance to shareholders



Data becomes most valuable when it supports action and assurance rather than simply reporting performance - it helps turn data into meaningful insight and ultimately better outcomes for the communities we serve

Thank You



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