

LGBF National Benchmarking Overview Report 2022/23

Secretary to the Commission and Executive
Director of Performance Audit and Best
Value

Item 7
Meeting date: 9 May 2024

Purpose

1. This paper sets out some background information for the Commission's discussion with the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) board and Improvement Service. The paper also sets out how this discussion will be used to inform the Commission's planned commentary on the LGBF which forms part of the Commission's new suite of local government overview reporting outputs.

Recommendations

2. The Commission invited to:
 - Note the National Benchmarking Overview Report 2022-23 and
 - Consider the implications for its work programme, in particular the forthcoming performance commentary output.

Background and purpose of session

3. The [Improvement Service](#) explains that the Local Government Benchmarking Framework "is a high-level benchmarking tool designed to support senior management teams and elected members to ask questions about key council services."
4. More information on the LGBF [can be found on the Improvement Service website](#), and in the National Benchmarking Overview Report 2022-23, also enclosed with papers for this meeting.
5. Members will be familiar with the LGBF from the Commission's ongoing Best Value work and local government overview reporting. Historically, the LGBF Board and Improvement Service have attended a Commission meeting once a year, in public, to discuss the overview report.
6. This year, given the number of new Commission members and the ongoing discussion on the SPI Direction, we have agreed with the LGBF Board and the Improvement Service to hold the discussion on the overview report in private.
7. This is to allow members the chance to ask any detailed questions on the data and have a full and frank discussion "in the round", with colleagues from Performance Audit and Best Value also invited to contribute to the discussion.
8. Kenneth Lawrie, Chair of the LGBF Board (and Chief Executive of Falkirk Council), will attend the meeting alongside Emily Lynch from the Improvement Service. Kenneth and

Emily will summarise the key messages from the report to introduce the discussion and then it will be open to all to contribute.

Accounts Commission LGBF output

9. When agreeing its new approach to local government overview reporting last October the Commission agreed to publish its own independent commentary on the LGBF, and the role it plays in supporting local government benchmarking and performance improvement activity.
10. Performance Audit and Best Value (PABV) staff and Commission sponsors (Jo Armstrong and Mike Neilson) are currently working on this audit output, which is due to be published soon after the Commission's meeting with the LGBF Board and Improvement Service.

This timing means that the content of this output can be informed by the Commission and PABV discussions with the LGBF Board and the Improvement Service. For example, this could be about reflecting any key points of emphasis which Commission members want to make about the role that the LGBF can and should play in supporting effective local government benchmarking and improvement planning activity. Or, it could be about commenting how the Commission intends to use LGBF data in future when assessing the performance of individual councils, or reporting nationally on the performance of the local government sector as a whole.