

LGBF National Benchmarking Overview Report 2023/24

Secretary to the Commission and Audit
Director, Performance Audit and Best Value

Item 8
Meeting date: 10 April 2025

Purpose

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

Recommendations

2. The Commission is invited to:
 - Note the [National Benchmarking Overview Report 2023/24](#); and
 - Consider the implications for its work programme, in particular the forthcoming commentary on council performance to be included within the 'spotlight' output, and in the context of the Commission's recently published [Statutory Performance Information \(SPI\) Direction 2024](#).

Background and purpose of session

3. The Commission has maintained a close interest in the development of the LGBF. This interest reflects the Commission's ongoing commitment to encouraging sector-led benchmarking and improvement, as well as its statutory responsibilities in directing councils to publish performance information and securing the audit of Best Value.
4. The Improvement Service explains that the LGBF "is a high-level benchmarking tool designed to support senior management teams and elected members to ask questions about key council services."
5. More information on the LGBF can be found [in the LGBF section of the Improvement Service website](#), and in the various [reports and supporting documents](#), including the [National Benchmarking Overview Report 2023/24](#), published in March 2025.
6. Members will be familiar with the LGBF from the Commission's ongoing Best Value work and local government overview reporting. The LGBF Board and Improvement Service attend a Commission meeting once a year to discuss the overview report and allow members of the Commission to ask questions on the data presented.
7. 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.

Accounts Commission ‘spotlight’ output

8. When agreeing its approach to [local government overview reporting](#) in November 2024, the Commission agreed to have a two-part ‘spotlight’ report covering overall as well as thematic or service-specific performance of Scotland’s councils. This report is expected to be published in the autumn of each year.
9. Part 1 of the ‘spotlight’ output will be a commentary on sector-wide performance and analysis of performance information such as the LGBF. Part 2 will alternate on an annual basis between covering a particular theme and a specific service area – as agreed at the Commission’s Strategy Seminar in March, this year’s will focus on culture and leisure services.
10. The timing of this work means the output can be informed by the Commission’s discussions with the LGBF Board and the Improvement Service. For example, this could be about reflecting any key points of emphasis Commission members want to make about the role the LGBF can and should play in supporting effective local government benchmarking and improvement planning activity. Alternatively, it could be about commenting on 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.

Conclusion

11. The Commission is asked to consider the [2023/24 LGBF National Benchmarking Overview](#) report in the context of its SPI Direction and in the development of its work programme, including the forthcoming LGO ‘spotlight’ outputs.