Scottish Local Government Assurance and Improvement Framework

Contents

Background

The Local Government Association (LGA) recently published an [Improvement and assurance framework for local government](#), mapping the various elements that provide assurance on the impact and performance of local government, and how they fit together. Against the context of the Verity House Agreement (VHA) and our collective focus on outcomes-based thinking in Scotland, there is an opportunity to set out the current 'architecture' that exists in relation to council and local government body improvement and assurance (including self-assessment, sector led improvement, audit, scrutiny, inspection, and reporting), but that also clearly relates to accountability. As part of the improvement and assurance landscape, the emergence of co-production and lived/living experience in policy development and service design is also now a key consideration for local government in Scotland.

As part of his review in 2007, Professor Lorne Crerar made recommendations about improvements to external scrutiny, including better co-ordination and a reduction in bureaucracy and burden. Importantly, and aligned with the work of the LGA, Crerar stated that *"primary responsibility for improving services lies with the organisations that provide them"*. Crerar recommended that Ministers and the Parliament should accept this principle and *"continue to support the development of **robust performance management and outcome-focused self-assessment** amongst service providers. Over time Ministers and the Parliament should*

rely more on self-assessment by providers, enabling a reduction in the volume of external scrutiny". As part of Workstream 2 within the Solace/IS Transformation Programme, there is a project aimed at full implementation of Crerar for local government. The outputs from that project are informing this framework by helping to demonstrate the robust improvement, assurance and governance that is already in place, and importantly where it needs refined, reduced, or reshaped to enhance accountability, including to communities.

As part of the VHA, Scottish Government and Local Government committed to *"jointly agreeing a monitoring and accountability framework, drawing on proportionate reporting and data collection, to provide evidence and visibility over progress towards agreed outcomes"*. However, between Scottish and local government there is a gap in terms of understanding and clarity around existing accountability and assurance arrangements, despite an expansive landscape of governance, reporting, performance improvement, audit, and scrutiny, both internally and externally. As we move forward with the significant reforms of public services that are now required, existing arrangements will need reviewed, adapted and, in some cases, changed significantly to respond to the growing need for services to focus on prevention. Nonetheless, a common understanding of the current architecture provides a valuable starting point.

Developing a Scottish version of the LGA framework is one key part of addressing the accountability and assurance commitments made in the VHA, providing foundations for a shared understanding and dialogue on accountability and assurance. It will also support councils and local government bodies to prepare for what will be required in the future.

Introduction

First and foremost, **councils are accountable locally**, not nationally, and are responsible for their own performance and improvement - internal management structures, elected member governance, and public performance reporting to the electorate are all part of a local government "'system" that is well shaped by statute and legislation and has a clear understanding of local needs married with the appropriate service delivery structures. Whilst there will be similarities e.g. statutory officers, there will also be differences e.g. committee names, remits, and departmental structures. However, the full range of local authority functions – statutory and discretionary - will be covered, and subject to a full range of performance, improvement, governance, and scrutiny arrangements, both internal and external.

Increasingly, sector-led improvement is playing a key role in performance review and improvement, linked to the structures described in the previous paragraph. The work of external scrutiny bodies, including Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission, inspectors and regulators (some of which are appointed by and accountable to Ministers) as well as commissioners are also a key part of this framework and are integral to providing independent, objective assurance that public money is being spent in a way that meets the requirements of "best value", with findings driving actions that should lead to improvement of outcomes for our communities based on local context, priorities and needs.

In this draft, the LGA Improvement and Assurance Framework has been adapted for a Scottish context and shaped around four key elements:

1. **Democratic accountability, governance, and assurance** *(including public performance reporting)* - open and transparent decision making, based on evidence and research, holding officers to account for council performance and improvement.

2. **Council management assurance and improvement** – efficient, effective and compliant running of services for communities

3. **Sector-led improvement and assurance** – officers from across local government owning and driving improvement of service delivery and outcomes, at both a local and national level.

4. **External scrutiny** – audit, inspection, regulation, commissioners and reporting.

1. Democratic Accountability, Governance, and Assurance

Democratic Accountability

Every five years, elections are undertaken in each local constituency across Scotland. In most cases, a group of councillors, able to command formal or informal majority support, will form an 'Administration' which controls the running of the council and will seek to implement as much of that group's manifesto and other policy choices as they can. It should be noted that not every council in Scotland operates with an administration. Councils that don't operate with an administration in Scotland are most likely to be found in island councils without strong political party representation. These councils will have corporate strategies that set direction but may also take many policy decisions on an issue-by-issue basis.

The administration provides clarity on what the policy direction of the council will be, which also comes with a high degree of accountability for the majority group. This dynamic can encourage a traditional adversarial 'opposition' to form, which seeks to leverage influence by opposing, criticising and creating negative publicity to bring about changes in decisions and policy direction.

Majority administrations aren't required to build consensus with non-administration members to do the things they want to do but may choose to act on well-formed arguments and recommendations arising from scrutiny functions controlled by non-administration members. Processes for cross-party working, such as short-life working groups, can also provide effective ways for administration and non-administration members to work together and facilitate the development of constructive relationships, where administration members can come to respect the input of non-administration members in the development and implementation of policy.

Minority administrations are a common arrangement because of the Single Transferable Vote (STV) electoral system. Typically, these will be formed by one political party, but there are instances of minority coalitions/partnerships between two or more groups.

Minority administrations are not able by themselves to implement their manifesto and other policy choices as they wish. They have less power and need to work hard to build consensus or negotiate with elected members out with the minority administration to ensure decisions are made or don't get overturned (for example through 'call-in' procedures).

Non-administration members will typically have greater leverage and more opportunities for influencing decisions.

If elected members can build effective working relationships and governance arrangements that facilitate consensus rather than traditional adversarial politics, then minority administrations can function well.

Elected Member Declarations of Interest are included on council websites as well as Officer Interests.

Democratic Governance

Councils in Scotland have democratic governance arrangements that suit local needs. The legislative context in Scotland does not prescribe certain 'models' or arrangements, instead providing flexibility through the mechanism in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to delegate to committees, sub-committees, officers or another local authority. Scottish councils have largely adopted one of two 'models' of governance arrangements: Committee system or Executive/Cabinet and Scrutiny model.

Councils with an Executive/Cabinet and Scrutiny model have chosen to delegate a significant amount of the decision-making powers to a committee (often called the 'Executive Committee' or 'Cabinet') with typically one-quarter to one-third of the members of the council. These can be balanced in favour of the administration, but in some cases aren't. To provide a check and balance on the power of the 'Executive Committee' or 'Cabinet', the council creates at least one committee to act as a scrutiny function (Scrutiny Committee) which typically has the power to call-in decisions and make recommendations to the Executive/Cabinet. These tend to be (but not always) chaired by a non-administration member and have the majority of its membership from non-administration members. Councils who have an Executive/Cabinet and Scrutiny model still have other committees which have delegated responsibilities for quasi-judicial and regulatory functions.

Councils with a Committee system have largely chosen to delegate decision-making powers through several major decision-making committees with remits covering a wide range of responsibilities and thematic areas. All or most elected members of the council will sit on at least one of these major decision-making committees. The membership of committees tends to be (but not always) proportionate to the political balance of the council. With no requirement in legislation to ensure political balance, this is up to individual councils. Committee systems tend to be referred to as more 'democratic' with most or all elected members taking part in major policy decisions.

Full Council

The full council meeting is the sovereign body of the council and is where all elected members meet to debate and take key decisions of the local authority. Some decisions must be made at full council as a matter of law and councils will decide for themselves what additional decisions are to be reserved to full council. While full council is important, the bulk of the decisions the council takes will happen in committees or are taken by officers through delegated authority.

Statutory Committees

Councils are largely able to discharge their statutory functions as they wish, though there are matters reserved to full council in legislation, and functions which cannot be delegated to officers. There are some bodies/boards created by legislation for Planning Authorities, Licensing Authorities and Valuation Authorities to have certain decision-making bodies/boards, which elected members sit on:

● Local Review Body – This is a requirement under The Town and Country Planning (Schemes of Delegation and Local Review Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 (legislation.gov.uk) for Planning Authorities to have a Local Review Body

- Licencing Board (or Boards) - were created by the [Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 (legislation.gov.uk)](#) to discharge the functions of Licensing Authorities

- Valuation Joint Boards – ten joint boards between councils were created by [The Valuation Joint Boards (Scotland) Order 1995 (legislation.gov.uk)](#) to discharge the functions of Valuation Authorities

Common types of committees

Though the legislation in Scotland provides councils with flexibility to put in place local arrangements to discharge their functions, reviewing the listed committees on council websites highlights common themes with the types of committees that are set up. They can be related to a particular function (e.g. Audit), service (e.g. Education), or thematic area (e.g. Communities). Typical committees include: Audit/Scrutiny/Governance; Children and Young People / Education; Finance / Economy; Infrastructure / Development; Transport; Environment / Climate; Housing; Communities; Corporate Services; Culture; Planning; Licensing; Local Area Committees (of various delegated functions, sizes of localities etc.); Recruitment & staff appeals; Pension; and Petitions. Committees are often a combination of two or more of these themes, and committees with similar thematic titles do not necessarily have the same delegated authority.

A council must conduct its meetings in public, unless there is a legal reason allowing a report to be taken in private, and this applies to full council meetings, committees and sub-committees.

There are also three key council documents which support democratic governance within a council:

- Standing Orders – a document (or a group of separate documents) that govern how council and committee meetings are convened and run, how and where decisions are taken by councillors, how contracts are awarded and how money is spent.

- Financial Regulations – these control budgeting, spending and financial planning.

- Scheme of Delegation – this sets out how council officers can make decisions on behalf of the Council.

All councils have internal controls and practices in place to ensure that they adhere to good governance principles. These include:

- councillor scrutiny

- audit and risk controls

- the publication of annual governance statements

- everyday actions taken by officers who have statutory roles

- propriety in decision-making

- responsibility for management arrangements.

Democratic Assurance

The ethical standards framework in Scotland comprises the Standards Commission, the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland (the Commissioner) and the Codes of Conduct, supported by the Standards Commission's Guidance on the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

Councillors are bound by the Councillors' Code of Conduct when undertaking their duties, which sets out, openly and clearly, the

standards of conduct that elected members must apply when carrying out their public duties and allows the public to know the standards they can expect of their elected members. The key principles which underpin the Code of Conduct are based on the principles of public life set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

The Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland (the Commissioner) investigates any complaints that an elected member has breached the Councillors' Code. If the Commissioner considers a councillor has breached the Code of Conduct, then they submit a report to the Standards Commission. The Standards Commission will then determine whether to direct the Commissioner to carry out further investigations, hold a hearing or take no action. If the decision by the Standards Commission is to hold a hearing, this will be to determine whether the councillor has contravened the Councillors' Code. If the Standards Commission finds that the councillor has breached the Councillors' Code, it will determine the sanction to be applied in accordance with its statutory powers — censure (a formal reprimand), suspension (for up to one year) or disqualification (for up to five years).

Elected members may also be asked by a member of the public to help them make a complaint, or to make a complaint on their behalf, about the council. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) is the final stage for complaints about most organisations that provide public services in Scotland, including councils. If a member of the public feels that their council has provided a poor service, delivered a service badly or failed to provide a service, they may complain to the council. The SPSO will only consider a complaint after it has gone through the full complaints procedure of the council, ensuring that the council has the opportunity to respond and to resolve the complaint internally. Once the investigation stage of the council's complaints handling procedure has been completed, the complainant has the right to approach the SPSO if they remain dissatisfied.

2. Council Management Assurance and Improvement

Councils have robust structures and approaches in place to provide assurance and drive improvement, which are audited by the Accounts Commission, given the duty of Best Value which requires councils to demonstrate that they are using resources effectively and focusing on continuous improvement. This section highlights some of the most critical and common building blocks of council management assurance and improvement.

Councils are required to appoint several statutory officers, who have specific duties and discharge their role as part of their wider responsibilities within their council. They have an independent role in promoting and enforcing good governance and for making sure councils comply with legislation. Council schemes of delegation set out what these roles involve and why they are important. The statutory officers are as follows:

- **Head of Paid Service**, established under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 – principal policy adviser and primary manager of the council, likely to be a role remitted to the Chief Executive. They are responsible to councillors for the staffing of the council and ensuring the work in different departments is coordinated.

- **Monitoring Officer**, established under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 – oversees governance and decision making and ensures that the council observes its constitution and operates legally. This involves overseeing arrangements

for member decision-making, ensuring their compliance with the constitution and legislation. It also includes reporting on the legality of matters, mal administration and the conduct of councillors and officers.

- **Section 95 officer (Chief Financial Officer)**, established under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 – Key roles include being responsible for the proper administration of the financial affairs of the council, ensuring the council has sound financial management and establishing and maintaining internal financial controls.

- **Chief Social Work Officer**, established under the Social Work (Scotland Act) 1968 – Councils are required to appoint a professionally qualified chief social work officer to provide members and senior officers with effective, professional advice in the discharge of the local authority's statutory functions as outlined in the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, including in relation to child and adult protection.

- **Chief Education Officer**, established under the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 – Carries out the authority's education functions under the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 and any other enactment. However, this function has not yet been fully enacted

- **Chief Planning Officer**, established under The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 - Advises on the functions conferred on them by virtue of the Planning Acts, and any function conferred on

them by any other enactment, insofar as the function relates to development. This includes being the professional adviser to the local or national park authority on the spatial and place-based implications of decisions and investments in the short, medium and longer term.

The head of paid service, monitoring officer and chief finance officer work together to ensure and support good governance in the local authority. The monitoring officer works with the chief finance officer to ensure that the authority's scheme of delegation is regularly reviewed, appropriately comprehensive, current, and with member-level decision-making and transparency proportionate to the scale of the authority's activity and risks.

The chief executive is responsible for ensuring that statutory officers have sufficient access and influence to carry out their roles. This could mean, for example, that they are a member of, or regularly attend Corporate Management/Strategic Management team meetings.

Councils have a **Corporate Management/Strategic Management Team**, which is made up of senior managers with strategic responsibility for the effective delivery of defined statutory and non-statutory services. This team is responsible for overseeing operational and strategic delivery including, the reporting and review of performance, finance and risk in areas such as:

- Delivery of the Council's priorities
- Compliance with statutory requirements (e.g. timescales for determination of planning applications, response to Freedom of Information Requests)

- Delivery of budget savings and medium to long-term financial strategy
- Responses to, and learning from, complaints
- Monitoring key performance indicators in areas such as human resources.
- Triangulation of all sources of data on performance.

The Corporate/Strategic Management Team also contributes to the review of the effectiveness of the council's governance arrangements to inform the annual governance statement, and considers and responds to annual reports by internal and external audit, inspectors, regulators, Ombudsmen etc.

In addition to considering all of the above individually, it is also essential that the corporate/strategic management team consider the cumulative impact where limited or no assurance is possible in relation to more than one issue or service. A trend of, for example, increasing complaints, whistleblowing and staff turnover may be an indicator of more systemic failings.

Other key elements of council management assurance and improvement arrangements are:

- **Operational Directors/equivalent** – these are typically members of the corporate/strategic management team and have responsibility for providing assurance and delivering improvement. Key roles include ensuring that: data used to inform decision-making and performance monitoring is of high quality; performance appraisals are conducted consistently, with individual objectives linked to corporate objectives; capability and disciplinary procedures are utilised consistently

and appropriately; appropriate governance is in place for any partnerships and local authority trading companies and that it is reviewed regularly; there is appropriate oversight of reporting on performance, finance and risk; actions in response to internal audit recommendations are implemented to agreed timescales; effective consultation and engagement with service users and wider communities informs service design, planning and delivery; and all necessary training is delivered to relevant members and officers to enable compliance with policies, procedures and strategies.

- **Internal Audit Function**- - The Statutory requirements are set out in The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014. These include providing Independent review and assurance of the effectiveness of risk management, governance, and controls, including policies, processes, and performance. The function is accountable to the local authority's Audit Committee or equivalent for transparency.

- **Key Plans** –These include Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, Corporate Plan, Transformation Plans, Financial and Service Plans.

- **Performance reporting** – Best Value duty requires councils to demonstrate effective use of resources and focus on continuous improvement. To facilitate this, management teams review performance reports on a regular basis and then report publicly in response to the Accounts Commission's Statutory Performance Indicator (SPI) direction.

3. Sector-led improvement – led nationally but used locally

Scottish local government is committed to delivering an assertive approach to sector-led improvement. The sector has its own improvement arm in the form of the Local Government Improvement Service, which offers a well-defined improvement architecture for councils to tap into, depending on local needs and requirements.

In addition, given the significant opportunities provided by digital, data, and AI to improve efficiency and effectiveness, improve customer service, and improve outcomes, the sector also has a Digital Office (the "Digital Office for Scottish Local Government") funded by Councils through a membership model. The Digital Office works in partnership with COSLA and Scottish Government on the development of national strategy and policy, supports councils to develop their own digital capability, delivers sector-wide collaboration, and provides technical assurance of solutions that impact the sector.

There are also a number of well-established professional associations, which deliver a range of improvement opportunities for various sectors within Scottish local government. Councils also have their own improvement strategies and plans in place, both corporately and at service level, as well as strategic Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs) with their Community Planning Partners.

Council Wide

- **Local Government Benchmarking Framework** (LGBF), which is a statutory performance indicator, provides rich data and analysis to support evidence-based decision making, practice sharing and enhanced public accountability via public performance reporting.

- **LGBF Family Groups** which provide an established framework used both locally and nationally to support meaningful like-for-like comparison, and sector wide practice sharing.

- **Self-evaluation**, including the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) or "How Good is Our…." promotes a robust approach to continuous improvement, supporting councils to undertake a comprehensive review of their strengths and areas for improvement, to inform planning.

- **Digital Maturity Assessment** – The Digital Office provides a service that allow Councils to evaluate the maturity for digital transformation. The assessment includes metrics relating to leadership, user-focus, skills development, collaboration, data, technology, and innovation. In line with the principles of Scotland's Digital Strategy and the characteristics of a Digital Council contained in the Audit Scotland report "Digital Progress in Local Government). The output from the process is a (CMMI-type) Digital Maturity rating and an improvement plan that is unique to the council

- **Peer Collaborative Improvement** provides a structured approach to bringing peers together to support improvement in priority areas through working collaboratively and sharing learning and practice. The LGBF and PSIF are key cornerstones of the Peer Collaborative Improvement approach.

- **Community Planning Outcomes Profile** provides a self-service tool to help Community Planning Partnerships assess if the lives of people in their community are improving.

- **Local Government Data Platform** (LGDP) is a collaboration between the IS, COSLA, Solace and the Digital Office for Scottish Local Government, and represents an ambitious transformation programme to deliver improvements in the way local government manages and uses data.

- **Local Household surveys**, community views, citizen/people's/access panels.

- **Complaints handling procedure** – every council is required under the model complaints handling procedure to set out its arrangements for dealing with complaints, and to report each year on how it has used complaints to improve services.

Sector Specific

- **CIPFA Directors of Finance Section** which is constituted to form views and opinions on matters concerning the management and operation of Scottish local government finance.

- **SLAED Indicators Framework** is used by all Scottish Local Authority Economic Development services to provide a consistent basis for measuring the economic performance of Councils, assisting and informing ongoing design and delivery of interventions, and highlighting the central role of economic outcomes in the prevention agenda.

- **Planning Performance Framework** was developed by Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS) and captures key elements of a high-performing planning service and comprises a mix of qualitative and quantitative performance measures to offer a balanced measurement of the overall quality of each planning service and is used to promote continuous improvement.

- **National Planning Improvement Champion** is hosted by the Improvement Service and is responsible for monitoring the performance of planning authorities and providing advice to them (and others) on what steps might be taken to improve their performance.

- **Common Advice Reporting Management Framework** has been developed in close consultation and co-operation with councils and other key stakeholders over a decade and provides a consistent basis for reporting and measuring money and welfare rights advice performance.

- **Scottish Climate Intelligence Service** is a partnership between the Improvement Service and Edinburgh Climate Change Institute and a key element of this service is to gather area wide emissions data from all 32 councils.

- **Tackling Child Poverty Self-Assessment Framework** was developed by the Improvement Service, who provide support to councils and partners to facilitate the self-assessment.

- **Equally Safe Quality Standards and Performance Framework** is a set of quality standards and performance indicators for local Violence Against Women Partnerships, which are used to measure, demonstrate and improve the activities partnerships are undertaking at a local level to address violence against women and girls and the impact this work is having.

- **Domestic abuse-informed practice and systems: a self-assessment toolkit and evaluation framework** takes a reflective look at key areas of policy and practice from a domestic abuse-informed perspective.

- **ADES and Education Scotland Collaborative Improvement** shares what works well at a local authority level and supports improvement in areas of local authority activity that have been identified as in need of further development. Collaborative Improvement aims to promote partnership working to ensure that sustainable improvements for all children and young people are achieved, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- **ADES Improvement "Quads"** – linked to above, Directors have agreed to work in 'quads' from January 2025 to focus on the self-evaluation evidence and outcomes and work together to provide support and challenge as part of an authority's approach to continuous improvement.

- **APSE Indicators** – some council services e.g. roads, waste etc. who are members of APSE can access performance reports, profile information, benchmarking, data drilling networking events and workshops to drive improvement.

- **Co-production and lived/living experience** in policy development and service design. For example, many councils use the Scottish Approach to Service Design, which supports and empowers people, including those with lived/living experience, to actively participate in the definition, design and delivery of their council services. Council services can assess how well they are engaging with people as part of their PSIF self-assessment, where there is a question focused on how the service, at an early stage, engages customers and communities in service design and delivery, to ensure they are involved in shaping the service.

- **Community Learning and Development (CLD) Standards Council** – development of resources to support practice improvement in CLD service delivery.

- **Active Scotland Outcomes Framework** - widely used across local authorities and partners as part of a systems approach to physical activity and sport, to improve public health.

- **Scottish Local Authorities Chief Internal Auditors' Group** (SLACIAG) - a peer network of chief audit executives (with their teams) share practice and develop sector specific guidance, tools, and templates. SLACIAG's vision is to be the voice of internal audit across Scottish local authorities and a driving force for best practice in respect of local authority and public transport bodies internal audit, governance, and operations.

- **A wide range of similar peer networks** in local government covering a broad range of professions e.g. Legal, IT/Digital/Security, HR, etc.

4. External scrutiny - audit, inspection, regulation, commissioners and reporting

Scrutiny landscape

The Strategic Public Sector Scrutiny Network (SPSSN) is in place to promote collaboration and identify shared risks, priorities and learning amongst Scotland's main public sector scrutiny bodies with a view to holding public bodies to account and supporting improvement in the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of scrutiny of public services for the people of Scotland.

The SPSSN fulfils two main functions, to:

- Oversee co-ordination of scrutiny activities of all public bodies in Scotland
- Bring together scrutiny bodies to consider significant policies or national risks facing Scotland, and where appropriate, responding collaboratively and providing shared leadership.

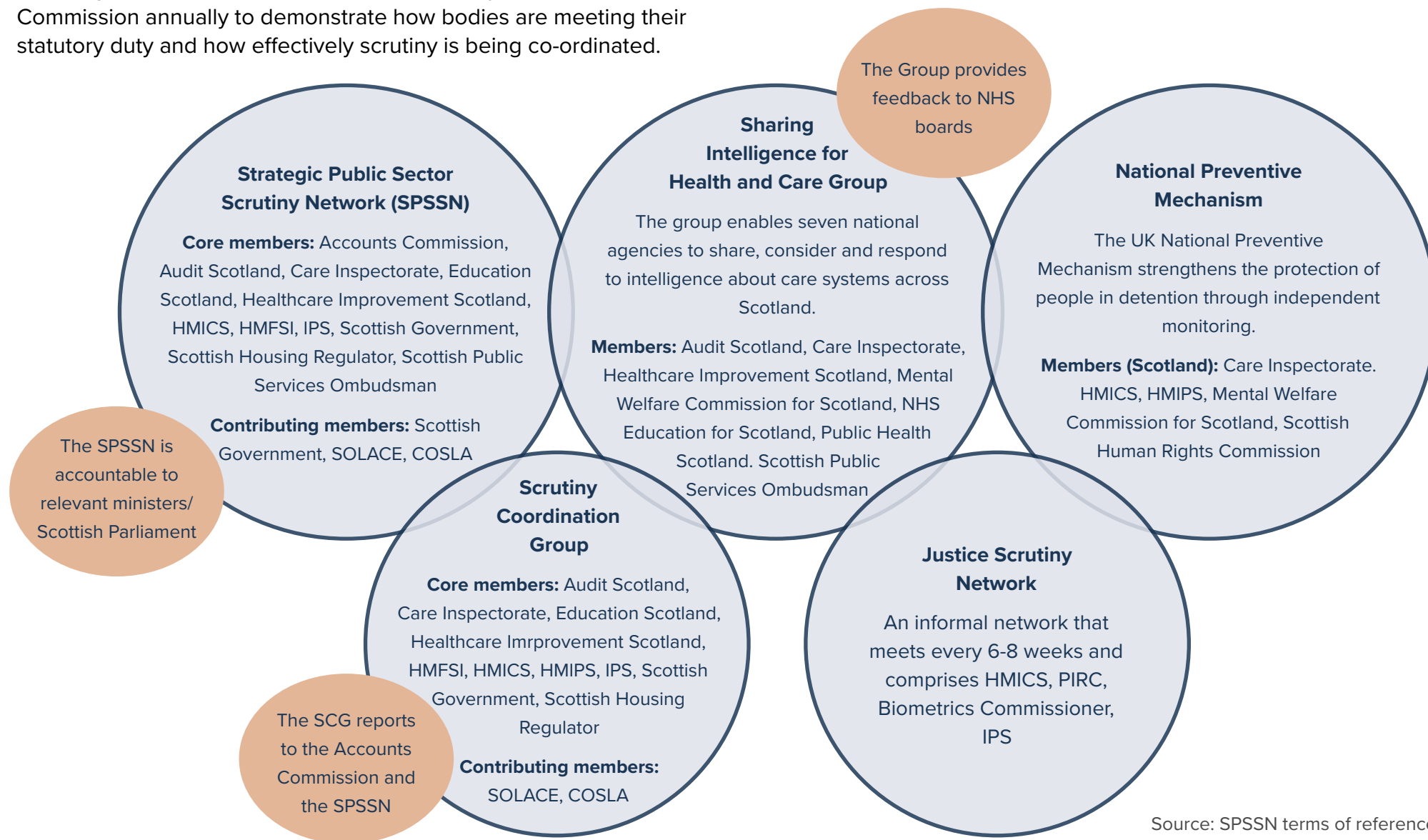The membership of the SPSSN is set out below:

- Accounts Commission
- Audit Scotland
- Care Inspectorate
- Education Scotland
- Healthcare Improvement Scotland

- HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
- HM Inspectorate of Prosecution in Scotland
- HM Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland
- HM Fire Service Inspectorate in Scotland
- Scottish Housing Regulator
- Scottish Public Service Ombudsman

The Scrutiny Coordination Group (SCG) promotes collaboration and shared learning amongst Scotland's main public-sector scrutiny bodies with a view to improving services for the people of Scotland. The SCG aims to deliver efficient and effective, well-co-ordinated scrutiny that supports improvement across Scotland's public services by:

- bringing together scrutiny bodies to consider significant policies, risks, or issues facing public services in Scotland, and where appropriate, providing shared leadership of collaborative responses.
- overseeing co-ordination of scrutiny activities in local government on behalf of the Accounts Commission. The SCG will be the key mechanism for ensuring that the principles of proportionate and coordinated scrutiny, as set out in the 2007 report from the Crerar Review, are delivered.

Scrutiny bodies have a statutory duty to co-operate with one another and, as requested by Ministers, the Accounts Commission has a duty to oversee the development and coordination of scrutiny in local government. The SCG will report directly to the Accounts Commission annually to demonstrate how bodies are meeting their statutory duty and how effectively scrutiny is being co-ordinated.

Strategic Public Sector Scrutiny Network (SPSSN)

Core members: Accounts Commission, Audit Scotland, Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, HMICS, HMFSI, IPS, Scottish Government, Scottish Housing Regulator, Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Contributing members: Scottish Government, SOLACE, COSLA

The SPSSN is accountable to relevant ministers/ Scottish Parliament

Sharing Intelligence for Health and Care Group

The group enables seven national agencies to share, consider and respond to intelligence about care systems across Scotland.

Members: Audit Scotland, Care Inspectorate, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland, NHS Education for Scotland, Public Health Scotland. Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

The Group provides feedback to NHS boards

National Preventive Mechanism

The UK National Preventive Mechanism strengthens the protection of people in detention through independent monitoring.

Members (Scotland): Care Inspectorate. HMICS, HMIPS, Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland, Scottish Human Rights Commission

Scrutiny Coordination Group

Core members: Audit Scotland, Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland, Healthcare Imrprovement Scotland, HMFSI, HMICS, HMIPS, IPS, Scottish Government, Scottish Housing Regulator

Contributing members: SOLACE, COSLA

The SCG reports to the Accounts Commission and the SPSSN

Justice Scrutiny Network

An informal network that meets every 6-8 weeks and comprises HMICS, PIRC, Biometrics Commissioner, IPS

Source: SPSSN terms of reference

There is a broad range of bodies involved with the scrutiny of councils and other local government bodies (detailed and described below). However, it is local government's view that this is a crowded landscape that needs reviewed. As part of the Solace/IS Transformation Programme, the Crerar Workstream Discovery Report set out the following recommendations in 2024:

- Continue to embed more rigorous, consistent and robust approaches to self-assessment/self-evaluation across Local Government that demonstrate accurately what is working well and what needs to be improved.

- Build on the existing peer collaborative improvement activity to support greater focus on local authorities supporting each other to improve.

- Publish a Scottish Local Government assurance and improvement framework that recognises what is already working and the levers for change to support more streamlined, outcome-focussed reporting and accountability.

- Seek support from Scottish Government to revisit the aspirations of the Crerar review that scrutiny should be risk-based and proportionate and that the starting point for any scrutiny should be the local authority's own self-evaluation.

On behalf of the Solace/IS Transformation programme, a project team is working with councils and scrutiny bodies across Scotland to progress these recommendations and to re-focus commitment to the recommendations of the Crerar review.

Accounts Commission – holds councils and other local government bodies in Scotland to account and helps them improve by reporting to the public on their performance. The Commission operates impartially and independently of councils and of the Scottish Government.

Audit Scotland – on behalf of the Accounts Commission (and Auditor General) provides clear, independent, and objective assurance on how effectively public money is being managed and spent. Oversees the annual financial audits of all Councils and local government bodies, now incorporating wider best value scope into these audits, as well as thematic focus each year e.g. workforce innovation, leadership etc.

Inspection

Care Inspectorate - a scrutiny body which supports improvement, looking at the quality of care in Scotland to ensure it meets high standards. Where it finds that improvement is needed, it supports services to make positive changes.

HM Fire Service Inspectorate - rolling programme of inspections of fire and rescue service delivery across Scotland's 32 local authority areas.

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland - undertakes joint inspection activity as part of both established cyclical programmes and specific planned joint work where policing contributes to shared outcomes across the public sector in Scotland. HM Chief Inspector is answerable to the Scottish Parliament for the exercise of his/her duties.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland - inspects the 15 prisons across Scotland in order to

establish the treatment of, and the conditions for prisoners and to report publicly on the findings. Undertakes thematic reviews e.g. of prisoner progression, which will involve Councils' social work services.

HM Inspectorate of Prosecution in Scotland - headed by HM Chief Inspector who reports directly to the Lord Advocate. The aim of the inspectorate is to enhance the quality of service and public confidence in the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service through independent inspection and evaluation.

HM Inspectorate of Education - The education reform programme and the new Education (Scotland) Bill, introduced on June 4, 2024, will establish a new office for the Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland, and will essentially separate the function of awarding qualifications from education inspection within Education Scotland.

Improvement agencies

Education Scotland - Scottish Government executive agency charged with supporting quality and improvement in Scottish education, including CLD and acts as the host agency for the CLD Standards Council, securing the delivery of better learning experiences and outcomes for children, young people and adult learners. The Chief Executive is accountable to Scottish Ministers but as an executive agency, Education Scotland operates independently and impartially. The education reform programme and the new Education (Scotland) Bill, introduced on June 4, 2024, will separate the function of awarding qualifications from education inspection within Education Scotland.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) – HIS provides improvement as well as working with e.g. Care Inspectorate on joint inspections of care services. HIS provides improvement guidance and resources.

Regulation

Scottish Social Services Council - regulator for the social work, social care and children and young people workforce in Scotland.

Housing Regulator - non-ministerial department responsible for regulating social housing in Scotland. To monitor, assess, report and intervene (as appropriate) in relation to social landlords' performance of housing activities and Registered Social Landlords' financial well-being and standards of governance.

OSCR - independent regulator and registrar for over 25,000 Scottish charities including community groups, religious charities, schools, universities, grant-giving charities and major care providers. Will pertain to Councils who provide services through Arm's Length External Organisations (ALEOs).

SEPA - regulation to protect the environment and communities from harm including in relation to waste management facilities.

Statutory consultees - organisations that are required to be consulted on certain planning applications such as Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Environment Scotland, Scottish Water, Transport Scotland, etc.

Commissioners

Below is a list of current commissioners relevant to local government. In 2023, the Finance and Public Administration Committee started an investigation into whether a more coherent and strategic approach is needed in Scotland:

- Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland

- Scottish Biometrics Commissioner

- Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People,

- Scottish Human Rights Commission

- Scottish Information Commissioner

- Scottish Public Services Ombudsman - the final stage for complaints about councils, the National Health Service, housing associations, colleges and universities, prisons, most water providers, the Scottish Government and its agencies and departments and most Scottish authorities.

- Standards Commission for Scotland

- Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Ultimately, if public concern exists in relation to a particular event or set of events, a public inquiry can be called for, with the aim of holding those responsible to account and preventing recurrence. These are becoming a feature of modern UK politics and are therefore something that Scottish and Local Government must take into consideration within this architecture. Recent examples include Historic Child Abuse Inquiry and the Scottish and UK COVID Inquiries. Not only do the inquiries take up local government resource but the outcome can also involve a financial liability.

Reporting

Local government is required to report across a broad range of policy areas and to a variety of audiences. Much of the existing reporting is to support national accountability, and is provided by councils at the request of Scottish Government. For smaller councils, this reporting burden can fall on the same member of staff, and for all councils, a growing requirement to report outputs risks diverting resource from service provision and the focus on improving outcomes. Often, there is a lack of clarity and transparency in relation to the purpose and use of much of the data collected, and a lack of "join up" to enable a focus on improving (and in some cases saving) lives.

The Local Government Data Platform project aims to provide a clear focus on the reporting which is essential to evidence improvement in outcomes in partnership, ensuring that we take account of existing data reporting and consider streamlining and reducing where possible. The project represents an ambitious sector-led transformation programme to deliver improvements in the way local government manages and uses data. It aims to improve and streamline the management of data returns and to provide enhanced value from the process by providing greater insight and intelligence to local government itself. The Platform will also provide improved data quality, improved timeliness of data, and greater assurance for stakeholders such as Scottish Government.

As part of the project's scoping work, the first infographic presented below was produced to demonstrate the overall reporting landscape. The second infographic breaks the reporting down by policy area and shows the timings and frequency of reports, with every week of every month of every year seeing a broad range of requirements.
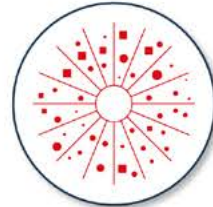
Local Government Data Reporting Landscape

>160
different data returns

>430
data collections per year

>24,000
separate data items per LA per year (or
>3 million
data items as some collections require individual level data and many thousands of returns)
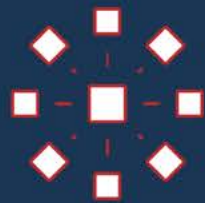
>30
public data reporting duties

>1000
FOI, EIR and SAR per year

>30
different requiring bodies (Scottish Government accounts for over half)

Rate of introduction has **accelerated** over the last 20 years.

Recently introduced returns are **more frequent**

Lack of **awareness** or **oversight** of what data is being collected or where there is **duplication**

60%
focus on social care, education, LG finance and LG workforce

>15%
of data collected is not published

Data collections are **largely still manual**, relying primarily on MS Excel spreadsheet attached to an email.

Lack of clarity and transparency in relation to the purpose and use of much of the data collected. Focus on:
- improvement in outcomes
- prevention and early intervention
- predictive analysis
- data quality and data standards

Calendar of Returns

Note: To provide an accurate picture of the level of demand and the level of input required to produce the data, it is important to note that data collections range from direct data downloads to complex returns which require calculation, collation, apportionment etc., on the part of the provider.

Mapping assurance and improvement arrangements and setting a future vision

To clearly demonstrate the significant accountability, improvement, and assurance arrangements already in place across all service areas in local government, the LGBF indicator 'categories' e.g. Children and Young People, Social Care, Culture and Leisure etc have been used to present the key elements of this framework across each of the service areas, as well as demonstrate the overarching audit and reporting arrangements that are in place.

Worked examples of the totality of the improvement and assurance arrangements which exist across each of the LGBF service areas are provided in the ANNEX. While this captures the most important and significant arrangements in place in 2024 within each service area, it is not exhaustive. Laying out the current arrangements aids discussions with Scottish Government about what they expect to see in a Verity House Agreement 'Monitoring and Accountability Framework', drawing from what exists already, and where they perceive there to be gaps in understanding, evidence or transparency (and how these can be easily filled, without adding to the burden of scrutiny and reporting).

However, perhaps more importantly, laying this information out can help facilitate dialogue on how we move to where we want to be, building on already established workstreams.

Where we we are now

Imbalance of power; "top down" direction and control

Scottish Government
- Lack of trust in local government
- Direct, control, monitor
- Funding direction/ring-fencing
- Input and output reporting
- Lack of join up of data
- Significant external scrutiny "system"
- National Performance Framework with limited buy in from key public service organisations

Local Government
- Significant external scrutiny (including Accounts Commission for local government alone)
- Reporting burden
- Inconsistent use of self-assessment & reporting
- limited powers, including for revenue raising

Levers of change

Local government-led work programmes

a. Complete work on this **Framework**
b. Complete Solace/IS work on **statutory duties/powers and Crerar** (including how to embed PSIF in all councils)
c. Use the above in discussions with Scottish Government officials, in the context of VHA to establish gaps and how they can be addressed from existing data and reporting.
d. Progress work on **Fiscal Framework**, linking clearly to Accountability and Assurance work
e. Progress **Local Government Data Platform**
f. Refreshed **Statutory Performance Indicator** Direction (by Dec 2024)
g. **NPF/Wellbeing framework** - explore how it can link clearly to LOIPs, Community Planning Partnerships and Public Service Reform.
h. Conclude **Local Governance Review**, ensuring a focus on place.
i. Continued lobbying for the incorporation of the **European Charter**

Where we want to be

Relationship of equals

Robust performance management and outcomes-focused self-assessment and improvement planning in all councils.

Co-ordinated external scrutiny is risk-based, looks at whole systems and is place based, resulting in a reduction in reporting burden.

Reporting to Scottish Government is outcome focussed; and there is clarity about the contribution of local government and all Community Planning partners to the NPF.

Data driven co-produced policy development.

Local government empowered to raise revenue; funding provided through General Revenue Grant (need for any specific grants jointly agreed); adequacy is assessed.

# Annex: map of existing improvement and assurance arrangements

Overarching assurance arrangements which are not service specific

- External Annual Audit Report (by Audit Scotland or appointed firms) including Best Value assessment.

- Best Value thematic report (integrated within Annual Audit Reports)

- Section 102 report (once every 5 years by Controller of Audit)

- Internal Audit - annual assurance report to include
  (a) audit opinion on effectiveness of governance, controls and risk management to inform the annual assurance process and Annual Governance Statement,
  (b) summary of work supporting the opinion, and
  (c) statement on conformance to internal audit quality standards (currently public sector internal audit standards (PSIAS))

- Council's Annual Governance Review and Statement (CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government).

- Accounts Commission's Statutory Performance Indicator (SPI) Direction (public performance reporting)

- Digital Office for Scottish Local Government Digital Maturity Service - Digital Maturity Review (Leadership, User Focus, Collaboration, Skills Development, Data-Driven, Technology Enabled, Innovation, Digital Maturity Improvement Plan)

- National Improvement Approaches where local government is a core partner, including the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education, The Promise Plan 24-30 and Progress Framework; the Collaborative Response and Assurance Group (CRAG) for delayed discharges; The National Trauma Transformation Programme; the Scottish Learning and Improvement framework for Adult Social Care Support and Community Health; the Local Governance Review; and the Fiscal Framework.

The accountability, improvement, and assurance arrangements in place across all of the service areas in local government

Click the service area to see key accountability, improvement, and assurance arrangements in place in 2024 for that particular theme.
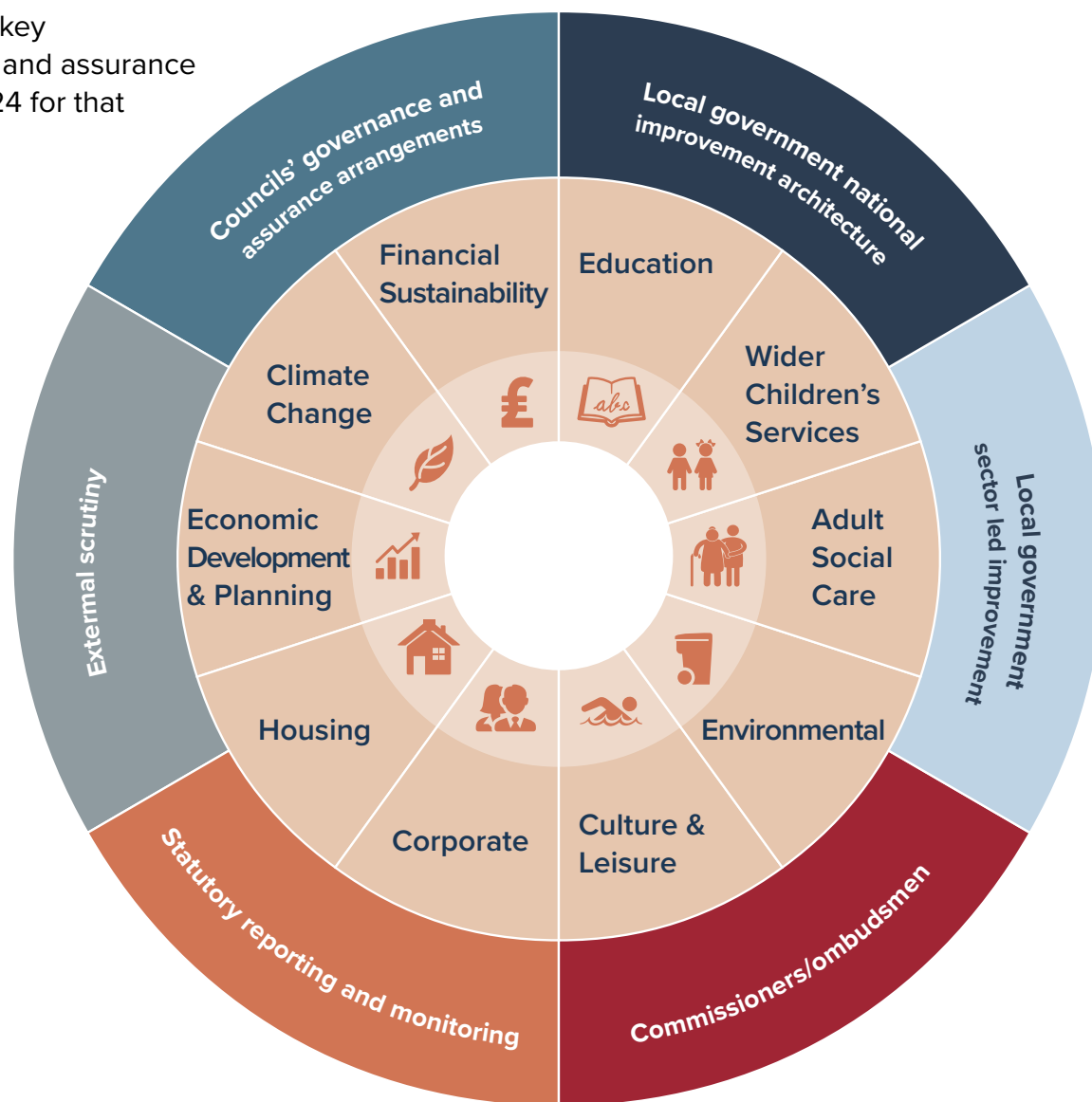
Note: This is based on 2024 data. Arrangements are dynamic and the picture will change over time.

Education

Councils' governance and assurance arrangements

Children's Directorate – Children's service plans (CSP) and performance indicators

Chief Education Officer

Council Plan and Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

Education Executive/Education Committee/Education and Learning Committee/Education Scrutiny Committee/ Education and Children's Services Committee

Local government national improvement architecture

LGBF

Cost per primary school pupil

Cost per secondary school pupil

Cost per pre-school education place

Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 5

Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 6

Percentage of pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at level 5

Percentage of of pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas gaining 5+ awards at level 6

Percentage of adults satisfied with local schools

Percentage of pupils entering positive destinations

Overall average total tariff

Average total tariff SIMD quintile 1

Average total tariff SIMD quintile 2

Average total tariff SIMD quintile 3

Average total tariff SIMD quintile 4

Average total tariff SIMD quintile 5

Local government national improvement architecture (cont.)

Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE level in literacy

Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE level in numeracy

Literacy attainment gap (P1,4,7 combined) - percentage point gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils

Numeracy attainment gap (P1,4,7 combined) - percentage point gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils

Percentage of funded early years provision which is graded good/better

School attendance rates

School attendance rates

School exclusion rates (per 1,000 pupils)

School exclusion rates (per 1,000 'looked after children')

Participation rate for 16-19 year olds (per 100)

Other

PSIF and How Good Is Our School/Education Authority/ Community Learning and Development

IS/LGBF Peer Collaborative Improvement

ELC Delivery Data Dashboard to monitor Early Years expansion

National Instrumental Music Services Survey

Local government sector led improvement

Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) Collaborative Improvement, Improvement Quads and range of peer-led networks

Community Learning and Development Managers Scotland (CLDMS) Executive, working groups and KPI annual return

External scrutiny

Inspection of Schools - Education Scotland

Inspections of CLD – Education Scotland

Inspections of ELC – Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland

ES Thematic Reviews, e.g. curriculum, maths, attendance – Education Scotland

Copyright – usage within schools – Copyright Licencing Agency

Joint Inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm – Care Inspectorate/Healthcare Improvement Scotland/HM Inspectorate of Constabulary/ Education Scotland

Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) Inspection – Health and Safety Executive

Thematic Inspection – Care Inspectorate

Registered Services Inspection – Care Inspectorate

Health and nutrition in primary, secondary and special schools – Education Scotland

Inspections of progress in improving learning, raising attainment, and closing the poverty-related gap – Education Scotland

Gaelic education – Education Scotland

Inspections of various services and functions in an education setting depending on the topic of the national thematic inspection – Education Scotland

Inspecting independent special schools and grant-aided schools – Education Scotland

Education

Statutory monitoring and reporting

Data Returns

Early Years Childcare Monitoring Survey – SG

Early Learning and Childcare Census – SG

Early Learning and Childcare Pre-Census Survey – SG

16+ Data Hub ("Opportunities for All" shared dataset) - SDS

Achievement of CfE Levels – SG

Attendance, Absence & Exclusions – SG

Grant Aided Special Schools Census and Leavers – SG

Health and Wellbeing Census - SG

Healthy Living Survey - SG

Parental Involvement & Engagement Census - SG

Pupil Census - SG

School Establishments - SG

School Estates (Core Facts) - SG

Scottish Attainment Challenge - Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) finance returns - SG

Scottish Attainment Challenge - Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) finance and resourcing plan returns - SG

Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme (SG)

Staff Census - SG

Staff FTE Pay data (Teachers) - SG

Ukrainian Displaced Pupils - SG

Reporting Duties

Children's Services Plan

Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan

Education Standards and Quality Report

1+2 Language Provision progress report

Gaelic Language Plan

Scottish Attainment Challenge Stretch Aims

UNCRC Report

LOIP

Commissioners/ombudsmen

Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Standards Commission for Scotland

Wider Children's Services

Councils' governance and assurance arrangements

Social Work Directorate – Children's service plans (CSP) and performance indicators

Chief Social Work Officer

Local Child Protection Committee

Council Plan and Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

Education, Children and Families Committee/Children & Young People Committee/Education and Children's Services Committee

Local government national improvement architecture

LGBF

CHN8a: The gross cost of "children looked after" in residential based services per child per week

CHN8b: The gross cost of "children looked after" in a community setting per child per week

CHN9: Balance of care for 'looked after children': % of children being looked after in the community

CHN17: Percentage of children meeting developmental milestones

CHN19b: School attendance rates (for looked after children)

CHN20b: School exclusion rates (per 1,000 'looked after children')

CHN22: Percentage of child protection re-registrations within 18 months

CHN23: Percentage LAC with more than 1 placement in the last year (Aug-July)

CHN24: Percentage of children living in poverty (after housing costs)

Local government national improvement architecture (cont.)

Other

PSIF and How Good is Our…

IS/LGBF Peer Collaborative Improvement

National Coordinator for Local Child Poverty Action Reports

national UNCRC Implementation Project Manager

Local government sector led improvement

Local Child Poverty Peer Support Network and Co-ordination Group (National Partners Group)

Promise Leads Network

Local Government Promise Programme Board

External scrutiny

Audit of Care Homes and Children's Homes (HM Inspectorate of Fire)

Inspection of Health and social care, early learning and childcare, social work, children's services, and community justice (Care Inspectorate)

One off thematic reviews – depending on any local issues, areas of concern, or risk assessments, or national policy matters which require a deeper dive (various bodies depending on the theme under review)

Inspection of Children's social work (Care Inspectorate extending to Joint Inspection Teams for Child Protection)

Experiences of Disabled Children and Young People (Care Inspectorate)

Joint Inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm (Care Inspectorate/HM Inspectorate of Constabulary/Education Scotland)

Thematic Inspections (Care Inspectorate)

Registered Services Inspections (Care Inspectorate)

Statutory monitoring and reporting

Data Returns

Health and Wellbeing Census - SG

Healthy Living Survey - SG

Child Protection (SG)

Eligible for Aftercare (SG)

Looked After Children (CLAS Return) (SG)

SCRA Feedback Loop (CHS)

Vulnerable Children Monitoring Return (SG)

LA Social Work Services (LASWS) Census (SSSC)

Reporting Duties

Children's Services Plan

Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan

UNCRC Report

Child Poverty Action Plan

Commissioners/ombudsmen

Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People,

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Scottish Human Rights Commission

Scottish Information Commissioner

Standards Commission for Scotland

Adult Social Care

Councils' governance and assurance arrangements

Social Work Directorate – Children's service plans (CSP), performance indicators

Chief Social Work Officer

Local Public Protection Committee's (e.g. Adult support and Protection; Drugs and Alcohol; Domestic Abuse; etc)

Council Plan and Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

Integration Joint Boards Integration Joint Monitoring Committee/Social Work Services Committee/Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Committee/Social Work and Social Care Board/Adult Care and Social Work Committee

Local government national improvement architecture

LGBF

Home care costs per hour for people aged 65 or over

Direct Payments + Managed Personalised Budgets spend on adults 18+ as a percentage of total social work spend on adults 18+

Percentage of people aged 65 or over with long-term care needs receiving personal care at home

Percentage of adults supported at home who agree that their services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life

Percentage of adults supported at home who agree that they are supported to live as independently as possible

Percentage of adults supported at home who agree that they had a say in how their help, care or support was provided

Percentage of carers who feel supported to continue in their caring role

Residential costs per week per resident for people aged 65 or over

Local government national improvement architecture

Rate of readmission to hospital within 28 days per 1,000 discharges

Proportion of care services graded 'good' (4) or better in Care Inspectorate inspections

Number of days people spend in hospital when they are ready to be discharged, per 1,000 population (75+)

Other

PSIF and How Good Is Our Council, SWIA Self Evaluation

HSCP and IJB PSIF self-assessment checklists

Adult Support and Protection Committee PSIF self-assessment checklists

Child Protection Committee PSIF self-assessment checklists

IS/LGBF Peer Collaborative Improvement

Domestic abuse-informed practice and systems: a self-assessment toolkit and evaluation framework takes a reflective look at key areas of policy and practice from a domestic abuse-informed perspective.

National VAW Network for VAW Partnership Co-ordinators/Lead Officers

Local government sector led improvement

Social Work Scotland Standing Committees and subgroups guidance, support and resources to support practice learning and improvement

External scrutiny

Audit of Care Homes and Children's Homes (HM Inspectorate of Fire)

Joint inspection of adult support and protection (Care Inspectorate/HIS/HM Inspectorate of Constabulary)

Joint inspection of adult services (Care Inspectorate/HIS)

Inspection of Community Justic Social Work (Care Inspectorate)

Inspection of Homes for Older People (Care Inspectorate)

Inspection of Health and social care, early learning and childcare, social work, children's services, and community justice (Care Inspectorate)

One off thematic reviews – depending on any local issues, areas of concern, or risk assessments, or national policy matters which require a deeper dive (various bodies depending on the theme under review)

Inspection of Children's social work (Care Inspectorate extending to Joint Inspection Teams for Child Protection)

Experiences of Disabled Children and Young People (Care Inspectorate)

Joint Inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm (Care Inspectorate/HM Inspectorate of Constabulary/Education Scotland)

Thematic Inspections (Care Inspectorate)

Registered Services Inspections (Care Inspectorate)

Adult Social Care

Statutory monitoring and reporting

Data Returns

Adult Support and Protection Biennial Report (SG)

Carers Census (SG)

Delayed discharges (SG)

Free Personal and Nursing Care Quarterly Monitoring Return (SG)

Quarterly Monitoring Data Return (Eligibility and Waiting times) (SG)

Social Care/Source/Adult Social Care Survey (Annual files) (PHS)

Social Care/Source/Adult Social Care Survey (quarterly files) (PHS)

Care at Home Weekly Return (PHS)

Adult Support and Protection (ASP) Minimum Dataset (SG)

Alcohol and Drugs (PHS)

Care Home census (PHS)

Care Inspectorate Annual Return (Care Inspectorate)

Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Supports and Services (SG)

Dementia - Post Diagnostic Support (PHS)

Equally Safe Quality Standards and Performance Framework (IS)

Bail Supervision (SG)

Community Justice Performance Return (Community Justice Scotland)

Community Payback Orders (CPO) Annual Return (SG)

Criminal Justice Social Work aggregate return (SG)

Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs) (SG)

LA Social Work Services (LASWS) Census (SSSC))

Statutory monitoring and reporting (cont.)

Reporting Duties

Community Justice Outcome Activity report

IJB Annual Performance Report

Chief Social Work Officers Report

LOIP

Commissioners/ombudsmen

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Scottish Human Rights Commission

Scottish Information Commissioner

Standards Commission for Scotland

Environmental

Councils' governance and assurance arrangements

Regional Transport Strategy / Local Transport Strategy

Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee / Environment and Transport Committee / Environment and Regeneration Committee

Local government national improvement architecture

LGBF

ENV1a: Net cost of waste collection per premise

ENV2a: Net cost of waste disposal per premise

ENV3a: Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population

ENV3c: Street Cleanliness Score

ENV4a: Cost per kilometre of roads

ENV4b: Percentage of A Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment

ENV4c: Percentage of B Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment

ENV4d: Percentage of C Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment

ENV4e: Percentage of U Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment

ENV5: Cost of trading standards and environmental health per 1,000 population

ENV5a: Cost of Trading Standards, Money Advice & Citizen Advice per 1000

ENV5b: Cost of environmental health per 1,000 population

ENV6: Percentage of total household waste arising that is recycled

ENV7a: Percentage of adults satisfied with refuse collection

ENV7b: Percentage of adults satisfied with street cleaning

Local government national improvement architecture (cont.)

Other

PSIF and How Good is Our....

IS/LGBF Peer Collaborative Improvement

Trading Standards Scotland

Local government sector led improvement

Scottish Collaboration of Transportation Specialists (SCOTS) APSE Performance Networks, national Road Asset Management project (RAMP), and LiveLabs2

Waste Managers Network

Scottish Local Authority Litter Managers Network

Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland (SCOTSS) Network

Society of Chief Officers of Environmental Health in Scotland (SOCOEHS) Network

External scrutiny

Inspections of burial grounds and burial authorities, crematoriums and cremation authorities, and funeral directors (SG, Senior Inspector of burial, cremation and funeral directors)

Health and Safety Enforcement (Health and Safety Executive)

Food Law Delivery (Food Standards Scotland)

Feed Delivery (Food Standards Scotland)

Private Water Supplies (Drinking Water Quality Regulator)

Local Air Quality Management (SEPA/Scottish Government)

Register of Food Businesses (HMRC)

Local Environmental Audit and Management System - LEAMS (Keep Scotland Beautiful)

Gully Waste Treatment (SEPA)

Co-ordination of Roadworks (Scottish Roadworks Commission)

Statutory monitoring and reporting

Data Returns

Air Quality Annual Progress report (SG)

Air Quality Monitoring Data (SG)

Annual Nitrogen Dioxide (NOx) Diffusion Tube Results, Scottish Government

Dog Control Notices (SG)

Local Authority Health & Safety Return (LEA1), UK Government

Annual data return on quality of private water supplies (SG)

Registered Food Premises, UK Government

Scottish Food Enforcement - Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS), Food Standards Scotland

Venison Dealer Returns (SG)

Climate Change Reporting, Sustainable Scotland Network

Complex waste management exemptions, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)

Licensed/permitted waste management site returns, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)

Material Recovery Facility Code of Practice data returns, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)

Nature Restoration Fund (SG)

Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory data returns, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)

Waste Data Flow, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)

Animal Health & Welfare Return (SG)

Burial Grounds - Assessor Information Request, Valuation Joint Board

Water Industry Commission for Scotland (WICS) Return, Scottish Water

Community Apparatus Data Vault, Scottish Road Works Commissioner

Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) - Income and Expenditure, Transport Scotland

Local Authority Road Length Survey, Transport Scotland

Environmental

Statutory monitoring and reporting (cont.)

Local Environment Audit and Management System (LEAMS) - Litter Monitoring System (LMS), Keep Scotland Beautiful

Roads Asset Management Planning (RAMP), Scottish Collaboration of Transportation Specialists (SCOTS)

Scotland Road Safety Framework 2030, Transport Scotland

Cycling, Walking and Safer Routes, Transport Scotland

Street Gazetteer, Scottish Road Works Commissioner

Section 70 Weights & Measures Act return, UK Government

Tobacco / Nicotine Vaping Products (NVP) (enforcement), Scottish Government

Reporting Duties

LOIP

Annual Income and Expenditure Report, Annual Functions Report and Licensing Register

Commissioners/ombudsmen

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Scottish Human Rights Commission

Scottish Information Commissioner

Standards Commission for Scotland

Culture and Leisure

Councils' governance and assurance arrangements

Service Level Agreements with Culture and Leisure Trusts

Culture and Leisure Strategy

Culture and Communities Committee/Cultural Committee/Communities Committee

Local government national improvement architecture

LGBF

C&L1: Cost per attendance at sports facilities

C&L2: Cost per library visit

C&L3: Cost of museums per visit

C&L4: Cost of parks & open spaces per 1,000 population

C&L5a: Percentage of adults satisfed with libraries

C&L5b: Percentage of adults satisfed with parks and open spaces

C&L5c: Percentage of adults satisfed with museums and galleries

C&L5d: Percentage of adults satisfed with leisure facilities

Other

PSIF and How Good is Our.... (HGIOCS)

IS/LGBF Peer Collaborative Improvement

Local government sector led improvement

Voice of Culture and Leisure Managers in Scotland (VOCAL) Network

External scrutiny

OSCR requires accounts of ALEOS to be externally scrutinised

Statutory monitoring and reporting

Data Returns

LGBF Statutory return on Culture and Leisure usage

Local Finance Return - expenditure on Sports, Libraries, Parks and Museums

Play Park Renewal Fund, Scottish Government

Cultural Statistics in Scotland, Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy

Public Library Annual Performance Statistics, Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy

Reporting Duties

LOIP

Commissioners/ombudsmen

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Scottish Human Rights Commission

Scottish Information Commissioner

Standards Commission for Scotland

Corporate

Councils' governance and assurance arrangements

Corporate Plans

Head of Paid Service (Statutory Officer)

Monitoring Officer (Statutory Officer)

Corporate Resources Committee/Corporate Services Committee/Policy and Resources Committee/Finance, Economy & Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee

Local government national improvement architecture

LGBF

CORP 1: Support services as a % of total gross expenditure

CORP 3b: Percentage of the highest paid 5% employees who are women

CORP 3c: The gender pay gap (%)

CORP 4: The cost per dwelling of collecting council tax

CORP 6a: Sickness absence days per teacher

CORP 6b: Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher)

CORP 7: Percentage of income due from council tax received by the end of the year

CORP 8: Percentage of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days

CORP 9: Proportion of SWF Crisis Grants decisions within 1 day

CORP 10: Proportion of SWF Community Care Grants decisions within 15 days

CORP 11: Proportion of SWF Budget Spent

CORP 12: Proportion of DHP Funding Spent

CORP-ASSET1: Proportion of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use

Local government national improvement architecture (cont.)

Other

PSIF and How Good is Our.... (HGIOCS)

IS/LGBF Peer Collaborative Improvement

Local government sector led improvement

Society of Personnel and Development Scotland (SPDS) Portfolio Groups, research, guidance and good practice

Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation (IRRV) Network

CIPFA Directors of Finance executive and subgroups

Society of IT Managers (SOCITM) and Digital Leaders

Local Authority Research and Intelligence Association (LARIA) peer networks, guidance and practice sharing

External scrutiny

External Audit Annual Report, External auditors appointed by Audit Scotland

Thematic Review, Audit Scotland/external auditors appointed by Audit Scotland

Controller of Audit Best Value Reports, Audit Scotland/external auditors appointed by Audit Scotland

Section 102 reports, Audit Scotland/external auditors appointed by Audit Scotland

Internal Audit PSIAS External Assessment, CIIA or peer review - every 5 years

Pensions Regulator, Pensions Regulator

Payroll, HMRC

DWP Systems, External Auditor appointed by DWP

DWP Scrutiny - Subsidy claim, MOU. review of sample of cases etc., Department of Work and Pensions

Procurement Commercial Improvement Programme

Statutory monitoring and reporting

Data Returns

Annual Business Register Employment Survey (BRES), ONS

Annual Survey of hours and earnings from ONS, ONS

Complaint Performance Monitoring, SPSO (Scottish Public Services Ombudsman)

Directed Surveillance / Regulation of Investigatory Powers (RIPSA) Return, Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO)

Financial Survey of Pensions (FSPS), Scottish Government

Information requests return (FOI and EIR), Scottish Information Commissioner

Joint Staffing Watch , ONS

Joint Staffing Watch collection for 16-24 year olds, Scottish Government

LGBF Data collection, Improvement Service

LGPS Annual Pension Return, Council's Pension Fund

Local Authority Social Work Services (LASWS) Census, SSSC - Scottish Social Services Council

Monthly Vacancy, ONS

Monthly Wages and Salaries Survey, ONS

Public Service Scheme Return, The Pensions Regulator

Quarterly Business Survey , ONS

Quarterly Joint Staffing Watch collection , Scottish Government

SPPA Annual Teachers Pension Return, Scottish Public Pensions Agency

Council Tax Assumptions (CTAS), Scottish Government

Council Tax Base (CTAXBASE), Scottish Government

Council Tax Receipts and Returns (CTRR), Scottish Government

Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Extracts, Scottish Government

National Fraud Initiative, Audit Scotland

Small area council tax base data, Scottish Government

Aggregates Levy Return, UK Government

Common Advice Performance Management Reporting Framework, Improvement Service

Corporate

Statutory monitoring and reporting (cont.)

Construction Industry Scheme Return, UK Government

Discretionary Housing Payment return, Scottish Government

HMRC - Business Rates return, UK Government

HMRC - Landlord Payments, UK Government

HMRC - Self Isolation Payments, UK Government

Housing Benefit Debt Recovery, UK Government

Housing Benefit Subsidy, UK Government

Landfill Tax Return, Scottish Government

Scottish Child Payment - Bridging Payments, Scottish Government

Scottish Welfare Fund, Scottish Government

Single Housing Benefit Extract, UK Government

Education Maintenance Allowance, Scottish Government

Reporting Duties

LOIP

Equalities Outcomes Report

Fairer Scotland Duty - Publication of written assessments

Annual Efficiency Statement

Commissioners/ombudsmen

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Scottish Human Rights Commission

Scottish Information Commissioner

Standards Commission for Scotland

Housing

Councils' governance and assurance arrangements

Local Housing Strategy

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee/Housing Appeals Board/Housing and Property Committee/ Housing Committee

Local government national improvement architecture

LGBF

HSN1b: Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year

HSN2: Percentage of rent due in the year that was lost due to voids

HSN3: Percentage of council dwellings meeting Scottish Housing Standards

HSN4b: Average number of days taken to complete non-emergency repairs

HSN5: Percentage of council dwellings that are energy efficient

Other

PSIF and How Good is Our.... (HGIOCS)

IS/LGBF Peer Collaborative Improvement

Local government sector led improvement

Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers (ALACHO) Networks

Scottish Housing Network

External scrutiny

Homelessness Services, Scottish Housing Regulator

Gypsy Traveller minimum site standards and/or fire safety, Scottish Housing Regulator

Service Quality, Scottish Housing Regulator

Tenant and Resident Safety, Scottish Housing Regulator

All housing services provided by social landlords in Scotland., Scottish Housing Regulator

Inspection of Tower Blocks, HM Inspectorate of Fire

Inspection of Sheltered Housing Accommodation., Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Housing Benefits, DWP

DWP systems., External auditor appointed by DWP

Statutory monitoring and reporting

Data Returns

Annual Housing Statistics Return, Scottish Government

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC), Scottish Housing Regulator

HL1, HL2, HL3 and PREVENT1, Scottish Government

Homelessness, Public Health Scotland

Housing First, Scottish Government

Housing Revenue Account, Scottish Government

NB 2 (New Build Private Builders), Scottish Government

NB1 Quarterly Return on New Housebuilding, Scottish Government

Self-Directed Support, Care Inspectorate

Short Term Lets Licensing data, Scottish Government

Unsuitable Accommodation Order Breaches Return, Scottish Government

Ukraine Longer-Term Resettlement Fund return, Scottish Government

Resettlement evaluation, UK Government

Lists of homeless service users who have died, Scottish Government

Temporary accommodation for homeless people, Scottish Government

Statutory monitoring and reporting (cont.)

Scottish Housing Network Quarterly Return (SHN), Scottish Housing Network

Scottish Housing Network Annual Return (SHN), Scottish Housing Network

Reporting Duties

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTPs)

Affordable Housing Supply Programme Annual Report

Strategic Housing Investment Programme (SHIP)

Private Sector Housing Grant

Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES)

LOIP

Commissioners/ombudsmen

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Scottish Human Rights Commission

Scottish Information Commissioner

Standards Commission for Scotland

Economic Development and Planning

Councils' governance and assurance arrangements

Planning

Local Development Plan/Regional Spatial Strategies/Local Outcomes Improvement Plan/Locality Plan/Local Place Plan

Environmental Impact Assessments (for proposed developments)

Chief Planning Officer

Planning Committee / Local Development Plan Committee / Development Management Committee / Local Review Body

Economic Development

City and Region Deals/Economic Development Strategy

Economy and Resources Committee/Economy and Infrastructure Committee/City Region Deal Joint Committee/Infrastructure, Regeneration and Economic Development Committee/Infrastructure Services Committee

Local government national improvement architecture

LGBF

ECON1: Percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from council operated/funded employability programmes

ECON2: Cost per planning application

ECON3: Average time per business and industry planning application (weeks)

ECON4: Percentage of procurement spent on local enterprises

ECON5: Number of business gateway start-ups per 10,000 population

ECON6: Investment in Economic Development and Tourism per 1,000 population

ECON7: Proportion of people earning less than the living wage

Local government national improvement architecture (cont.)

ECON8: Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband

ECON9: Town Vacancy Rates

ECON10: Immediately available employment land as a percentage of total land allocated for employment purposes in the local development plan

ECON11: Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita

ECON12a: Claimant count as a percentage of working age population

ECON12b: Claimant count as a percentage of 16-24 population

Other

PSIF and How Good is Our.... (HGIOCS)

IS/LGBF Peer Collaborative Improvement

National Employability Partnership Manager

National Planning Improvement Champion

National Planning Improvement Framework

Local government sector led improvement

SLAED networks and indicators framework

Scotland Excel services, resources and procurement frameworks

Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS) executive committee, sub-committees, and Plannning Performance Framework

Statutory monitoring and reporting

Data Returns

16+ Data Hub ("Opportunities for All" shared dataset), Skills Development Scotland

No One Left Behind Management Information, Scottish Government

SLAED Indicators, SLAED

Building Standards - Key Performance Outcomes, Scottish Government

Building Standards - Workforce , Scottish Government

Conservation Areas, Historic Environment Scotland

Planning Performance Framework Statistics, Scottish Government

Tree Preservation Orders, Register of Scotland

Vacant and Derelict Land Survey, Scottish Government

Annual Procurement Report, Scottish Government

Reporting Duties

Scottish Biodiversity Duty Report

Allotments Annual Report

Local Development Plan - Development plan Scheme

Local Development Plan - Action / Delivery Programme

Housing Land Audit

Industrial land Business Land Audit

Annual Procurement Report

LOIP

Commissioners/ombudsmen

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Scottish Human Rights Commission

Scottish Information Commissioner

Standards Commission for Scotland

Climate Change

Councils' governance and assurance arrangements

Climate Change Impact Assessment/Integrated Impact Assessments (incorporating climate change)

Climate Change Committee/Environment, Transport & Net Zero Committee/Net Zero, Transport and Environment/ Climate Change and Sustainability Committee/Sustainability Committee/Climate, Environment and Biodiversity Committee

Local government national improvement architecture

LGBF

CLIM1: CO2 emissions area wide per capita

CLIM2: CO2 emissions area wide: emissions within scope of Local Authority per capita

CLIM3: Emissions from transport per capita

CLIM4: Emissions from electricity per capita

CLIM5: Emissions from natural gas per capita

Other

PSIF and How Good is Our.... (HGIOCS)

IS/LGBF Peer Collaborative Improvement

Scottish Climate Intelligence Service

Local government sector led improvement

Scottish Climate Intelligence Service

External scrutiny

Local Air Quality Management (SEPA/Scottish Government)

Statutory monitoring and reporting

Data Returns

Air Quality Annual Progress report, Scottish Government

Air Quality Monitoring Data, Scottish Government

Annual Nitrogen Dioxide (NOx) Diffusion Tube Results, Scottish Government

Climate Change Reporting, Sustainable Scotland Network

Nature Restoration Fund, Scottish Government

Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory data returns, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)

Tree Preservation Orders, Register of Scotland

Reporting Duties

Climate Change Report

Scotland's Annual Climate Change Declaration report

Scottish Biodiversity Duty Report

Commissioners/ombudsmen

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Scottish Human Rights Commission

Scottish Information Commissioner

Standards Commission for Scotland

Financial Sustainability £

Councils' governance and assurance arrangements

Chief Financial Officer (Section 95 Officer)

Finance and Resources Committee/Policy and Resources Committee/Budget Board/Audit & Governance Committee/ Finance and Corporate Resources Committee

Local government national improvement architecture

LGBF

FINSUS1: Total useable reserves as a % of council annual budgeted revenue

FINSUS2: Uncommitted General Fund Balance as a % of council annual budgeted net revenue

FINSUS3: Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream - General Fund

FINSUS4: Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream - Housing Revenue Account

FINSUS5: Actual outturn as a % of budgeted expenditure

Other

PSIF and How Good is Our.... (HGIOCS)

IS/LGBF Peer Collaborative Improvement

Local government sector led improvement

CIPFA Directors of Finance (DOF) Section

Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) network, portfolio groups, development resources and events.

External scrutiny

External Audit Annual Report, External auditors appointed by Audit Scotland

Thematic Review, Audit Scotland/external auditors appointed by Audit Scotland

Controller of Audit Best Value Reports, Audit Scotland/external auditors appointed by Audit Scotland

Section 102 reports, Audit Scotland/external auditors appointed by Audit Scotland

Internal Audit PSIAS External Assessment, CIIA or peer review - every 5 years

Pensions Regulator, Pensions Regulator

Statutory monitoring and reporting

Data Returns

Local Financial Return (LFR), Scottish Government

Annual Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Finance return, Improvement Service

Provisional Outturn & Budget Estimates (POBE), Scottish Government

Quarterly Borrowing and Lending Return, UK Government

Revaluation Appeals Statistics, Scottish Government

Tax Incremental Financing (TIF), Scottish Government

VAT partial exemption calculation, UK Government

VAT return, UK Government

Whole of Government Accounts (WGA), UK Government

Director Of Finance Performance Indicators, Chartered Institure of Public Finance & Accountancy

Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) - Building Standard Services, Scottish Government

Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) - Burial Grounds and Cremations, Scottish Government

Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) - School Hostels, Scottish Government

Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) - Teachers Remoteness & Distant Islands Expenditure (TRDI), Scottish Government

Non-Domestic Rates Billing System Snapshot, Scottish Government

Statutory monitoring and reporting (cont.)

Non-Domestic Rates Income (NDRI) Returns (Provisional, Estimate and Notified), Scottish Government

Reporting Duties

Unaudited Annual Accounts

Audited Annual Accounts

Annual Budget & setting of Council Tax Levels

Prudential Indicators

Annual Efficiency Statement

Commissioners/ombudsmen

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Scottish Human Rights Commission

Scottish Information Commissioner

Standards Commission for Scotland

is