

Meeting	Policing Performance Committee
Date	28 <sup>th</sup> May 2020
Location	Teleconference
Title of Paper	Benchmarking Seminar Summary Report and Next Steps
Presented By	Martin Smith (SPA Strategy Programme Lead)
Recommendation to Members	Yes
Appendix Attached – No	

**PURPOSE**

This paper provides a summary of the main discussion points arising at a recent seminar on benchmarking in the context of Scottish policing performance. The paper also suggests next steps for the Committee to discuss and consider.

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Authority has a statutory duty to keep policing in Scotland under review, promote continuous improvement in policing and hold the Chief Constable to account for the policing of Scotland. The Authority also has a statutory duty to assess Police Scotland's performance, on a regular basis, in relation to the achievement of agreed planning outcomes and underpinning objectives.
- 1.2 The benchmarking of policing performance information, comparing performance internally and externally, can assist the Authority to fulfil these statutory functions and responsibilities, by helping to contextualise performance data and experiential observations reported to the Committee and support Police Scotland by identifying potential areas for continuous improvement action and in promoting the recognition and sharing of best practice.
- 1.3 On 28<sup>th</sup> April the Authority and Police Scotland co-hosted, by teleconference, a seminar on the subject of performance benchmarking. Over 30 people participated in the event, representing a range of organisations across the UK, with an interest in policing performance and knowledge or past experience of and learning from performance benchmarking to share.
- 1.4 This paper summarises the main points discussed during the seminar and suggests next steps that the Committee is recommended to consider.

## **2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC**

- 2.1 The Authority has a statutory duty to keep policing in Scotland under review, promote continuous improvement in policing and hold the Chief Constable to account for the policing of Scotland. The Authority also has a statutory duty to assess Police Scotland's performance, on a regular basis, in relation to the achievement of agreed planning outcomes and underpinning objectives. These performance assessments are formalised annually in the Annual Report and Accounts. On a quarterly basis Police Scotland provides performance reports to the Committee (and the Board) on policing performance, referencing progress against delivery of the Annual Police Plan and the contribution to achieving the strategic outcomes in the Joint Strategic Police Plan.
- 2.2 An area identified for development in performance reporting concerns performance benchmarking. Both the Authority and Police Scotland are committed to incorporating more performance

benchmarking information and data into the performance analysis process and reporting format to help contextualise data observations and trends, identify potential areas for continuous improvement, promote and share good practice and continue to build organisational learning and a positive self-assessment and improvement culture. Previous audit and inspection activity by HMICS and Audit Scotland have identified that the Authority should make greater use of benchmarking information and data when assessing policing performance.

2.3 On 28<sup>th</sup> April 2020 the Authority and Police Scotland co-hosted a teleconference seminar on the subject of performance benchmarking. More than 30 individuals participated in the event with representation from:

- The Scottish Police Authority
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Government
- COSLA
- HMICS
- Scottish Institute for Policing Research
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (England and Wales)
- UK College of Policing
- Independent academics / advisors

2.7 The following is a summary of the main discussion points:

- There was a strong interest and appetite among participants for comparative analysis of performance information at a local, national and international level with a recognition that the way the information is presented and communicated should be tailored to the intended audience/consumer of the information.
- Benchmarking is broader than examining headline performance measures and results. Comparison of the operational delivery processes and tactical approaches behind the data comparisons are also important and this is where the learning opportunities exist. Examining different results, the environmental and societal conditions in which they are generated and differences in how things are done can contribute to organisational reflection and give a basis on which to consider the question of recognised best practice and examples from which to take organisational learning.

## OFFICIAL

- A key learning point from experience elsewhere has been the importance of presenting and using performance benchmarking as a starting point for enquiry into continuous improvement opportunities rather than as an 'end point or unqualified judgement' about performance.
- Another key learning point is that approaches to performance assessment and benchmarking need to consider organisational culture. Approaches should therefore be described in ways that make it clear that the intention is not to implement a sanctions based approach or a competitive, "league-table" type culture. Such approaches can lead to unintended outcomes such as resistance and avoidance behaviours in and by organisations.
- Linked to organisational culture is a need for all parties who work with comparative performance data to become really comfortable with not knowing the answers immediately and also being able to acknowledge that they may be able to improve their performance relative to other higher-performing organisations.
- Comparisons can rarely be exact/direct, not only because no two places or organisations are identical, but also because data collection methods can vary, counting/recording methods can vary, and data quality assurance processes can vary. Different organisations and localities may also work to different strategic outcomes and have different strategic priorities and/or have differing resource allocations/capability.

### 3 NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 Despite the challenges that surround performance benchmarking, participants were keen to support the development of policing performance benchmarking in Scotland.
- 3.2 An option for the Committee to consider is the setting up of a Short Life Working Group of the Committee to take forward the work alongside the developing performance framework and including input from across the range of seminar participants. The SLWG could use the streamlined set of 'measures of progress' (subject to their approval) contained in the policing performance framework as a reference point. The SLWG could report back to the wider network on progress made later in the year, and seek the wider network's views on proposals as they develop. The SLWG could report to the Committee at each meeting as a standing item basis.

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are **no** financial implications associated with this report.

**5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are **no** personnel implications associated with this report.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are **no** legal implications in this paper.

**7. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are reputational implications associated with this paper. Strengthening and contextualising the approach to assessing performance information through the incorporation of more benchmarking information is likely to improve public and stakeholder perceptions of the Authority in terms of its role of keeping policing under review, promoting and supporting continuous improvement, and holding the Chief Constable to account.

**8. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are **no** social implications associated with this paper.

**9. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

9.1 There are **no** community implications associated with this paper.

**10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are **no** equality implications associated with this paper.

**11. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are **no** environmental implications associated with this paper.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are requested to Note and discuss the content of this paper and consider the options within the next steps section.