

Agenda Item 6

Meeting	Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee
Date	15 July 2021
Location	By Video Conference
Title of Paper	SPA Best Value – way forward
Presented By	Lynn Brown, SPA Chief Executive
Recommendation to Members	For Consultation
Appendix Attached	Appendix A – Best Value in the SPA

**PURPOSE**

To provide the Audit Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) with an overview of the Authority's requirements in respect of Best Value and to outline the SPA's approach to demonstrating Best Value.

*The paper is presented in line with the corporate governance framework of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) terms of reference and is submitted for consultation.*

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Authority, Chief Constable and Accountable Officer have specific responsibilities with respect to Best Value.
- 1.2 Audit Scotland and HMICS have oversight roles in respect of Best Value and may choose to undertake an audit of the Authority and Police Scotland's arrangement for achieving Best Value.

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

- 2.1 The report at **appendix A** outlines:
  - the requirements to achieve Best Value;
  - background to previous work undertaken;
  - what does Best Value mean;
  - how does the service currently achieve Best Value;
  - the Authority's proposed approach to demonstrating Best Value; and
  - next steps.

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are financial implications associated with this paper. Use of resources is a key Best Value characteristic which includes financial resources that require to be considered.

## **4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are personnel implications associated with this paper. Use of resources is a key Best Value characteristic which includes people resources that require to be considered.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There may be legal implications associated with this paper, given that Best Value principles include all aspects of how the service operates effectively.

## **6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There may be reputational implications associated with this paper, if the Authority is not able to demonstrate good stewardship of public money and fair/ equitable use of all resources for the benefit of the public.

## **7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are social implications associated with this paper. Partnership work and working with communities are key Best Value characteristics that require to be considered.

## **8. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

- 8.1 There are community impact implications associated with this paper. Working with communities is a key Best Value characteristic that requires to be considered.

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are equalities implications associated with this paper. Fairness and equality are key Best Value characteristics that requires to be considered.

## **10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are environmental implications associated with this paper. Sustainability is a key Best Value characteristic that requires to be considered.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are requested to note the overview of Best Value and the Authority's approach to Best Value.

SCOTTISH POLICE  

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AUTHORITY

Appendix A  
Best Value in the SPA  
JULY 2021

# Executive Summary

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**01**

## Best Value requirements

- There are legal duties to secure Best Value:
  - by the Authority for: the Board, SPA corporate and Forensic Services; and
  - by the Chief Constable for Police Scotland.
- Furthermore, the Accountable Officer has a specific responsibility to achieve Best Value whilst the Board has an oversight role to ensure and promote Best Value principles.

**02**

## Achieving Best Value

- The Authority and Police Scotland have arrangements that contribute to the achievement of Best Value, however, there is currently no systematic approach to monitor and assess Best Value and improvements over time.
- This paper outlines an approach to demonstrating Best Value that will enable the Authority and Accountable Officer to discharge their duties.

**03**

## Approach to demonstrating Best Value

- The proposed approach is risk based, proportionate and informed by other sources of assurance from the Authority's four lines of defence model (e.g. internal audit and HMICS work).
- It is based on an annual self-assessment followed up by targeted deep-dive work informed by the self-assessment. It is proposed to consider all Best Value characteristics on a cyclical basis.
- Further work is required on the specific approach to be adopted by Police Scotland and what assurances will be provided to the Accountable Officer and Board.

**04**

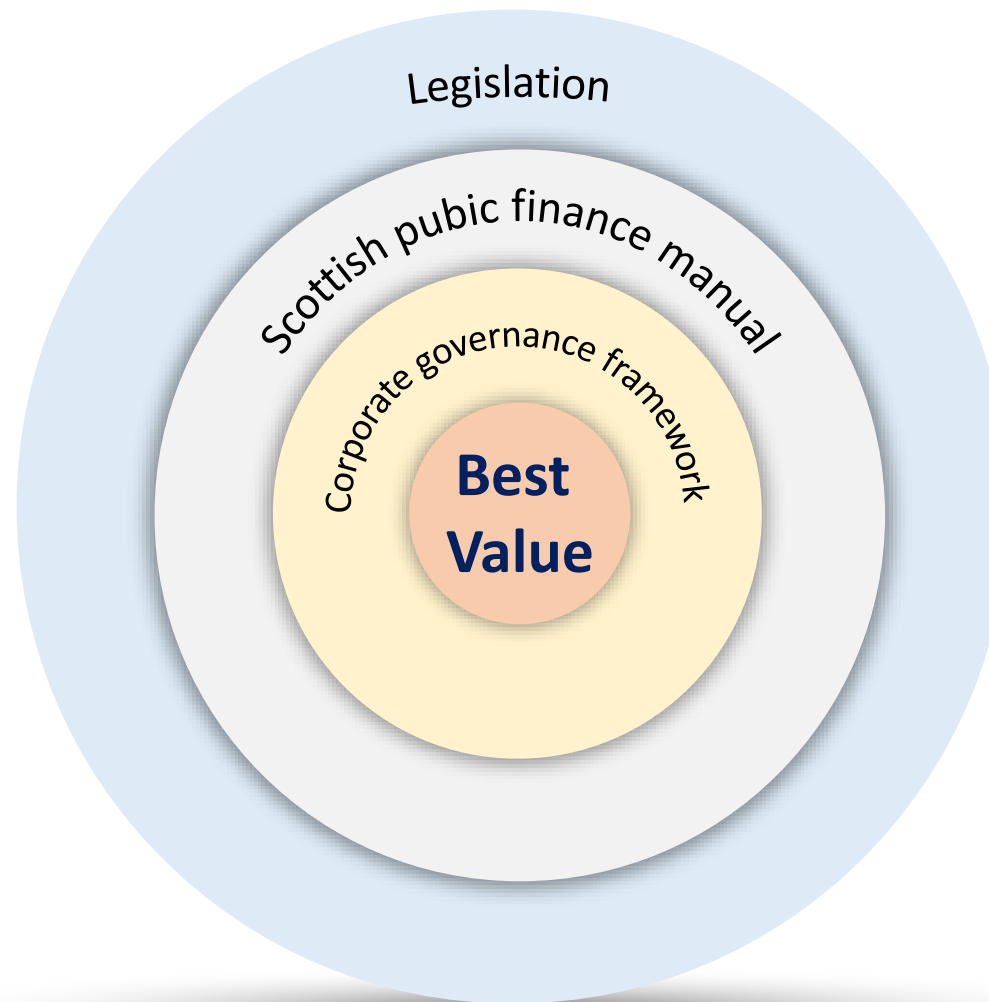
## Next steps

- Annual self-assessment for SPA corporate and Forensics Services to be completed and reported to ARAC with further deep-dive work to be identified and proposed.

# Best Value requirements

## Legislation

- Police and fire reform (Scotland) Act 2012:
  - S37 – **duty of the Authority** to make arrangements which secure Best Value for the Authority (i.e. Board, SPA corporate and Forensic Services);
  - S37 – **duty of the Chief Constable** to make arrangements which secure Best Value for the police service;
  - S38 – Authority & Chief Constable should have regard to **relevant guidance** issued by Ministers and reference to **generally recognised published code**.
  
- Public finance & accountability (Scotland) Act 2000:
  - Auditor General for Scotland may choose to examine the arrangement made the Authority to secure Best Value.
  - There is specific requirement or timescale / period for such examinations to occur.



## Scottish Public Finance Manual (SPFM)

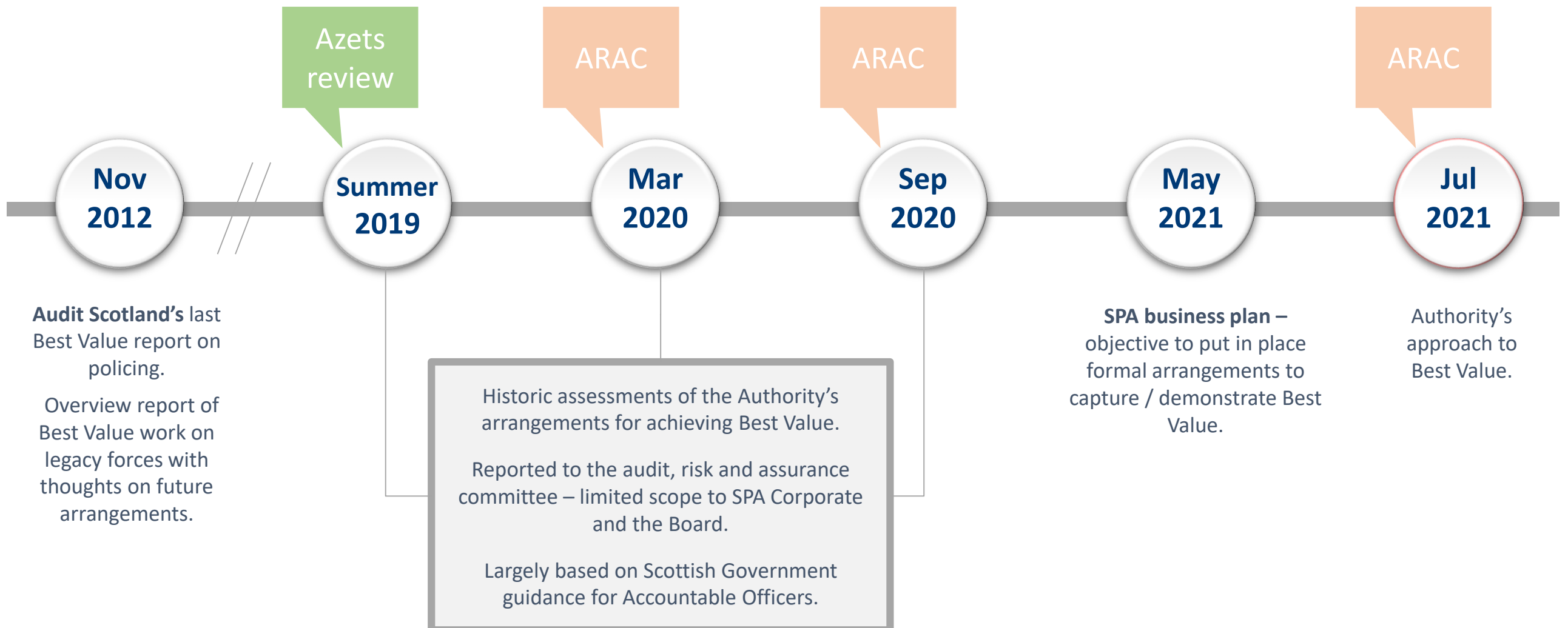
- Defines further Best Value principles.
- Outlines specific duty on **Accountable Officers** to achieve Best Value.
- Further guidance outlined in Scottish Government's 'Best Value in public services: guidance for Accountable Officers'

## Corporate governance framework of the SPA

- Reaffirms Authority's requirement to secure Best Value and the specific role of the Accountable Officer.
- Makes clear the Auditor General for Scotland and HMICS may carry out examinations into arrangements made by the Chief Constable and Authority to secure Best Value.
- Strategic police plan should generally include a description of how Best Value will be achieved.
- In conducting their oversight role the Board and committees have corporate responsibility for promoting the efficient and effective use of resources in accordance with the principles of Best Value.
- SPA's Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) should have a strategic oversight for how Best Value requirements are being achieved.

# Background

- As Local Government bodies, legacy police forces had a structured process in place of external Best Value audits. No specific Best Value audits have been undertaken by Audit Scotland or HMICS since the creation of the Authority.
- In the first years since the creation of the service the focus has been rightly placed on integration of legacy forces and creation of the national service.
- Over the last year there has been increasing attention on the Authority's responsibilities to achieve Best Value with reports being provided to the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC). Following the implementation of the SPA 2020 structure, resources have now been directed towards ensuring that the Authority's responsibilities for Best Value are appropriately discharged.
- Audit Scotland and HMICS have indicated that whilst there are no specific plans currently in place to conduct a Best Value audit of the Authority, it is likely there will be a joint audit undertaken at some time in the coming years.



# What is Best Value?

## Police & fire reform (Scotland) Act 2012

Make arrangement to secure **continuous improvement in performance** and to contribute to the achievement of **sustainable development** of the Authority and Police service.

In making these arrangement have specific regard to:

1. **Economy** - minimising the cost of resources used whilst having regard to quality.
2. **Efficiency** - relationship between outputs and the resources used to produce them.
3. **Effectiveness** - the extent to which objectives are achieved. The relationship between intended and actual impact of a service.
4. **Equal opportunities** - prevention, elimination and regulations of discrimination of protected characteristics.



## Audit Scotland's Best Value characteristics

1. Vision & leadership
2. Governance and accountability
3. Use of resources
4. Partnership & collaborative working
5. Working with communities
6. Sustainability
7. Fairness and equality



## Authority's vision of Best Value:

*"A culture of continuous improvement in how we work, delivering positive outcomes for communities whilst ensuring good governance and effective use of resources"*



# Achieving Best Value

- The Authority seeks to embed Best Value principles in all activities. The most effective organisations create a culture of continuous improvement to enhance outcomes for the communities they serve.
- The service has a wide range of controls that help to achieve Best Value and ensure continuous improvement in performance and sustainable development. This is outlined further in the excellence framework and four lines of defence model.
- It is recognised that there are extensive arrangements already in place to help secure Best Value. As the service continues to mature and improve a coordinated and evidence based approach to demonstrating Best Value is desirable.
- Such a coordinated approach will highlight areas for improvement and provide the Authority and Accountable Officer with the assurances they require to discharge their legal responsibilities.
- The table illustrates Audit Scotland's seven Best Value characteristics and provides some selective examples of ways that this is already achieved across the policing system.
- The subsequent pages outlines a structured ongoing approach to **demonstrating Best Value**, using that approach to drive continuous improvements.

Best Value characteristics	Expectations	Examples of current practice across the policing system
1 Vision & leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is there a long term strategy?</li> <li>▪ How was it developed / with stakeholders.</li> <li>▪ Is progress monitored with action taken.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Joint strategy for Policing (2020).</li> <li>✓ SPA business plan.</li> </ul>
2 Governance & accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are there robust governance arrangement in place to support achieved of Best Value?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Governance and accountability framework for the SPA.</li> </ul>
3 Use of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How well are resources being used?</li> <li>▪ Are there appropriate strategies / policies in place?</li> <li>▪ How is implementation being monitored and reported?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Procurement strategy and standing orders.</li> <li>✓ Strategic workforce plan.</li> <li>✓ Long term financial strategies.</li> </ul>
4 Partnership & collaborative working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Does the service engage with partners to secure improvements for communities not just through its work but that of partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ SG drug death taskforce.</li> <li>✓ Contact assessment model (CAM).</li> </ul>
5 Working with communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How are communities engaged in the services work?</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate a clear link to engagement and the services response.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Consultation on key areas of work including: use of body worn video and local police priorities.</li> </ul>
6 Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Does the body embed sustainable development in its work?</li> <li>▪ Consideration of: the environment; sustainable economy; healthier society and using science responsibly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Environmental strategy.</li> <li>✓ Balanced budget approved for 2021/22.</li> <li>✓ Scrutiny of artificial intelligence in policing.</li> </ul>
7 Fairness and equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can the body demonstrate consideration of equality and fairness issues is embedded throughout its work?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Joint equalities outcomes (2021 – 2023)</li> <li>✓ Mainstreaming report and progress.</li> </ul>

# Demonstrating Best Value: Board, SPA Corporate & Forensic Services

- This section outlines the proposed Authority's arrangements (Board, SPA Corporate and Forensics Services) for **demonstrating Best Value**. We recognise that Best Value principles should be embedded into everything we do. This section is based on demonstrating that the Authority has appropriate arrangements in place that are operating effectively with improvement being made.
- Audit Scotland highlight that their Best Value approach is **proportionate and risk based**. These principles equally apply to the Authority's work. The Act and SPFM only require the Authority and Accountable Officer to make arrangements to embed Best Value. Whilst there is no requirement to demonstrate it this is considered good practice.

## Authorities approach to demonstrating Best Value

### 1. Self-assessment

- Annual self-assessment based on the Scottish Government's Accountable Officer Best Value guide.
- Separate consideration for each area.
- Cross departmental collaboration to achieved a robust output, underpinned by evidence bank.
- May identify gaps, areas for improvement or further investigation.
- This assessment will also be used to demonstrate improvements over time.

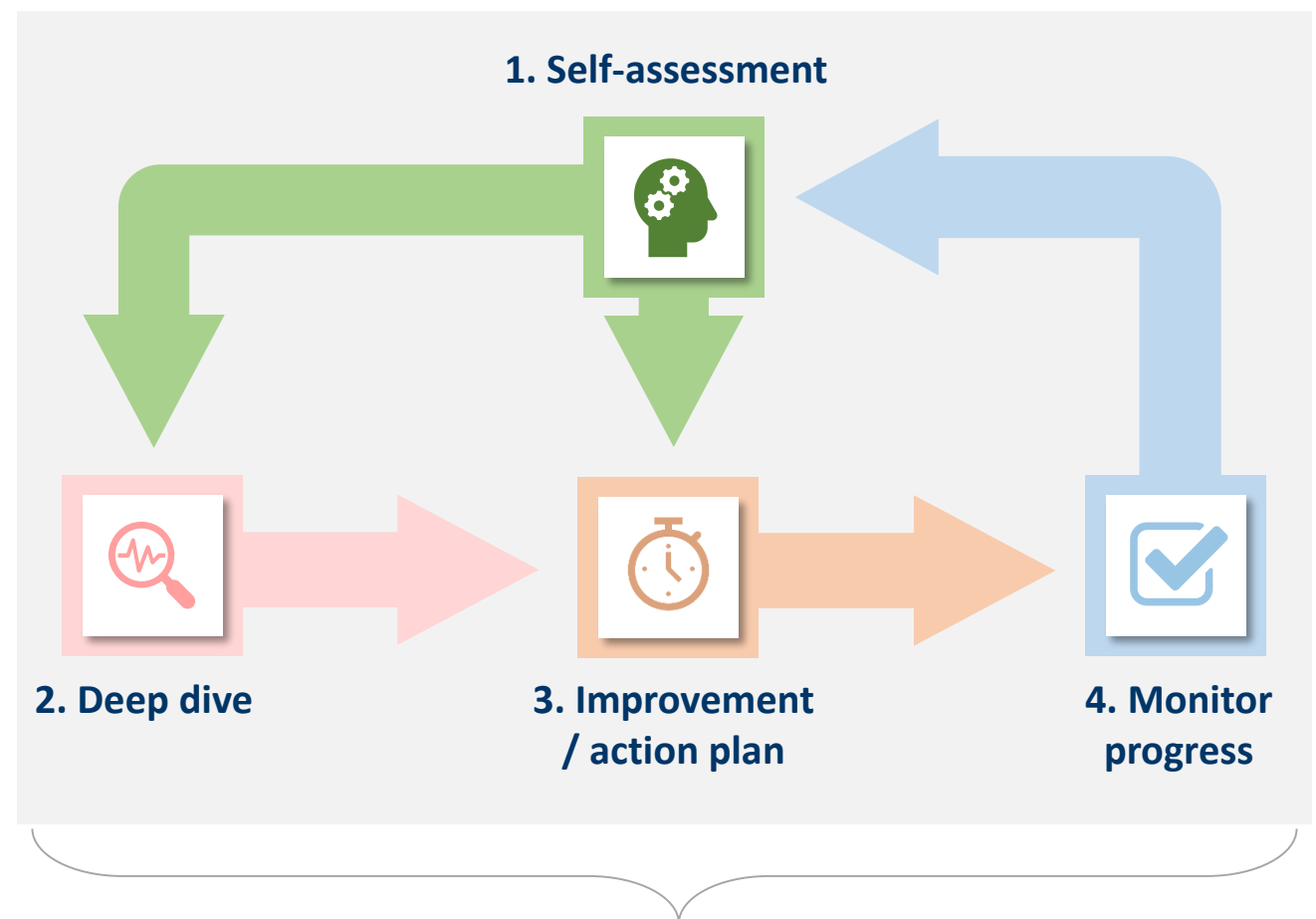
### 2. Deep dive

- Based on the self-assessment conduct further analysis into specific areas based on proportionality and risk.
- Consider using Audit Scotland's 16 Best Value toolkits.
- Assessment supported by evidence and consider EFQM excellence model/ public sector improvement framework (PSIF) and benchmarking data.
- Aim to have a cyclical consideration of all characteristics.

### 3. Improvement / action plan

- Based on self-assessment and deep dives develop an improvement / action plan.

### 4. Monitor progress – re agreed actions and feedback to subsequent annual self-assessment.



**Supported by other sources of assurance**  
eg internal / external audit, HMICS and  
other assurance providers.

# Next steps

