

Mr Kevin Stewart MSP
Convener
Local Government and Regeneration Committee

16th March 2016

Dear Kevin

— Thank you for letter dated 8th March 2016 regarding the Local Government Benchmarking Framework. I was very pleased to see the Improvement Service and SOLACE giving evidence to the Committee on this matter and delighted that the session went so well.

I see that you have invited the Improvement Service to consider how they benchmark their own work and I am sure they will respond to you direct.

There is one issue in your letter that I would like to address and that is COSLA's involvement in any benchmarking of the work of the Improvement Service. COSLA is not in fact a funder of the IS and therefore would have no legitimate role in this matter, nor do we have a governance role. The Improvement Service (IS) is a company limited by guarantee, established by Scottish councils to provide shared services and improvement support on their behalf. The Board has four political leaders and four chief executives who, once appointed, have full responsibility for the IS under company law. The matters you raise therefore are entirely for the IS and their funders, the 32 local authorities in Scotland and I am sure you will be satisfied from the response you get from them.

As you might know, I do of course chair the Improvement Service Board and in so far as this matter may reach Board level then I might be involved in that capacity. However, to be quite clear, my role as President of COSLA and my role as Chair of the IS Board are quite separate in terms of their responsibilities and accountabilities.

I hope this provides clarity on the issues raised in your letter. Given that COSLA does not have a specific role, I have passed your letter to the IS Chief Executive for response.

Yours sincerely



David O'Neill
COSLA President