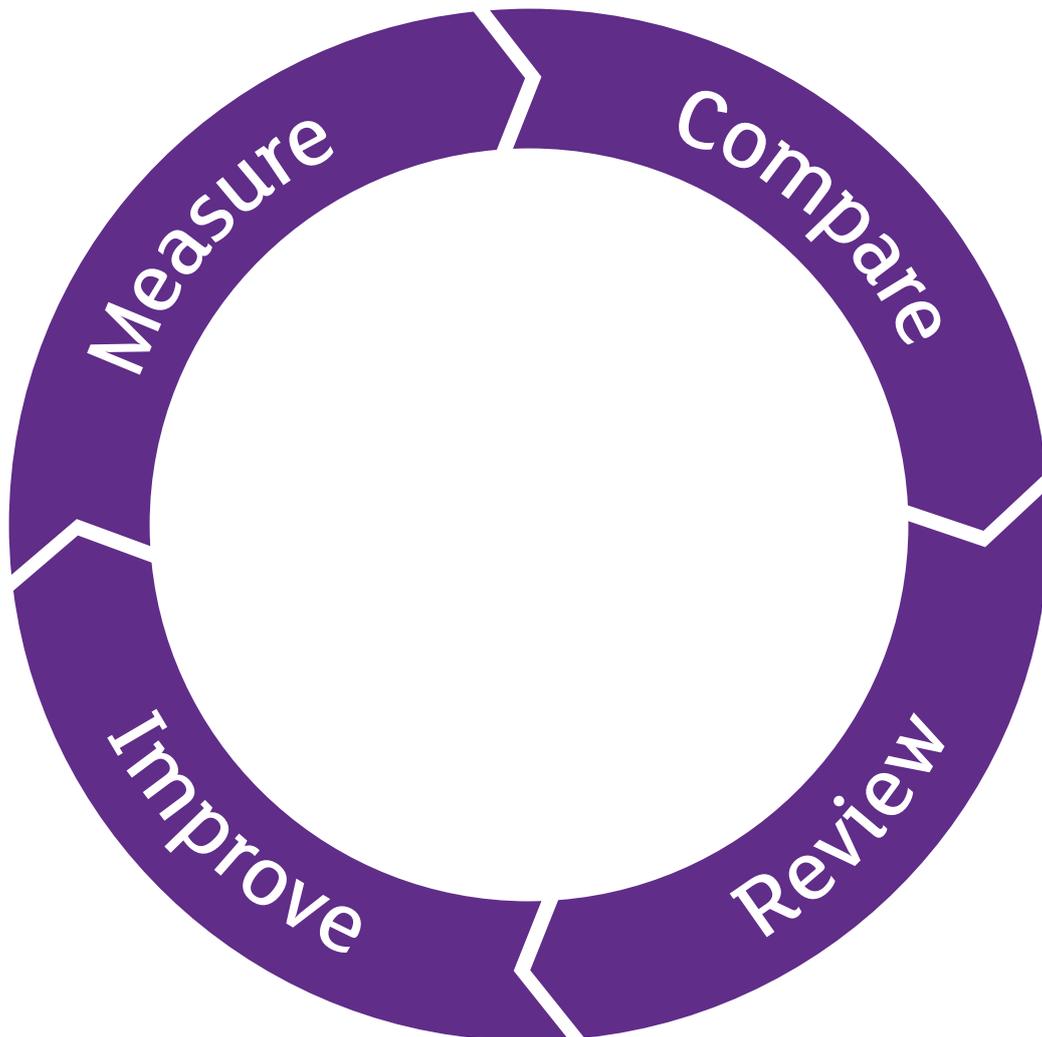


CIPFA Information Services

# corporate services benchmarking clubs

2016

NEW Improved Service





# a new, improved service

Benchmarking is a vital tool to help drive improvements and deliver value for money. We have developed our clubs with a real collaborative ethos, ensuring that they continue to meet your needs, constantly improving to maximise the benefit to your organisation.

## We've listened to your feedback and made a number of significant enhancements to the service for 2016:

- A new integrated package giving you access to our **full club range** for one price
- Don't have the resource to complete all returns? That's fine, we'll now be providing **national reports** for those clubs you are unable to participate in
- But don't worry, our detailed **comparative reports** and **interactive tools**, uniquely prepared for your individual authority, will still be available for the clubs you provide returns for
- Fresh new **executive summaries** highlighting the key metrics, ideal to provide to management teams and for an *at-a-glance* review
- Improved reporting including **enhanced visualisations** and **intelligent text**, adding even more value to the outputs received
- **Online access** to all outputs for your entire organisation, including access to **historical reports** where your organisation was a member
- New **qualitative feedback reports** drawing on the information provided from your scrapbook responses to add rich insight
- **Streamlining questionnaires** so that they focus on the key information and minimise the burden upon your staff to complete
- A **new style review meeting** where results are presented and best practice examples made accessible to all members

## Additional benefits

Discounted access to an **onsite workshop** where one of our expert advisors will present the key findings to your management team.

## Savings

All this is being provided **cheaper** than ever before with a significant **50% saving** on the 2015 price for access to all clubs.



# corporate services benchmarking

## Measuring is the key to greater efficiency

Benchmarking is a vital tool to help drive improvements and deliver value for money. To really improve the performance and efficiency of your organisation you need to measure your back office functions and compare yourselves to similar organisations so that you can identify where changes should be made.

CIPFA holds more data on local government performance than any other organisation in the world and our Corporate Services Benchmarking Clubs are the market leader in local government benchmarking, with high levels of participation and customer satisfaction. Our detailed reports, databases, and interactive tools provide you with solid evidence to support decisions on budget and improvement.

## Corporate Services

Our Corporate Services benchmarking clubs cover the key back office functions that you will need to improve if you are to maximise your efficiency.

## The benefits of benchmarking

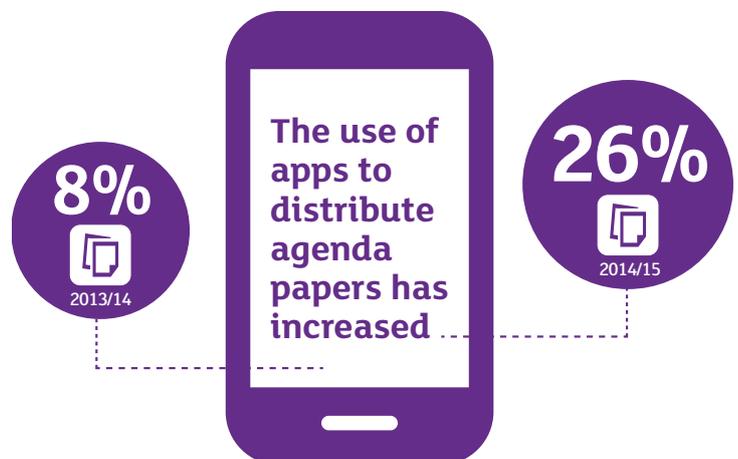
Establishing a baseline for your service delivery and identifying where you can improve is critical for service managers who need to reduce costs and transform services in tough economic times.

Our benchmarking will help you:

- compare your organisation's costs and performance with similar bodies
- review performance trends within your authority over time
- evidence your organisation's performance in relation to value for money
- highlight areas of concern or where costs might be reduced
- share information and ideas with your peers at our review meetings
- learn from the successes and mistakes of your peers
- produce detailed reports for management teams and audit committees
- become more efficient and manage your resources more effectively.

'Members are very interested in cost comparison with other Authorities and the benchmarking exercise is an effective way of achieving this. It also enables us to look at what we are doing differently and whether this impacts upon our service.'

**Steve Hart, London Borough of Haringey  
– Non Domestic Rates Benchmarking Club**



# benchmarking extras

CIPFA's benchmarking reports already provide you with the ability to expertly compare your authority's costs and performance with other members, in addition to highlighting areas where you may reduce costs intelligently with minimal impact.

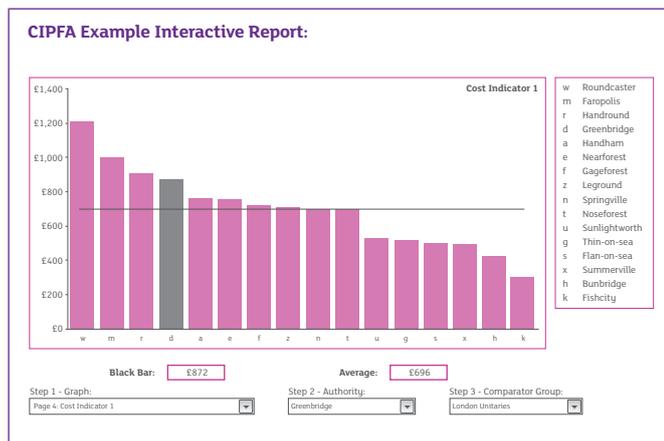
On top of these market leading publications, CIPFA offers three tools as part of the service, that will allow you to perform an in-depth exploration and gain further valuable insights from the benchmarking reports data: the **Interactive Report**, the **Read-Back Interface**, and the **Scrapbook**.

## Interactive Report

CIPFA's Interactive Report allows benchmarking club members to quickly and easily reproduce many of the graphs found in the benchmarking reports.

You can select which graph you want to create, highlight specific members, and select groups of members to compare.

These graphs are easy to insert into PowerPoint presentations or Word documents, giving you flexibility to effectively present your data.



## Read-Back Interface

CIPFA's Read-Back Interface gives benchmarking club members unprecedented access to the raw data behind the graphs and analysis that are generated by benchmarking club reports.

You simply select the member that you would like to view raw data for, and the questionnaire populates itself with the relevant figures.

Using these figures, you can perform your own numerical and statistical analysis against other authorities, creating your own graphs or reports based on the raw data provided.

## Scrapbook

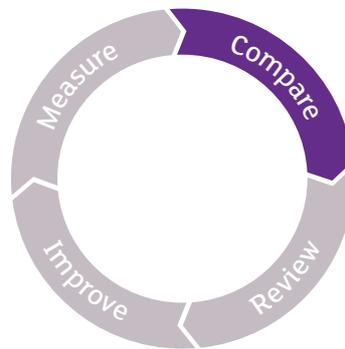
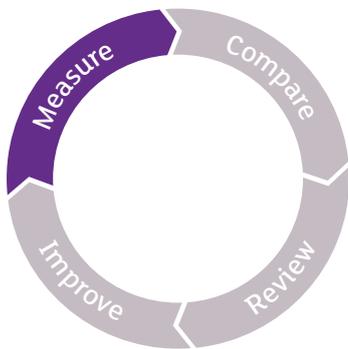
Where CIPFA's benchmarking reports provide detailed numerical analysis, CIPFA's Scrapbooks provide access to feedback on the challenges that members face, and the best practices they have implemented.

By providing access to the text responses that members have given to these questions, CIPFA's Scrapbooks provide a valuable insight into the successful measures that other members have taken to overcome shared challenges.

# the benefits of being a benchmarking club member

We have developed our clubs with a real collaborative ethos. To benefit from the huge advantages on offer, all you need to do is pay an annual membership fee and complete the relevant questionnaire. Each club is run to a timetable that ensures that you can benefit from the outputs when they are the most useful to you.

CIPFA benchmarking clubs follow the well established improvement cycle:



## Measure

**Questionnaire:** A user-friendly questionnaire is circulated to nominated contacts with detailed definitions and guidance on its completion. A telephone and email helpline is also available to answer any queries. You will typically have a six week period in which to return data (see timetable section).

**Data Analysis and Validation:** The returned data is subject to extensive analysis and validation to ensure that data is as accurate as possible. A draft report is then issued providing you an opportunity to revise data if we reveal any inconsistencies before final reports.

As we are benchmarking each function from the point of view of your organisation, it doesn't matter how the function is delivered, whether in-house, via shared services, contracted out or a mixture of these.

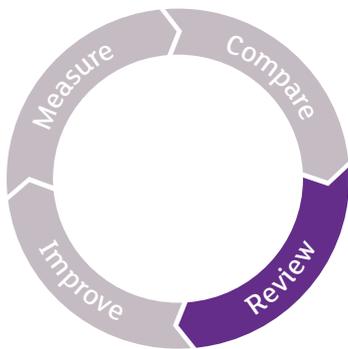
## Compare

**Comparative Reports:** Members get two reports that will identify your specific authority in a series of easy to understand tables and graphical visualisations that collectively build up a detailed view of your service; one will compare you to all club members and the second with your personally selected group of organisations.

**Scrapbook:** Each club includes textual questions covering key areas of policy and practice that provide detailed insight into approaches taken by peer organisations in a clear and simple to read set of documents.

Having access to good quality information from your organisation and from your peers is only part of the cycle.

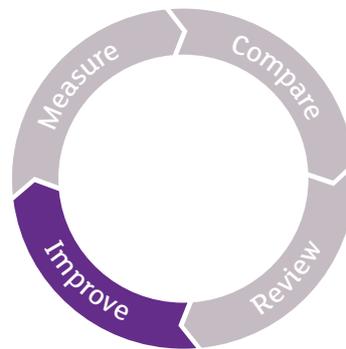
CIPFA benchmarking clubs allow you to review your processes and practices and to improve your efficiency.



## Review

**Database and Interactive Report:** A full database is available for club members, including all data and member contact details, and a user-friendly interactive reporting tool allowing you to recreate any of the charts from the main reports using alternative groupings, you can carry out deeper analysis.

**Review Meetings:** At the end of the exercise, members can attend review meetings to discuss and debate the findings; you can also use this as a chance to discuss best practice and matters of mutual concern with your peers.



## Improve

You use your learning to make changes in your organisation. We can also offer additional support interpreting and utilising your benchmarking results to support organisational transformation and improvement through our expert advisory service.

CIPFA works to constantly improve the benchmarking service and so at the end of the process we assemble a steering committee, formed of experienced practitioners from the relevant service area, to ensure the scope of the exercise and the questionnaire meets your needs. All our exercises are guided by you so we can collect information that will continue to help you in the delivery of your services.

By joining you will receive a suite of comparative reports, the full club database, an interactive reporting tool, a scrapbook of approaches and the opportunity to attend a review meeting. All within the club price!

## We also do...

Please visit our website [www.cipfa.org/services/benchmarking](http://www.cipfa.org/services/benchmarking) to see our other benchmarking clubs such as those for Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Customer Contact, or to see our Value for Money Indicator streams.

# corporate services benchmarking clubs 2015

## Clubs offered for 2015:

### Finance

- 1 Accountancy
- 2 Treasury Management

### Governance

- 3 Audit
- 4 Risk Management
- 5 Counter-fraud
- 6 Insurance

### Revenues & Benefits

- 7 Council Tax
- 8 NNDR
- 9 Benefits Admin
- 10 Debtors

### Staff

- 11 HR
- 12 Payroll
- 13 Pensions Admin

### Legal & Democratic

- 14 Legal
- 15 Democratic
- 16 Electoral

### Supplies

- 17 Procurement
- 18 Creditors

‘This year’s and last year’s benchmarking have fed into two service reviews as they clearly demonstrated how our workloads and costs per 1,000 population compared to other similar authorities. The reviews have rationalised our team structures to maximise value for money for our residents. This year’s figures will also be fed into a council-wide transformation.’

**Holly Adams, Waltham Forest – Democratic Services Benchmarking Club**

# Finance

## 1 | Accountancy

Accountancy is at the core of every finance function.

We collect staffing (central & local) and cost data for the following defined activities:

- financial strategy and planning
- financial advice
- budget preparation
- budget monitoring
- preparation of final accounts
- technical research and major projects
- systems support
- treasury Management

The total cost of the accountancy function and staff FTE's are allocated across the services being supported using the standard SERCOP service analysis.

We compare the accountancy cost per £1,000 gross revenue turnover for the authority and by service. We also compare the accountancy staff FTE per £million gross revenue turnover for the authority and by service.

Data is also collected on the timeliness of the key financial outputs and in-year forecasting activity.

## 2 | Treasury Management

We analyse the previous year's treasury management activity for both investment and borrowing. Investment spreadsheets are provided for members use, so that their monthly balances and returns can be computed on a consistent basis for various types of investment including: fixed rate deposits, callable and structured products, notice accounts, money market funds, gilts & bonds and externally managed funds. We can then compare:

- rates of interest received and average investment balances
- investment structure and maturity profiles
- rates of interest paid and balances for temporary and long term borrowing
- overall cost of the treasury management function.

There is also an option of on-going quarterly investment comparisons during the following year, providing quick up-to-date feedback for members.

## Governance

### 3 | Audit

We collect staffing (central & local) and cost data for the internal audit function in order to derive the number of audit days available and the cost per audit day.

We then compare the audit days per £million authority gross revenue turnover.

This is further analysed by:

- type of audit
- system audited
- type of risk

We also compare and analyse in-house staff by cost per auditor and the number of chargeable days per auditor.

### 4 | Risk Management

Our award winning club was developed by CIPFA in partnership with Alarm with the aim to:

- inform the Annual Governance Statement
- provide evidence for external audit
- inform the annual risk management plan
- measure the organisation's level of maturity within risk management.

The main areas covered are:

- leadership and management
- policy and strategy
- people
- partnership and resources
- processes
- risk handling and assurance
- outcomes and delivery

### 5 | Counter Fraud

It is estimated that the public sector loses £21bn a year to fraud, of which £2.1bn relates to local government.

The National Fraud Authority (NFA) has established a specialist team to support local authorities tackling this issue and in partnership with local authorities has developed the first unified, strategic approach to counter fraud against local authorities, 'Fighting Fraud Locally' (FFL) launched on 4 April 2012.

Endorsed by FFL and drawing on the excellent work of the CIPFA Better Governance Forum, the London Public Sector Counter Fraud Partnership and others, we will be capturing data that will help you to assess how your counter-fraud function compares to the wider public sector.

We benchmark data on the following key areas:

- the structure of counter-fraud within your organisation
- costs and income generated by the function
- staffing numbers and levels of training
- split of time across activities eg reactive detection, formal detection, pro-active
- numbers and type of cases eg entitlement, tax, procurement
- how your organisation calculates the value of fraud
- methods of prevention and checks undertaken
- recovery of losses and methods used.

The Counter Fraud Centre is the UK's national centre of excellence on counter fraud. The Centre was launched in July 2014, and is hosted by CIPFA.

For further information visit:

<http://www.cipfa.org/services/counter-fraud-centre>

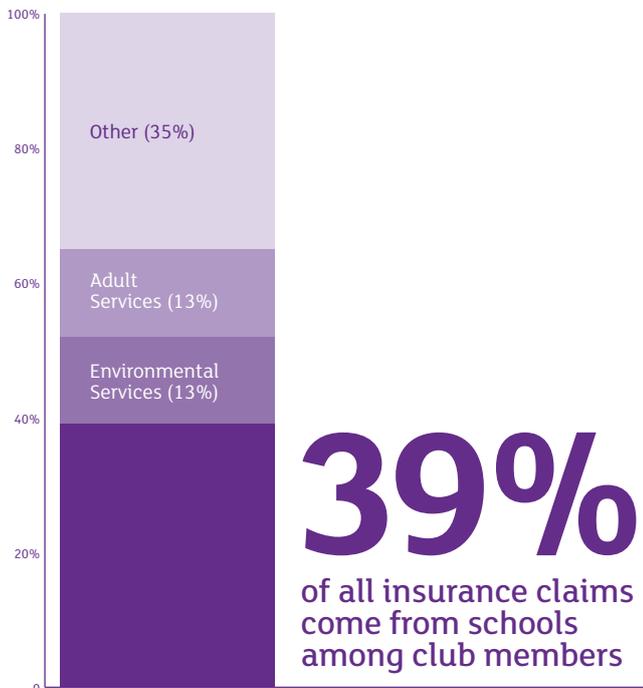
## 6 | Insurance

We collect and compare a broad range of information including:

- claims histories
- claims handling
- self Funding
- tendering – processes and timeline
- insurance management information

The types of policies covered include:

- combined liability
- employers liability
- public liability
- property
- motor
- terrorism cover
- non-Standard risks



## Revenues & Benefits

### 7 | Council Tax

We collect processing costs and workload volumes. This enables informed comparisons to be made between the average collection cost per banded dwelling and dwellings per FTE. Data is collected in the following areas:

- collection Rates
- CTRS, Personal and Property Discounts
- inspections
- reviews
- billing
- methods of payment
- recovery & enforcement
- customer contact

Members can also compare their in-year collection rates in October.

### 8 | Non-Domestic Rates

We collect processing costs and workload volumes. This enables informed comparisons to be made between the average collection cost per hereditament and hereditaments per FTE. Data is collected in the following areas:

- collection Rates
- reliefs: mandatory and discretionary
- inspections
- changes to valuation lists
- BIDS
- reviews
- billing
- methods of payment
- recovery & enforcement
- customer contact

Members can also compare their in-year collection rates in October.

## 9 | Benefits Administration

We collect processing costs (both central and contact centres) and claims volumes. Direct costs are further analysed by function. This enables informed comparisons to be made of the processing cost per weighted caseload (weighted in line with the DWP subsidy formula) and caseload per FTE. Data is collected in the following areas:

- new claims & change events
- performance standards
- DHP
- LHA
- appeals
- overpayments
- fraud
- social fund
- customer contact

## 10 | Debtors

We collect the transactional volumes and processing costs for all methods of invoicing and collection of the organisation's debts (excluding Council Tax, NDR and Benefits overpayment recovery where handled outside of the debtors function). This is further analysed by:

- type of debt eg residential care, sundry debtors etc
- collection performance
- aged debt
- methods of payment accepted
- recovery actions

This enables informed comparisons to be made of the processing cost per invoice and the overall cost to an organisation of its debtor function. It also highlights differences of approach.

## Staff

### 11 | HR

HR can cover a multitude of activities. We collect staffing (central & local) and cost data for the following defined activities:

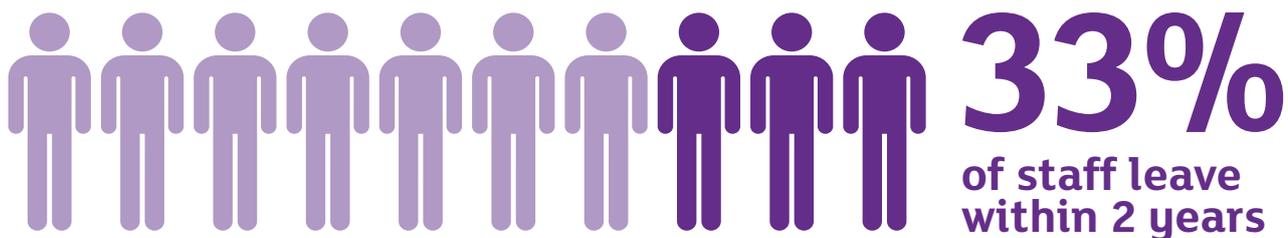
- recruitment & selection
- learning/training & development
- organisational development & change management
- pay & reward management
- attendance management
- employee & industrial relations
- equalities/diversity

We collect various organisational statistics:

- employee numbers: full-time/part-time/zero hours by head count and FTE
- employee contracts: permanent/fixed term/zero hours by number of contracts and FTE
- agency costs/total pay bill
- sickness absence
- self-service

We then compare the HR cost per Employee FTE/Headcount/Contract.

We also separately collect and compare costs for Health & Safety and for Occupational Health & Welfare.



## 12 | Payroll

We collect the transactional volumes and processing costs for payment of salaries, wages and pensions for the organisation. This is further analysed by:

- input: whether positive or negative
- frequency and number of payrolls
- payment performance
- methods of payment used
- self-service
- salary sacrifice schemes

This enables informed benchmarking of the processing cost per payslip and per payee; the overall cost to an organisation of its payroll function and also highlights differences of approach.

## 13 | Pensions Administration

We collect the transactional volumes and processing costs for administering the LGPS using the SF3 definitions. Costs are further analysed by function.

**Note:** “employing authority work” and any work associated with the administration of non-LGPS pensions are excluded.

Data is collected in the following areas:

- membership analysis
- employer analysis
- change events – member and employer
- quotations and charges
- communications
- tracing agencies
- self-service

This enables informed benchmarking of the net cost per member, payroll cost per pensioner and number of members per admin FTE. It also highlights differences of approach.

## Legal & Democratic

### 14 | Legal Services

We collect staffing (central & local) and cost data for the legal services function in order to derive the number of and cost per hour for hours available, and the number of and cost per hour for charged hours.

Data is collected in the following areas:

- caseload by type of work
- care Proceedings
- work for/by other local authorities
- work for other bodies
- charging rates
- staff composition

We then compare the legal cost and FTE per 1,000 population of the authority and per £1,000 gross revenue turnover for the authority.

### 15 | Democratic Services

We collect staffing, cost and activity data for the following defined activities:

- committee Support
- schools Appeals
- member Support
- civic Mayor’s (or equivalent) Office
- overview & Scrutiny

We then compare activity together with reporting costs as £1,000 per 1,000 population or per member as appropriate.

## 16 | Electoral Services

We collect staffing, costs and workload data for the two main activities in Electoral Services:

Maintenance of the electoral register:

- registration processes
- workloads
- performance standards
- conduct of elections:
- types of elections
- polling stations
- staffing
- scale of fees
- performance standards

We then compare the costs per 1,000 population of the authority and per 1,000 electors for the authority.

## Supplies

### 17 | Procurement

Effective and efficient procurement is one of the greatest challenges facing the public sector – authorities spend huge amounts of money with a wide range of suppliers, and obtaining value for money while achieving savings is paramount in the current climate of continued pressure on authorities' budgets.

This club supports the procurement function in two ways:

- Helping authorities to share data on a wide range of procurement topics and to network with colleagues in other authorities
- Examining where authorities have been successful in making savings – which helps other authorities to target their procurement activity on similar areas to achieve similar savings.

Data is collected in the following areas:

- examination of organisational expenditure with third parties
- the remit of the procurement function
- use of technology
- measuring savings & targets
- size, structure and cost of procurement function
- collaborative Procurement
- sourcing strategy
- contract management



## 18 | Creditors

We collect the transactional volumes and processing costs for all methods of processing and payment of the organisation's creditors (excluding refunds of Council Tax and NDR, and payments of Benefits where handled outside of the creditors function). This is further analysed by:

- source of invoices eg consolidated, feeder system etc
- services using Feeder systems
- purchase Orders
- methods of payment used
- payment performance

This enables informed comparisons to be made of the processing cost per invoice and the overall cost to an organisation of its creditor function. It also highlights differences of approach.



# 64%

of agenda papers  
sent by email

## We also do...

As well as Corporate Services Benchmarking we offer the following:

### Social Care

Meaningful comparative data is difficult to find in social care. CIPFA's social care benchmarking clubs help authorities share data in a non-judgemental environment.

We offer clubs in:

- children's care
- adult care
- public health

### Customer Contact

Understand your customer contact function and identify areas of channel shift and cost reduction.

We offer:

- strategic customer contact survey
- contact benchmarking tool.

For more details go to:

[www.cipfa.org/benchmarking](http://www.cipfa.org/benchmarking)

# common approach for most clubs

To see what is actually covered in a specific club, please go to our webpages at [www.cipfa.org/benchmarking](http://www.cipfa.org/benchmarking) to see last year's club questionnaires and examples of reports sent to club members.

## Service Delivery

How the function is delivered in your organisation: in-house (centrally or locally), shared service, contracted out etc.

## Overall Costs

The costs of function are analysed between direct costs, indirect costs, outsourced costs.

## Staffing

FTE's, salary levels, qualifications, training, turnover, sickness levels

## IT Software systems

Software (incl. version) used for specific activities in each function

## Organisational Structures

Section structure: job title/grade/level, FTE numbers and salary levels

## Self-Service

Details of what self-service options may be available for a function (both internally and externally).

## Suppliers

Each function may use external suppliers: specialist advice eg. treasury management advisors; bought-in services eg. resilience processing of benefit claims; specialist services eg. Debt collection etc.

## Productivity Measures

Workload per member of staff eg. the ratio of employee FTE's per HR staff FTE

## Performance Measures

National and local KPI's where available eg. BVPI8 re Invoices paid on time.

## Scrapbook Questions

Covering current and emerging issues affecting each function – these are collated and distributed to members in a separate document.

# corporate services benchmarking clubs 2016 timetable

Club	Questionnaire emailed	Questionnaire Return Deadline	Final PDF Report emailed
Treasury Management	March 2016	April 2016	June 2016
Human Resources	April 2016	May 2016	July 2016
Audit	April 2016	May 2016	July 2016
Creditors	April 2016	May 2016	July 2016
Debtors	April 2016	June 2016	July 2016
Council Tax	April 2016	June 2016	July 2016
NNDR	April 2016	June 2016	August 2016
Payroll	April 2016	June 2016	August 2016
Insurance	April 2016	June 2016	August 2016
Legal	May 2016	June 2016	August 2016
Pensions Administration	May 2016	July 2016	August 2016
Benefits Administration	May 2016	July 2016	September 2016
Accountancy	May 2016	July 2016	September 2016
Procurement	May 2016	July 2016	September 2016
Democratic Services	June 2016	July 2016	September 2016
Electoral Services	June 2016	July 2016	September 2016
Counter Fraud	June 2016	August 2016	October 2016
Risk Management	June 2016	September 2016	November 2016

This timetable is subject to variation.

## Contact us

To confirm timetable dates, view example questionnaires and reports please visit our website: [www.cipfa.org/corporateservices](http://www.cipfa.org/corporateservices)

For more information about how CIPFA Benchmarking can help your organisation or to sign up today contact:  
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