



OPEN GOVERNMENT STEERING GROUP

General Medical Council Boardroom
Gentle's Entry, Edinburgh EH8 8PJ
25 September 2018 10.00 – 11.30

NOTE OF MEETING

Attendees

Co-chairs

Graeme Dey (Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans) (apologies)
Barbara Allison – Director Communications, Ministerial Support & Facilities, Scottish Government - Deputising
Eric Honoré – Chair of Civil Society Steering Group

Civil Society

Graham Meikle - University of Westminster
Alex Stobart - Mydex
Shaben Begum – Director, Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance
Kelly McBride – Director of The Democratic Society in Scotland
Lucy McTernan -
Ian Watt – CodeTheCity
Sally Kerr – Independent Expert
Ben McElwee – See Me Scotland (Apologies)
Catherine Gee – Keep Scotland Beautiful (Apologies)

Government

Scottish Government

Doreen Grove – Head of Open Government
Audrey MacDougall - Chief Social Researcher
Scott Bell – Head of Procurement Development and Construction
Colin Cook – Director of Digital
Roger Halliday – Chief Statistician and Data Officer (Apologies)
Stephen Gallagher - Director for Local Government and Communities (Apologies)
Claire McPherson - Deputy Director Public Service Reform Division (Apologies)

Local Government

Councillor Graham Houston – Vice President, COSLA
Simon Cameron – Corporate Policy Manager, COSLA

Steering Group Secretariat

Madeleine Fleming – Open Government, Scottish Government

Observers

Niamh Webster – Digital Communications, Scottish Government

Sue Kearns – Deputy Director Consumers and Low Carbon Division, Scottish Government
Daren Fitzhenry - Scottish Information Commissioner
Saskia Kearns – Consumers and Interventions Team, Scottish Government

Welcome and Introductions

Doreen Grove, Head of Open Government at Scottish Government, welcomed members to the refreshed OGP steering for Scotland. Members introduced themselves, stating their interest and involvement in Open Government.

Update from Civil Society

Elric Honoré, co-chair of the group outlined the renewal process which the Civil Society group have been undergoing, with new members joining the Steering Group at this meeting following a recent election within the OGP network. These new members bring fresh skills and experience from a variety of backgrounds. Elric also shared ambitions for the future of the network, suggesting a need for more easily accessible citizen participation and an increase in engagement with the network's online presence.

Update from COSLA

Councillor Graham Houston shared work which COSLA have been undertaking, highlighting their efforts to ensure that principles of transparency, interdependency and openness are at the heart of local governance review and public health reform. He outlined the pilot underway to explore use of the CONSUL platform with Scottish Local authorities, with several councils using the platform and a number of others, and partners, interested. A participatory budgeting conference was held with all 32 councils to explore further embedding this practice into ways of working, with at least 6% of budgets already identified by councils which could be subject to PB. An international conference is to be hosted by PB Scotland in October.

Update from Scottish Government

Barbara Allison (Director Communications, Ministerial Support & Facilities) expressed regret on Mr Russell's (Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations) behalf that Brexit pressures have necessitated passing on responsibility for Open Government. She made Mr Dey's (Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans) apologies for being unable to attend this meeting, and reassured the group that ministerial commitment to and interest in Open Government has not diminished.

Doreen Grove (Head of Open Government) shared how the Open Government team are working to reframe Open Government from a series of one off commitments to being embedded in how we do our business, feeding into the Scottish Approach and

wider work towards transparency. This ambitious course of work was acknowledged in Ottawa at the Open Government Partnership Global summit.

At the halfway point of our current OGP plan, the IRM report we have just received suggests we must focus on and build upon what we have already done. We need to think strategically for the future and long term.

International workshops on the future of OGP Local and IRM

Lucy McTernan gave an overview of the discussions which have taken place over the past year in within OGP on the future of OGP local. Key points were:

- A [3 pillar strategy](#) was agreed in May, subject to the detail of the plan being coproduced with the Open Government Community. There was some opposition to this plan from some countries, and some residual resistance remains.
- This strategy will allow Scotland to continue to be part of OGP in its own right
- Hopeful that Scotland will continue to be part of pillar 2 (Enhanced OGP Local Program), become part of pillar 1 (National-Local Vertical Integration), and be leaders for pillar 3 (Knowledge, Learning & Innovation Platform).

Discussion followed this update, of which the key points were:

- Scotland's position mentoring other Governments has been a great way to raise our profile, hopefully this can continue
- Currently this 3 pillar strategy shouldn't lead to any change in our relationship with the UK – we already lead on one of their commitments. However, might lead to change in future.
- Graham Houston will reach out to local government in the rest of the UK to share our learnings
- A subgroup is proposed from the steering group to lead on our UK commitment – interested parties are to contact the Secretariat.

Independent Reporting Mechanism Design Report

Steering group members provided their first reflections on the report:

- Much of what the report contains are weaknesses we were aware of due to the thorough reflection we did after completing our consultation period – we already knew a lot of what we'd like to improve.
- Civil Society will discuss the cocreation process and feedback received at their meeting in November. There is also a number of points for Scottish Government to think on – we need a much clearer programme of how we'll do that. Likely to be an iterative process to come up with this.
- The report generally feels fair and accurate – and shows our improvement following the very critical report on our first plan. It recognises our successes (eg the creation of a multistakeholder forum).
- Raises questions again around specificity – hard to record the ambitious goals we have in Scotland with the specificity which the reporting mechanism

requires from commitments. Report suggested focussing on specific commitments in the plan, while accepting that other work is going on in parallel – is this something we would want to look into?

- This is an opportunity to look again at the commitments where level of impact reported is lower than we would like – how can we fix this within this session? Process of becoming more specific and adding milestones as we progress.

Deep Dive – Commitment 4

This commitment is about making it easier for the public to hold public service providers to account – this is a very complex landscape which is challenging to navigate. However, the commitment is not simply looking to help citizens to navigate the existing landscape, but is instead looking for a solution.

Alex Stobart and Saskia Kearns outlined the key themes which have emerged from their work so far:

- The power dynamic between the complainant and organisation plays a large role – complainant may be fearful of negative outcomes if identified.
- Working with original Signatories to build consensus of understandings regarding key terms, including “accountability”. Focus is on learning and continuous improvement, not assigning blame.
- Strong collaborative working has been enabled through setting up a partnership working group
 - Alasdair Hay (former Chief Fire Officer of Scottish Fire & Rescue Service) appointed as independent Chair
 - A closed group on Discuss has been set up – this hasn’t been as successful as hoped, but using google docs and other collaborative software as well, including regular and close collaboration between Civic and Government Commitment Leads.
- Research has benefited from varying perspectives – but more work is required with individual people to develop a robust evidence base of challenges/barriers to accessing accountability and opportunities, or gaps for improvements. A consultant, We Are Snook, has been appointed to lead on user research work running from October to January:
 - 4 events across Scotland – locations not yet agreed
 - 1 main event for public delivery, scrutiny and regulatory bodies
 - Following these events, a Peoples Panel will be established.
- Possible solutions discussed so far between Partners include:
 - An education piece – many citizens don’t know what their rights are, or what the role of different scrutiny and regulatory bodies is
 - Good practice principles for what accessible, accountable services look like, or service optimisation guidance for scrutiny bodies
 - A peoples’ led review of outputs of scrutiny or regulatory bodies’ activities to improve accessibility and usability
 - Some form of digital navigation platform to facilitate people to quickly and easily access the most relevant advice and scrutiny bodies to raise complaints, or seek redress

AOB

- COSLA's involvement is not written into the group's governance structure at present – suggestion to amend the document.
 - Important to retain appropriate balance between Government (local and national) and civil society – therefore cannot be framed as a three-way collaboration in the governance revision.
- The role of observers should also be recognised in the governance document.

Next steps

The secretariat will draft and circulate for approval an updated governance document for this group.

The next meeting of this group (18th December) should include a workshop to enable further productive discussion.