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**OPEN GOVERNMENT STEERING GROUP**

General Medical Council Boardroom

Gentle's Entry, Edinburgh EH8 8PJ

19 December 2018 10.00 – 13.00

**NOTE OF MEETING**

**Attendees**

**Co-chairs**

Graeme Dey (Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans)

Elric Honoré – Chair of Civil Society Steering Group

Councillor Graham Houston – Vice President, COSLA

**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 – Independent Expert

Ian Watt – CodeTheCity (Apologies)

Sally Kerr – Independent Expert

Ben McElwee – See Me Scotland (Apologies)

Catherine Gee – Keep Scotland Beautiful (Apologies)

**Government**

Doreen Grove – Head of Open Government

Jennie Barugh – Director of Performance and Strategic Outcomes

Colin Cook – Director of Digital

Roger Halliday – Chief Statistician and Data Officer

Stephen Gallagher - Director for Local Government and Communities

Claire McPherson - Deputy Director Public Service Reform Division (Apologies)

Barbara Allison – Director Communications, Ministerial Support & Facilities, Scottish Government (Apologies)

Audrey MacDougall - Chief Social Researcher (Apologies)

Gillian Cruikshank – Social Researcher (deputising)

**Steering Group Secretariat**

Madeleine Fleming – Open Government, Scottish Government

Simon Cameron – Corporate Policy Manager, COSLA

**Observers**

Daren Fitzhenry - Scottish Information Commissioner (Apologies)

Rachael Kelly – Scottish Government Graduate Development Programme Member

Joe Chapman – Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (deputising)

Martin Macfie – Head of Open Data

Andy McDevitt – Independent Reporter on Scotland for OGP’s IRM Mechanism

**Welcome and Introductions**

Simon Cameron welcomed members to the meeting, extending a particular welcome to Graeme Dey (Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans), who was attending his first meeting, and to Andy McDevitt, Scotland’s IRM reporter, who was kindly visiting. Members introduced themselves, stating their interest and involvement in Open Government.

**Update from Scottish Government**

Graeme Dey (Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans) spoke about his involvement in the effort to improve Scottish Government’s FOI performance. He outlined how successes so far had to be built upon, and the idea of openness engrained into the everyday work of the Government. He alluded to some challenges which this agenda will face in the coming year, but expressed his optimism that Open Government will be a catalyst to achieving these aims.

**Update from Civil Society**

Elric Honoré, head of the Civil Society Network expressed his belief that the Civil Society network has evolved over the last few months. He thanked the new members of the steering group for the experience and enthusiasm they have brought with them, allowing the network to really add value to the work of OGP in Scotland. Though highlighting that the relationships between government and civil society are still evolving as parties on both sides get to grips with how to make these interactions work well, he expressed optimism that the Civil Society group was in a good place to begin to rebuild trust in Government.

**Update from COSLA**

Councillor Graham Houston provided an update on COSLA’s recent work related to open government. COSLA’s president has recently written to all local government leaders to seek proposals on bringing to life the local governance review. Open Government is key to this type of change, both in terms of what we’re doing and how we’re doing it. Ensuring the principles of subsidiarity, transparency, participation and interdependence are realised in everything we do will come from this focus.

Work on the CONSUL platform is ongoing. Its use for participatory budgeting is being strengthened, and officials are exploring how it could be used to support the next round of Democracy Matters conversations. Connections through the global network of OGP have allowed knowledge and learning sharing with colleagues worldwide.

Finally, COSLA have been working proactively with councils, Scottish Government and colleagues from civil society to develop a way forward for Scotland’s commitment within the UK Open Government Action Plan.

**Update from OGP Internationally**

Lucy McTernan gave a brief update on OGP worldwide. The steering committee has just gone through its routine transition to new co-chairs – these are now Robyn Hodess on the Civil Society side, and the Argentinian Government. There has been some delay caused by the change of power within the Argentinian Government, but commitment to Open Government remains firmly engrained within the new administration. The new 3 year plan for global partnership has been under discussion recently, and, positively for Scotland, the plan for OGP Locals is central to this.

Doreen Grove (Head of Open Government) shared the positive feedback and interest which Scotland’s Open Government work has been receiving on the international stage, highlighting the benefits this brings for the programme’s learning and profile. Our commitment on participation has attracted particular attention, with Doreen currently taking part in a group looking at how to establish a system wide approach to participation across the EU.

**Commitment Updates**

Commitment leads provided a short summary of progress on their commitment, in complement to the written updates already provided. Key points are recorded below.

Commitment 1 – Jennie Barugh

* Two working group meetings have now taken place, both were helpful
* SNIB gave a deep dive on their work at the last working group meeting – this was well received and felt to be useful by attendees.
* SNIB milestones are on track
* Procurement have be

Commitment 2 – Doreen Grove

* Discussions have taken place around the need to set up a working group for this commitment, and the plan is to get this up and running in the new year.
* The participation framework has been delayed slightly, due to unexpected demands on staff resources (primarily due to the announcement of a major participation initiative for Scotland in the form of a national Citizens Assembly).
* Round table events focussing on ensuring inclusion of protected characteristics within participation will take place in January and February – dates for these will be publicised once confirmed.
* A Firestarter event looking at systemisation of participation is taking place on 14th February – details [here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sharing-power-embedding-deliberative-methods-in-scotland-tickets-80446336157)

Commitment 4 – Alex Stobart

* A large amount of work has been put into building good working relationships between government and civil society, and with scrutiny bodies. These are now in a good place.
* A piece of research has been commissioned by Scottish Government to
* A workplan is currently being prepared for the next year of activity, focussing on two main outputs:
  + Assessing the coherence and effectiveness of accountability processes
  + Feeding into the establishment of the new Consumer Scotland body

Commitment 5 – Elric Honoré

* Elric has only recently taken on the role of civil society lead for this commitment, so there was nothing to add to the written update on Scottish Government work
* Civil society is taking on the challenge of looking at where information is held about Brexit online – trying to break down siloes to help to build trust in information.

A conversation followed about the voice of young people feeding into Open Government work, with Mr Dey expressing the view that more of this was required. It was agreed that this was something which should be given additional thought, but it was also highlighted that several commitments had worked with young people, though on an individual project basis.

**Deep Dive – Commitment 3**

Roger Halliday and Sally Kerr presented a deep dive into how commitment 3 of the action plan is progressing, summarised below.

* A large amount of outreach work has been carried out, for example promoting open data at events (eg DataFest, The Gathering), and chairing a roundtable meeting on open data and data literacy with a range of stakeholders.
* Working with community groups and local authorities, assessments of data literacy skills have taken place
* Improvements continue to be made to statistics.gov.scot:
  + New help guides have been published
  + A publishing method has been developed for sharing National Performance Framework datasets
  + A larger number of small area datasets are now published, increasing the opportunities to describe communities through data
  + A wider range of apps and dashboards have been built directly from statistics.gov.scot
* Work is ongoing to make the Open Data Portal more discoverable, including improving many of the functionalities of the portal.
* Upskilling work for technical skills has included:
  + Delivering analyst training to produce visualisations and maps using open data
  + The creation of an Opendatascot R package, allowing easier production of apps and dashboards
  + Connecting together different portals (eg NHS) and reusing data
* Civil Society engagement with this work through OGP has increased markedly in the past few months, creating great opportunities for collaboration, particularly around research, engagement with wider civil society, and planning for the next iteration of Open Government Action Plan.
* Challenges faced so far include:
  + Weak demand for Open Data
  + Need to improve data literacy
  + Difficulties in publishing large or complex datasets useably
  + Making data more discoverable
* Next steps:
  + Build on Civil Society member enthusiasm and involvement:
  + Shape approach to open data beyond 2020
  + Identifying demand for Open Data
  + Spotting places to test out new approaches

The group agreed that it was important to build up a record of cases where Open Data had made a significant and beneficial difference, using this to demonstrate the value of Open Data.

Alasdair Hodgson, responsible for the health data section of commitment 3, was unable to attend this meeting. However, a detailed paper was circulated, and an offer put our for a meeting to be arranged with any steering group member who wished to discuss its contents further.

**Online Engagement**

Madeleine Fleming outlined the work which she and Elric Honoré have been undertaking to assess the effectiveness of Government and Civil Society’s collective online presence on Open Government. This work is detailed in the Open Government Online Presence and Engagement paper, circulated prior to the meeting.

Madeleine demonstrated the new gov.scot feature “collections”, outlining how it could be used to improve progress monitoring and reporting online for Open Government Commitments.

A call was put out to request participants for a working group to create an Online Engagement Strategy for Open Government in Scotland, ensuring that best use is being made of online channels to publicise and attract scrutiny of this work.

**Next Steps**

The next meeting of the Open Government Steering Group will take place on March 11th. Any non-members wishing to attend this meeting as observers should contact the secretariat (madeleine.fleming@gov.scot)