

## **NOTE OF MEETING**

### **STAJAC Steering Group**

**Time:** 2.30pm, 7 November 2014

**Place:** Audit Scotland, 110 George Street - Board Room

**Present:** Marieke Dwarshius, STAJAC (Chair)  
Michael O'Neill, Scottish Government  
Douglas Proudfoot, East Lothian Council  
Ken Graham, Renfrewshire Council, for SOLAR  
Douglas Sinclair, Accounts Commission  
Fraser McKinlay, Audit Scotland  
Cllr Paul Johnston, COSLA  
Paul McFadden, SPSO  
Mark McAteer, Improvement Service  
John Lincoln, Audit Scotland

**Apologies:** Malcolm Burr, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, for SOLACE  
Ronnie Hinds, COSLA  
Linda Pollock, Scottish Government  
Alicia McKay, Scottish Government

		<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Welcome and comments</b></p> <p>The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Cllr Paul Johnston representing COSLA.</p> <p>For the benefit of the attendees and Cllr Johnston they all provided a brief introduction.</p> <p><b>Points to note:</b> Linda Pollock is on maternity leave and Alicia McKay is her replacement. Ronnie Hinds is standing down from this steering group as he is no longer Chair of Local Government Benchmarking and is now Deputy Chair of Accounts Commission.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Note of previous meeting</b></p> <p>Previous minutes approved with the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• KG was present and DS was not in attendance</li><li>• Outline Scope of the project, bullet 2 – not fully accurate of what the group is doing. We are the Steering Project Group only.</li></ul>	
	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p><b>Invitation to COSLA</b></p> <p>Marieke Dwashius noted receipt of letter from COSLA with regard to them not being invited to join the Steering Group. Marieke and Fraser McKinlay provided a brief update on their subsequent meeting with the President. Re-assurance was given to COSLA that it was only a timing issue as they were in hand to send an invitation to them.</p> <p><b>Meetings with Angela Leitch</b></p> <p>Marieke also noted that she met with Angela Leitch, East Lothian Council and next SOLACE Chair to discuss the language used on “getting it right first time”. MD re-iterated this to the group about using the correct language.</p>	

	<p>Cllr Johnston added that there needs to be a clear understanding between Administrative Justice and Performance management. The group had a brief discussion on the differences and agreed that :</p> <p>Administrative justice relates to the individual transaction with the customer and the fairness of the process for them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance management is the application to ensure the process work well and may well be the internal system of the local authority.</li> <li>• DS suggested that a PM system could be designed to collaborate decisions with results</li> <li>• PM suggested that the NHS master class on complaints and the role of elected members could be replicated for local government. It could be expanded for Administrative Justice and how it fits in to the wider picture.</li> <li>• The justice element is included because complaints can escalate into the justice system</li> </ul> <p>Marieke also met with Angela Leith and Douglas Proudfoot on a separate issue. AL shared her concerns on Local Government being perceived as failing. MD commented that she is keen to explore taking this forward through SOLACE when the briefing has been agreed. KG happy to do this through SOLAR and will action for March presentation.</p> <p><b>Extra resource</b> MD confirmed that someone is starting in 2 weeks to work full-time with the Committee and will help JL to finalise the Project Brief document.</p>	Ken Graham
3 and 4.	<p><b>Project Scoping Document and Case Studies</b></p> <p>JL presented the document and provided an updated on the amendments from the previous meeting.</p> <p>MD noted that this discussion is to note comments/amendments and that approval of final document will be made via email.</p> <p>MD suggested that the key parts to look at are the methodology, areas for case studies (and examples) and proposed outputs.</p> <p><b>Project aims and objectives</b></p> <p>During discussion, it was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That we should explain what is meant by administrative justice at the beginning.</li> <li>• Para 3, 1<sup>st</sup> bullet make more positive by removing the word failure and also add “and cost” after “impact”.</li> <li>• Para 3, last bullet add “and impact” after “importance”</li> <li>• MD clarified that it is not the intention to compare one local authority with another, but it would be helpful to produce an example on costs.</li> <li>• Para 2, last bullet: DS suggested that “grievances” is changed to “complaints”. The group further discussed this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ as it was thought there may be confusion around complaints handling.</li> <li>○ There was no boundary around what decisions would be looked at as part of the complaints and it could have the potential of being taken that all decisions would be investigated. KG noted that the types of decisions are articulated at para 9.</li> <li>○ Approval was received for the word change to “complaints”.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• DS all suggested that a summary of what is not being looked at is also</li> </ul>	JL



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure there are examples of good practice within the case studies</li> <li>● MD noted that she will be meeting with Alicia McKay and her Department Head to discuss this as they may have a different view on our perspective.</li> </ul> <p><b>Appendix 2 – key questions</b></p> <p>A general discussion was had around the key questions and their suitability.</p> <p>MD questioned whether this section provided a good steer on the types of things to look at in the case studies as it should be linked back into “right first time” and are they in place with different Councils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● FM suggested the questions are a good basis of discussion with the Council but we don’t have the time/resource to visit all the Councils. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It was agreed that Councils do need to be tested with the questions. With the objective output of finding out what is actually happening out there now/or getting to a place to set out to help Councils.</li> <li>○ JL was hoping to visit Councils to talk through the framework and objectives.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● The key questions would be included within the scoping document and not as an appendix.</li> </ul> <p>DS left the meeting</p> <p>Further discussion developed around the key questions and case studies. FM noted that it would be better to speak to people who understand to make believable case studies.</p> <p>MD agreed that the questions should not mislead people and she will look at removing some of the questions to produce a less detailed version for SOLACE, COSLA and the Councils.</p> <p><b>Appendix 3</b></p> <p>MD asked JL what the intention of including this appendix within the brief. JL confirmed it was a list for people who received the brief to know what this group are looking at. MD and JL to look at list again.</p> <p>Concerns were noted that as it is not an exhaustive list that some of the areas are not equally as important. Access to care at home services to ne included within Social Work section. JL to amend list accordingly and re-issue for further feedback.</p>	<p>MD/JL</p> <p>JL</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Timetable for future steering group</b></p> <p>MD presented the timetable for the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Project brief – sign off early/mid December via email</li> <li>● Next meeting early April</li> <li>● Sign-off report for meeting in May</li> </ul>	<p>JL</p> <p>NC</p> <p><del>NGNC</del></p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Next steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No other points to note and meeting closed</li> </ul>	