

26 January 2018

CONFIDENTIAL

Ken Macintosh, MSP
Presiding Officer
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Our ref: RA/SP/2018

By email to: Presiding Officer & Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body Secretariat

Dear Ken

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Draft Revised Strategic Plan

As you are aware, under section 17(1) of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002, the SPSO must lay a Strategic Plan before Parliament every four years. Section 17(7) of the Act enables the SPSO to lay a revised plan. Please find attached a draft revised plan for the SPCB to consider and comment on. It is my intention to lay the revised plan before Parliament at the end of March 2018 so that it has effect from 1 April 2018.

I thought it might be helpful to the SPCB if I set out some of my background thinking and why I have decided to revise the existing plan.

I have been in post now since 1 May 2017. Since May, I have been:

- focusing on delivery of day-to-day business and delivery of statutory functions and operational imperatives
- learning more about the organisation through this work, and
- engaging with my colleagues and other stakeholders about our work and perceptions of the organisation.

In the context of that learning, I reflected on whether the strategic plan, as currently laid, fully captures the actual work we do and the actual strategic approach we are taking. I also considered whether the current plan supports and enables the direction we wish to take in the future.

My view is that, in light of the significant changes the organisation has already been through, the current strategic plan needs to be refreshed and re-focused. This is:

- to better capture the range of my responsibilities

- to highlight how delivery at a strategic level is cross-cutting in that some elements of our work (e.g. improvements in public services) rely on contributions from a range of operational activities across the organisation
- and, crucially, to put more emphasis on my wider vision to contribute to lasting improvement in public services by putting people at the strategic heart of what we do. This is reflected in both the content of the strategic plan and the title: **SPSO Strategic Plan 2018—2020: *Putting People at the Heart of Public Services***.

You will appreciate this is not a fundamental change of direction. It draws on and develops some of the excellent work that was already in place. What is significantly different is that the SPSO's vision is more explicitly couched in terms of improvement through delivery of *all* our statutory functions: in other words, as a modern Ombudsman service we do much more than complaints.

The other significant difference is the approach taken to resourcing. I have adopted a "programme" approach in that rather than try to put a resource requirement on each strategic aim, I have set out the resource requirement to deliver the whole strategy, recognising that the same resources may contribute to several of the overarching strategic aims. I have made an assumption that my consolidated budget from the SPCB will not be increased. In addition, I have set out the circumstances in which I would expect to return to the SPCB for additional funding, either through the contingency fund (as now) or in other, unpredictable, circumstances. I hope the SPBC finds this distinction helpful.

I will be publishing this draft strategic plan on our website early next week, inviting wider comment. If anything significant arises as a result, I will update the SPCB.

A strategic plan is, by definition, a high level document so if the SPCB has any questions or would like additional information, I would be happy to provide it, or meet the SPCB to answer questions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rosemary Agnew". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rosemary Agnew
Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Cc Janice Crerar