

Minutes of a meeting of IPSA's Board

Wednesday 27 September 2017

Present: Ruth Evans, Chairman
Sir Robert Owen
Liz Padmore
Anne Whitaker
Rt. Hon Jenny Willott

In attendance: Marcial Boo, Chief Executive
Alastair Bridges, Director of Corporate Services
John Sills, Director of Regulation
Vicky Fox, Director of MP Support Services
Publication Manager (MP Portal demonstration)
Head of Communications
Head of Policy and Assurance
Project Lead (MP Portal demo & IPSA 2017 highlight report)
Executive Assistant (Minutes)

Apologies: Naomi Stauber, Chief of Staff

Status: Submitted for approval at the meeting of the Board on 2 November 2017

Publication: Approved for publication.

1. Welcome and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those attending.
- 1.2 The Board received apologies from IPSA's Chief of Staff.
- 1.3 The Chairman invited the Board and members of staff to declare any interests not previously recorded. No new interests were declared.

2. Minutes of previous meetings and matters arising

Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 13 July were approved as a correct record.

Actions arising from the previous meeting

- 2.2 The Board noted the actions that had been completed since the last meeting.

3. IPSA Online: Presentation of the MP Portal

- 3.1 IPSA's Publication Manager presented the current iteration of the MP Portal to the Board, explaining that from December the Portal will be the first screen that MPs see when logging into IPSA's system.
- 3.2. The Board noted the stylistic simplicity of the Portal, and the ease with which it could be navigated. They agreed that the Portal's capacity to send messages directly to MPs or their Proxies provided an opportunity for IPSA to consider how better to communicate with MPs and their staff in future.
- 3.3 The Board agreed to see the final version of the Portal on 29 November before it goes live.

ACTION: IPSA's publication manager to present a finalised version of the IPSA Portal to the Board on 29 November.

4. Compliance Officer's report

- 4.1 The Compliance Officer for the IPSA presented his report to the Board, explaining that he had opened no new investigations since his last report in June. His report focussed primarily on a Freedom of Information request for all correspondence associated with nine complaints handled by the previous Compliance Officer between 2013-2015. The Compliance Officer explained that, although these cases did not progress to formal investigations, the requestor believed some form of remedial action to have taken place, arguing there was a public interest in any details being disclosed. After those

details were withheld under section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act in order to protect personal data, a subsequent appeal from the requestor to the ICO was rejected. The requestor has since appealed this judgement and the case is awaiting Tribunal.

- 4.2 The Board noted that the case was ongoing, and looked forward to further updates. They thanked the Compliance Officer for his update.

5. IPSA Online: Highlight report

- 5.1 IPSA's Project Lead, presented the IPSA Online highlight report for September to the Board. The report highlighted that integrated systems testing had been delayed due to resourcing issues at our suppliers, and that IPSA continued to seek further guarantees from them about their data security arrangements. The Chief Executive highlighted that, at present, the project allowed for three months of contingency time and that one month of that time had now been used.
- 5.2 The Board noted that senior IPSA staff were working to resolve these issues quickly and effectively, but that contingency plans were also being put in place should issues persist. The Chief Executive would meet the global CEO of the supplier on 11 October. The Chair was assured that IPSA's management were approaching these issues proactively and responsibly, and looked forward to a further update at the Board's next meeting.

ACTION: IPSA's Board to receive a paper on possible contingency plans, and the likelihood of their requiring implementation, at their meeting of November 29.

6. IPSA's Annual Assurance Report

- 6.1 IPSA's Head of Policy introduced the Annual Assurance Report to the Board in draft form. The Board had previously agreed that the report should detail IPSA's pre-payment validation, post-payment validation and thematic assurance reviews of expenditure, and that those thematic reviews, including on the 2015 General Election expenditure, EU referendum expenditure, pooled services, connected parties, claims for surveys and gifts review, and travel and subsistence, would be published alongside the Annual Assurance Report. The report on EU referendum expenditure was attached as an annex for the Board's review.
- 6.2 The Board noted that the Annual Assurance Report was well written, and made some detailed comments to be incorporated in the final version. The Board would have an opportunity to review each detailed assurance report in hard copy during October, and, the Annual Assurance Report would return to the Board on 2 November for final approval.

ACTION: IPSA's Board to receive a paper copy of each of the thematic assurance reviews to be published alongside the Annual Assurance Report, ahead of their next meeting on 2 November.

7. Financial Management Report

- 7.1 The Director of Corporate services updated the Board on IPSA's financial position, noting that IPSA remains forecast to underspend against its overall budget, but that it continues to manage some risks on IPSA Online capital, with more project costs having been capitalised than originally forecast. The Board were informed that midyear reviews of budgets were scheduled for October.
- 7.2 The Board noted that IPSA's budgets continued to be well managed, and were assured by their discussion of the midyear review process. The Board looked forward to receiving further detail on the IPSA Online budget within the revised assessment of the benefits of the improvement programme due to be presented on 29 November.

8. Chief Executive's Report

- 8.1 The Chief Executive presented his monthly update report to the Board. He noted that IPSA continued to support both defeated and new MPs effectively, with 40 of 67 defeated MPs having now concluded their affairs with IPSA. Face-to-face interviews with over two dozen MPs, garnering qualitative feedback on IPSA's work, are underway.
- 8.2 The Board thanked the Chief Executive for his report, noting in particular that the Information Commissioner's Office had yet to respond formally to IPSA about the data breach that occurred in March of this year. The Board were grateful that further internal audit reports on IPSA's cyber and data security would be submitted to the Audit and Risk Committee in November, and agreed it would also be useful to receive a presentation on IPSA's data security requirements under the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

ACTION: Alastair Bridges to prepare a session for IPSA's Board on 29 November, explaining to the Board IPSA's GDPR requirements.

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking IPSA's Executive for continuing day to day business effectively, whilst simultaneously managing the IPSA Online improvement programme and an unexpected General Election.

Meeting closed.