

Minutes of the IPSA Board Meeting – 29 April 2010

Present: Ian Kennedy (Chair) Andrew McDonald (Chief Executive)
Jackie Ballard John Sills (Policy Director)
Ken Olisa James Gerard (Implementation Policy)
Isobel Sharp Rosara Joseph (Implementation Policy)
 Jamie Rubbi-Clarke (Implementation Policy)
 Ed Owen (Communications)
 Martyn Taylor (Secretariat)
 Kiran Virdee (Secretariat)
 Ruth Sloan (Implementation projects and
 processes)
 Adrian Rickard (HR Director)

Apologies: Scott Baker

1. Welcome

1.1. The Chairman welcomed Board Members to the IPSA Board meeting. Scott Baker had sent apologies.

2. Minutes and matters arising

Paper: IPSA/290410/1

- 2.1. The Board expressed its thanks for the timely fashion in which it had received papers for the meeting.
- 2.2. The Board approved the minutes of the 15 April Board meeting, subject to a minor amendment. The Board requested an action status check-list to be considered alongside the minutes at future meetings.
- 2.3. The Board requested that arrangements for openness of IPSA's Board meetings be considered at the Board meeting in May.
- 2.4. The Board agreed the **Code of Conduct, Expenses Code** and **Gifts and Hospitality Code**, subject to receiving final clarification on two points – firstly, on personal donations to candidates standing for election; secondly, on whether to register

hospitality received from close friends who happen to be members of the House of Lords.

3. Chief Executive's report

Paper: IPSA/290410/2

3.1. The Board considered the Chief Executive's report, as follows:

- IPSA is on course to be fully operational from Friday, 7 May. No room now exists for slippage;
- IT user acceptance testing has been progressing well. A number of retiring MPs have tested the expenses system and provided valuable feedback;
- from Wednesday, 4 May there will be daily operational meetings of the executive to ensure that IPSA is in a position to deal with any matters that may arise;

3.2. The Board sought assurances that contingency plans were in place and asked to see the job descriptions for new MPs' staff.

4. Compliance Officer

Papers: IPSA/290410/4-4A

4.1. Rosara Joseph introduced the paper setting out early thoughts on how the Compliance Officer may conduct an investigation and the proposed time-lines for consulting on such procedures.

4.2. The Board's views were sought on the consultation period, the limitation period and the nature of any hearings by the Compliance Officer. The Board agreed the following:

- the consultation paper on the Compliance Officer's procedures of investigation will be considered at the meeting of 18 May;
- the consultation period will last four weeks and IPSA will consult more widely than it is obliged to by statute;
- the first set of MPs' expenses will be published before Parliament rises for the summer;
- the presumption should be for a relatively short limitation period, but further advice on this will be taken at the 18 May meeting setting out a number of options;
- on the nature of the Compliance Officer's hearings, further advice would be taken at the 18 May meeting, but the key principles of fairness, workability and transparency should be central to any approach.

5. Recouping Capital gains

Papers: IPSA/150410/3-3A;

- 5.1. The Board considered the papers on recouping from MPs notional and actual capital gains on properties for which MPs receive a mortgage interest subsidy during a transitional period.
- 5.2. The Board decided that MPs wishing to benefit from such a subsidy should pay for the costs of the initial and final valuation.
- 5.3. The Board further agreed the proposed conditions and guidance for recouping such gains, subject to a number of amendments following the receipt of legal advice and the inclusion of illustrations in the published guidance.

6. Transitional costs

Paper: IPSA/150410/5

- 6.1. The Board considered a paper examining the risks of some returning MPs being bound by existing contracts which could result in their exceeding their annual budgets for various areas of expenditure.
- 6.2. The Board agreed that MPs should be advised that IPSA will not be amending the set budgets but will monitor the situation.
- 6.3. The Board further agreed that on contracts for accommodation that exceed the new limits, IPSA would assist MPs in extricating themselves from such contracts by covering the excess rental costs for up to three months, on condition that returning MPs renting such accommodation have given their landlords notice.

7. MPs' cash-flow: loans and advances

Paper: IPSA/150410/6

- 7.1. James Gerard presented a paper setting out the loans and advances that MPs may apply for. The Board agreed the papers subject to the limits being clear as to what is available for loans and advances against invoices or estimates, and subject to MPs being able to apply for an advance if buying multiples of certain items, such as computers.

8. Limits on individual items

Paper: IPSA/290410/7

- 8.1. The Board considered a paper on whether IPSA should set limits on individual items. The Board decided that it would not impose such limits.

9. Scheme guidance

Paper: IPSA/290410/8-8A

- 9.1. The Board agreed the draft guidance on the MPs' expenses scheme, subject to a number of clarifications and some further advice, to be circulated by the end of the week.
- 9.2. The Board agreed that it would consider ways of revisiting the scheme and guidance at a future Board meeting.

10. Engagement with MPs

Paper: IPSA/290410/9-9A

- 10.1. The Board welcomed the progress being made on engaging MPs and their staff. The Board noted that the regional training was a particularly welcome aspect of the programme of activities.

11. Any other business

- 11.1. The Board was advised that it would shortly receive a paper on pay ranges for MPs' staff.

The meeting was closed.