

Minutes of the IPSA Board Meeting – 23 March 2010

Present:	Ian Kennedy (Chair)	Andrew McDonald (Chief Executive)
	Scott Baker	Robin Galloway (Implementation Director)
	Jackie Ballard	Nigel Gooding (Operations Director)
	Ken Olisa	John Sills (Policy Director)
	Isobel Sharp	Kate Mathers (Finance)
		James Gerard (Implementation Policy)
		Martyn Taylor (Secretariat)

1. Welcome

- 1.1. The Chairman welcomed Board Members to the final IPSA Board meeting before the publication of the new scheme governing MPs' expenses. A Sky film crew was present for this item.

2. Minutes and matters arising (papers IPSA/230310/1, IPSA/230310/2)

- 2.1. The Board approved the minutes of the 9 March Board meeting and looked forward to the circulation of the 10 March Board meeting minutes.
- 2.2. The Board considered a short paper on future agenda items. The Board asked for standing items to be added to the forward agenda and for matters such as annual audits to be included in it.
- 2.3. Board members requested a session with the IPSA operations team to walk through the system for claiming expenses and to experience the system as MPs and their staff would.

3. Chief Executive's report (paper IPSA/230310/3)

- 3.1. The Board considered the Chief Executive's report on the various projects in hand. The Board considered:
 - the recruitment process for an interim Compliance Officer;

- the arrangements for IPSA's call centre immediately following the general election when the number of telephone calls about the new system are expected to peak; and
 - IPSA's budget which remained subject to the approval of the Speaker's Committee which would not now meet until after the general election.
- 3.2. The Board expressed their appreciation for the continued hard work of the IPSA team and recognised the pressure the team is under.

4. Preparations for Go Live (paper IPSA/230310/4)

- 4.1. The Board considered a paper on the projects in hand to deliver a fully operational IPSA in time for May. It further considered the contingency arrangements in place for each of these projects. The Board discussed:
- the arrangements for transferring payroll responsibility for MPs in early May and MPs' existing staff in June;
 - the arrangements for payroll responsibility for new staff members, for which IPSA would be responsible immediately after the general election;
 - the importance of clear guidance about the new arrangements for MPs and their staff; and
 - the need to anticipate, and be adequately staffed for, very high telephone call levels immediately after the general election.
- 4.2. The Board requested regular sight of the IPSA implementation project plan and for it to become a standing item at Board meetings.

5. Cost of the expenses scheme (paper IPSA/230310/5)

- 5.1. The Board considered a paper on the cost of the expenses scheme and some areas the National Audit Office had highlighted as posing potential concerns from an audit perspective, as follows:
- a banded approach should be adopted for MPs' living and constituency office accommodation;
 - staffing budgets were based on average spend by MPs on staff rather than maxima and should be set out in a simple format that includes the reasoning for the level of the cap;
 - the total cost of the new scheme should compare favourably to the cost of the old scheme.

6. MPs' Expenses scheme and consultation report – sign-off (papers distributed previously)

6.1. The Board considered the draft MPs' expenses scheme, as follows:

- the default position should be “no receipt, no repayment”;
- responsibility for scanning receipts should rest with IPSA but should be kept under review;
- the process of redacting receipts would be discussed at a future Board meeting;
- clear Service Level Agreements need to be set out separately so that MPs know what they can expect from IPSA;
- the scheme needs to be clear it governs the rules for MPs and not for ministers;
- hotel accommodation should be available to London-area MPs on those occasions when the House sits very late and they cannot easily get home by public transport;
- overtime payments to staff should only be made if a full explanation is given for the need for this;
- constituency travel claims should be accompanied by a proforma which sets out the reasoning for the claim;
- the definition of “connected parties” should be stated clearly;
- the precise arrangements for recouping capital gains on property – or the level of public subsidy – would be set out in guidance in advance of the general election; and
- the wording in the scheme and consultation report should be consistent.

7. Launch of the scheme (papers IPSA/230310/6A-C)

7.1. The Board considered a number of papers on the arrangements for the launch of the new scheme.

The meeting was closed.