

Minutes of a meeting of IPSA's Board

Wednesday 28 February 2018

Present: Ruth Evans, Chairman
Sir Robert Owen
Rt. Hon Jennifer Willott
William Lifford
Jackie Smith

In attendance: Marcial Boo, Chief Executive
Alastair Bridges, Director of Corporate Services
John Sills, Director of Regulation
Vicky Fox, Director of MP Support Services
Head of Policy and Assurance
Head of Communications
Head of Human Resources (Item 3)
Senior Executive Assistant and Board Secretary

Apologies: None

Status: Submitted for approval at the meeting of the Board on 21 March 2018

Publication: Approved for publication

1. Welcome and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those attending, including Jackie Smith, attending her first formal Board meeting since taking up her post.
- 1.2 The Chairman invited the Board and members of staff to declare any interests not previously recorded. The Chair declared that she had also been appointed to chair the Payment Systems Regulator.

2 Minutes of previous meetings and matters arising

Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 30 January 2018 were approved as a correct record, barring one correction.

Actions arising from the previous meeting

- 2.2 The Board queried whether the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) were likely to notify IPSA of the result of their ongoing investigation into the data breach, affecting MPs' staff, which occurred in March 2017. The Executive advised that no timescale had been given by the ICO.

3 IPSA's Staff Survey

- 3.1 IPSA's Head of HR presented the results of IPSA's staff survey to the Board, explaining that results had improved compared to 2017. In particular she highlighted the improved engagement score amongst staff. The Board agreed that there had been a noticeable improvement compared to 2017. However, they noted that more staff than last year reported issues with bullying and harassment at work. The Head of HR explained that that percentage increase equated to just one more case than in the previous year, but that the increase was being taken seriously and would be addressed in the action plan due to be developed.
- 3.2 The Board agreed that it would be useful to discuss the survey results with staff at their engagement session ahead of the Board meeting on 21 March.

4 Annual Survey of MPs and their staff and IPSA's General Election Survey

- 4.1 The Board received the results of two surveys conducted by IPSA's communications team. The Head of Communications acknowledged that participation in the annual survey of MPs had dropped noticeably and so the results were less reliable than in previous years. Ben Page, the Chief Executive of IPSOS Mori, would be attending IPSA's

March Board meeting, and would offer advice on what alternative methods we could use to survey MPs.

- 4.2 The Board agreed this would be useful, and looked forward to addressing this on 21 March. The Board also agreed that the new IPSA Online Homepage would also give us the capability to communicate to specifically targeted individuals.
- 4.3 The Board noted that MPs and their staff had been split on the effectiveness of the account management support model used by IPSA. However, they were content that the results were broadly positive about IPSA's service overall.
- 4.4 The Board NOTED the General Election survey, and the largely positive feedback about IPSA's service to MPs, particularly to those who lost their seats, and their staff during the 2017 snap General Election. They were content with the recommendations set out in the paper, and looked forward to a broader discussion on how IPSA might better engage MPs and their staff in March.

5 Compliance Officer's report

- 5.1 The Compliance Officer presented his bi-monthly update report to the Board for their consideration. He explained to the Board the status of his existing workload, noting that in the second half of the financial year it had increased substantially. The Board were keen to know more detail about the Compliance Officer's existing cases, and when they might be closed. They agreed that Will Lifford would assist the Compliance Officer in creating a more detailed case log, so that the Board might better understand when cases would be resolved.
- 5.2 The Board agreed that a further update, incorporating the Compliance log, should be received at their next meeting on March 21.

6 Resourcing for the Office of the Compliance Office.

- 6.1 The Board received a paper detailing the resourcing needs of the Compliance Office. The Board noted that the paper argued that no additional resource was required by the Compliance Officer, but they also acknowledged that his workload had increased markedly in recent months. The Board considered that it would be prudent for the Compliance Officer to return to them in June with revised resourcing proposals, at which point it would be evident if the current spike in work was temporary, or longer lasting.

7 IPSA's KPIs

- 7.1 The Chief Executive presented to the Board IPSA's revised Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2018-19. He explained that three changes were proposed to IPSA's KPIs for the next financial year, and that a more thorough exercise assessing the effectiveness of our current KPIs would take place following the implementation of IPSA Online.
- 7.2 The Board noted that the target of 60 per cent satisfaction with our service amongst MPs and their staff, questioning whether it was optimistic to expect a regulator to achieve such levels. They agreed that this was to some extent dependent upon a discussion due to be held with Ben Page in March, about how IPSA might measure more effectively the level of satisfaction amongst MPs and their staff. They agreed this could be revisited following that meeting on 21 March.
- 7.3 The Board were otherwise content with the changes proposed, but suggested that the substantive review of IPSA's KPIs in 2019 consider the additions of KPIs on decision making and data security too.

8 MPs' pay

- 8.1 The Head of Policy presented to the Board a recommendation that MPs' pay be increased by 1.8 per cent from 1 April 2018, in keeping with IPSA's determination in 2015 to link future changes in MPs' pay to the October figure of the ONS's AWE-KAC9 index of average weekly earnings in the public sector. The Head of Policy confirmed that, as the Board had also committed to reviewing the additional salaries of Chairs of Select Committees and Members of the Panel of Chairs by the same method as the MP basic salary, it was recommended that their salaries also be increased by 1.8 per cent.
- 8.2 The Board acknowledged their previous determination, and were content that the proposed changes be implemented from 1 April.

9 MPs' pensions

- 9.1 The Head of Policy presented a paper on MPs' pensions to the Board. The paper sought further guidance from the Board on the scope of IPSA's work reviewing MPs' pensions.
- 9.2 The Board agreed the principles set out in the paper, including that any reforms to the MPs' pension scheme should protect accrued rights, and that the scheme itself must be sustainable and affordable and not require significant amendment for at least 25 years.

9.3 The Board also noted that they had previously sought a more detailed proposal on the injury benefits paid out in the event of an MP's death. The Head of Policy advised that she had conferred with lawyers on this issue. She proposed that IPSA consult on a change to the pension scheme that would mean an enhanced death-in-service lump sum payment to an MP's dependants if death should occur in the line of duty. The Board were content with this recommendation, and agreed that the remaining recommendations set out in the paper should also be included in IPSA's consultation document on MPs' remuneration.

10 IPSA Online Highlight report

10.1 The Board noted that significant progress had been made since their last meeting of 31 January, including the successful launch of e-payslips for MPs and their staff, the near completion of internal system testing, and the completion of the first phase of usability testing with MPs and their staff. The Board were pleased to hear of the positive feedback received to date through the usability testing in particular, and looked forward to being updated on the first payroll parallel run in March.

11 Financial management accounts

11.1 The Board noted the accounts as of 31 January 2018. They were content with IPSA's financial position, and thanked the Director of Corporate Services for his update. No detailed comments were provided.

12 CEO's Report

12.1 The Board noted IPSA's ongoing work to achieve GDPR readiness by May, and were pleased that a substantive update was scheduled for their next meeting of 21 March.

12.2 The Board also noted that IPSA intended to launch in early March its consultation asking when MPs and their staff should receive their pay each December. The Chief Executive re-affirmed that the consultation followed representation from numerous MPs who wanted December's salaries paid earlier than the last working day of the month. The Board looked forward to receiving the results of the consultation in May.

13 AOB

13.3 No further items were raised at the Chair's invitation. The Chair thanked the Board and Executive for their attendance, bringing proceedings to a close.

Meeting closed