

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of IPSA

Tuesday 16 October 2012

Present	Sir Ian Kennedy, Chair Sir Scott Baker Jackie Ballard Ken Olisa Isobel Sharp Paula Higson, Acting Chief Executive Peter Davis, Compliance Officer [item 7] Nick Lee, Head of Board and Chief Executive Office	Mark Anderson, Head of Communications [items 1 – 6] Belinda Brown, Head of Performance and Assurance [items 5 – 9] John Sills, Director of Policy [items 1 – 9] Briony Carew, Assistant Policy Manager [item 4] Susan Logan, Finance Manager [item 7] Tony Lord, Head of Policy [items 1 – 4]
Apologies	Andrew McDonald, Chief Executive	
Status	Final for publication as approved at the meeting of the Board on 20 November 2012.	
Publication	For publication no later than 11 December 2012. (Sections 7, 9.5 and 9.6 not for publication.)	

1. Welcome

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed the Board to the meeting.
- 1.2. The Chair noted that an additional item, relating to a recent Freedom of Information request for details of MPs' landlords' names, had been added to the original agenda.

2. Minutes and matters arising

IPSA/161012/1 – Minutes of a meeting of the Board of IPSA, 18 September 2012;

IPSA/161012/2 – Action list

- 2.1. The Board approved the minutes of the meeting of the Board of 18 September 2012 for publication, subject to one amendment.
- 2.2. The Head of Board and Chief Executive Office reported that:
 - a further report on the appropriateness of the sanctions in place with respect to payment cards would be provided separately, under the item relating to the annual review of the Scheme;
 - work was under way to schedule the next meeting of the IPSA-MP liaison group; and
 - arrangements would be made for the Board to consider lessons learned since its appointment in 2010.
- 2.3. The Board agreed that, with respect to its review of MPs' pay and pensions, it would be important – in addition to its public consultation – to talk to those who had experience of the issue and who might wish to offer advice.

Appointments to the Board

- 2.4. The Board agreed that:
 - it would be important to make appropriate transition arrangements for the incoming Board; and
 - it would discuss at a later date, having received advice from the Executive, what its public position should be with respect to the process for appointments to the Board.

Mark Anderson to provide a draft setting out possible approaches to communications with respect to the process for appointments to the Board.

Nick Lee to make arrangements for a meeting between outgoing and incoming Board members.

3. Pay and pensions: Consultation

3.1. The Board noted that:

- IPSA had successfully launched its consultation on MPs' pay and pensions on 15 October; and
- work was now under way to engage with a range of different interested parties, so as to take account of their views.

4. Annual review of the *MPs' Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses*

IPSA/161012/4 – Draft consultation on the annual review of the MPs' Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses (2013/14)

4.1. The Board agreed that:

- the foreword to the consultation might be an opportunity for the Board to reflect on IPSA's work since May 2010;
- it would be important, when launching the consultation document, to emphasise the importance to IPSA of hearing the views of ordinary members of the public;
- when asking the question about membership fees for schemes such as car clubs, it would be important that it was made clear what eligibility criteria would apply to such schemes; and
- when asking the question about changes to provisions for diverted journeys, it would be important to make clear that this did not affect the rules governing the division between parliamentary and party-political activities elsewhere in the Scheme.

Tony Lord to circulate the draft foreword to the annual review by 19 October 2012.

John Sills to arrange for the circulation of a revised draft consultation document on 30 October 2012, in advance of the Board meeting on 6 November 2012.

5. Strategy: Review of progress against corporate plan

IPSA/161012/5 – Progress against corporate plan 2012/13

5.1. The Board noted that:

- good progress had been made against the corporate plan in the year to date;
- all of IPSA's operational key performance indicators (KPIs) for the financial year were on track; and
- work on IPSA's reward strategy was behind schedule as a consequence of staff absence, but work was under way to agree a revised timetable for this work.

5.2. The Board agreed to record it thanks to IPSA's operational teams for their significant contribution to achieving IPSA's operational KPIs for the year to date.

Nick Lee to put in place arrangements for the Board to consider IPSA's reward strategy.

6. Freedom of Information requests

IPSA/161012/X1 – Freedom of Information: Release of landlord names

6.1. The Head of Performance and Assurance reported that:

- IPSA had, recently, received a number of Freedom of Information requests, including one relating to the names of MPs' landlords and agents;
- the publication policy, which had been approved by the Board in 2010, stated that IPSA would not release data where it was aware that, in doing so, it would identify an MP's specific address; and
- the request relating to the names of landlords was more complex than it first appeared because, in some cases, there was a clear link between a landlord's name and an MP's address and, in some other cases, a relatively straightforward search using publicly-available information would make it possible to identify a particular address.

6.2. The Board noted that, given the need for further work to be carried out in advance of the release of any information, the statutory deadline for the request in question (of 20 working days) would be missed.

6.3. The Board agreed that:

- it would be important to seek the view of the Information Commissioner's Office with respect to the recent request and the concerns that had been raised as regards MPs' security;
- more work was needed with respect to the request for the names of landlords but, in any case, it remained important that IPSA carried out, as previously agreed, assurance work with respect to the data relating to MPs' rental agreements; and
- IPSA's position should favour transparency unless there would or could be a risk to MPs' security as a consequence of this transparency. Where MPs had indicated that they did not have concerns, then it would be appropriate to release the data in question.

7. Compliance Officer's report

IPSA/161012/6 – Report of the Compliance Officer

7.1. The Board noted the report of the Compliance Officer.

8. Finance report

IPSA/161012/8 – Finance report

8.1. The Acting Chief Executive introduced a report setting out the management accounts as 30 September 2012. She reported, in particular, that:

- the accounts included a thorough forecast for IPSA's expenditure through to the end of the financial year; and
- the Board would need to make a decision as regards any need for a supplementary estimate (or otherwise) at its meeting on 20 November 2012.

8.2. The Board noted that:

- an under spend of £13m was expected on subhead A (MPs' pay, pensions, business costs and expenses) and expenditure against subhead B (IPSA's administration) was increasingly tight; and
- although it was too early to be definite, she did not – based on data - expect IPSA to breach its control totals.

9. Chief Executive's report

IPSA/161012/9 – Chief Executive's report; IPSA/161012/10 – Board Information Update

9.1. The Acting Chief Executive introduced a report setting out developments since the Board's previous meeting. She reported, in particular, that:

- IPSA's operational performance in the preceding month had been strong;
- it had successfully moved across to its new, smaller, office space on the east side of Portland House: this would generate significant savings, which had already been taken account of in IPSA's Estimate and corporate plan; and
- new data relating to IPSA's performance in relation to enquiries from MPs and their staff showed that it replied to roughly ½ of emails within 1 working day, against a target of five working days.

Transitional mortgage interest subsidy

9.2. The Board noted that:

- more than half of those MPs who had made claims under the transitional mortgage interest subsidy had now completed the process for seeking a second valuation and, if necessary, repaid the taxpayer share of any capital gain;
- there were outstanding queries with respect to a very small number of MPs; and
- overall, good progress had been made in addressing what the Board had identified early on as one of the least publicly palatable elements of the old system.

9.3. The Board agreed that with respect to the transitional mortgage interest, it would be important to consider how to provide for transparency with respect to the end of the subsidy – possibly when data relating to the subsidy was published in March 2013.

Mark Anderson to provide a report on IPSA's approach to the publication of repayments relating to the mortgage interest subsidy.

Director of Finance and Corporate Services

9.4. The Acting Chief Executive reported that work:

- was under way to appoint both an interim and a permanent Director of Finance and Corporate Services; and

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- an interim post holder would have been identified before the end of October; and
- an offer would be made to a permanent candidate before the end of the calendar year.