

Minutes of a meeting of IPSA's Board

23 September 2025

Board Members: Richard Lloyd OBE (Chair)
Dame Laura Cox
Helen Jones
Will Lifford
Lea Paterson CBE
Andrea Spataro (Boardroom Apprentice)

See Annex for record of attendees.

Status: Submitted for approval at the meeting of the Board on 4 November 2025

1. Welcome and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chair invited attendees to declare any interests not previously recorded, with none being declared.

2. Actions and Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the Board meeting of 15 July were approved.
- 2.2 The Board noted the completed and outstanding actions. The Head of Policy provided an update on inter-office loans and externally funded secondments for MPs' offices, confirming that an inter-office loans process would be in place in the autumn and that an implementation plan with regard to externally funded secondments was under development. The Chief Executive recorded his thanks to the wider IPSA team for their efforts in closing off actions due by the end of September and ahead of his departure from the role.

3. MPs' Staff Representatives Board Engagement

- 3.1 The Board welcomed MPs' staff representatives from GMB, the Members' and Peers' Staff Association (MAPSA), Unite, and the Wellness Working Group (WWG), inviting them to outline any current concerns and to contribute towards the Board's thinking on budgets and pay for 2026-27.
- 3.2 The MPs' staff representatives recorded their thanks for IPSA's continued positive engagement with them on MPs' staff pay and terms and conditions, and were in agreement on the positive impact that recognition of past service, recent changes to family leave policies, and the introduction of a ring-fenced training, health and wellbeing budget would have on MPs' staff. Three core issues were highlighted by the MPs' staff representatives as requiring further action. These were the introduction of pay and career progression pathways to enable greater career development and address low pay at the bottom of the current pay bandings; continued work to equip MPs as employers with the skills to be able to consistently apply good management practice, working alongside the House on training programmes; and greater consideration of what could be done to address potential inequalities of pay across MPs' offices with respect to protected characteristics. The representatives for GMB and Unite also highlighted that recent MPs' staff pay awards have not kept pace with the rate of inflation.
- 3.3 The Board welcomed the feedback provided by the MPs' staff representatives, noting the limits of IPSA's remit and commitment to taking into account the experience of other working people and the wider economic context in making funding and support decisions. Within those constraints, IPSA would continue to work on initiatives that would improve the working lives of MPs' staff.

4. Consultation on the 2026-27 Scheme

- 4.1 The Head of Policy presented the draft 2026-27 Scheme and accompanying consultation document, noting that following a Board session in July, a blank-page approach had been taken alongside an effort to minimise the number of prescriptive rules where a degree of flexibility was reasonable. Details of processes and explanatory information had been removed from the body of the Scheme and, where needed, would be included in supplementary guidance material.
- 4.2 The Board were supportive of the changes made to the Scheme, recommending some minor amendments in terms of simplified language and a strengthening of the wording accompanying the value for money principle. The Board recognised the importance of the supplementary guidance that would accompany the new Scheme and emphasised that this should not be overly legalistic or complicated in nature. The Director, Policy and Engagement confirmed that a summary of significant changes to supplementary guidance would be provided to the Board ahead of its November meeting and that work was underway to make improvements to the MP-facing website which would host the guidance.

- 4.3 The Board considered several policy changes recommended for inclusion in the 2026-27 Scheme consultation, expressing their support for these provided they were framed with care. There was, however, caution expressed over entirely removing the limits associated with reward and recognition payments, given that restrictions were typical across the public sector. The Board delegated approval of the final version of the draft Scheme and consultation document to the Chair.

5. Consultation on MPs' Remuneration

- 5.1 The Director, Policy and Engagement provided an overview of the work completed since the 2024 General Election in reviewing MPs' remuneration from the commissioning of essays for a Green Paper through to the convening of a Citizens' Forum to discuss MPs' pay and funding. It was proposed that the consultation on MPs' remuneration be centred upon the outcomes of this combined work, in particular the recommendations made by the Forum where these concerned MPs' remuneration. It was noted that the Forum recommendations appeared to lend support to the adoption of a determination which rather than relying upon one particular measure against which to benchmark MPs' pay would make it incumbent upon IPSA to consider a range of indicators in making its decision, including the annual rate of change in average UK household income, relevant international comparisons, and the remuneration of similar public sector roles. The Board were also asked to consider whether IPSA should align the timing of the annual MP pay award with wider public sector pay awards which were typically decided upon and announced over the summer and backdated to 1 April, rather than a decision being made prior to the end of the financial year.
- 5.2 Whilst the Board acknowledged the arguments in favour of altering the timing of the annual MP pay award, it was agreed not to commit to a date in the body of the determination given that the timing of other public sector pay awards and recommendations were also open to amendment. The Board were in agreement that no one pay indicator was currently suited for MPs' pay to be benchmarked against, and that therefore reference to a relatively narrow range of indicators was currently preferable. In considering a determination on MPs' remuneration, the Board noted that differentials in pay between MPs and their staff needed to be examined. It was also acknowledged that MPs' remuneration should be considered in the round and that a review of MPs' pension arrangements may be required in the medium-to-long term.
- 5.3 The Board were in agreement that the Citizens' Forum had proven to be a very useful exercise, with helpful recommendations arising from a well-informed and representative sample of the UK population. The Board agreed to consult on the matters discussed, delegating sign off of the consultation document to the Chair.

6. Consultation on MPs' Staff Pay and Career Progression

- 6.1 The Remuneration Policy Specialist presented a draft consultation concerning MPs' staff pay and career progression, noting that following the Board briefing session in early September a more gradualist approach had been taken. As such, it was recommended to consult on the piloting of a competency-based framework with particular focus on a new 'leadership' level across all job families, setting of a minimum pay policy, a reduction in the width of the current pay bands, the introduction of a 37.5 hours full-time equivalent working week, and the creation of a ring-fenced budget for MPs' staff training, health, and welfare; to be introduced from April 2026.
- 6.2 The Board agreed to the recommendations for consultation, alongside consulting upon the way in which IPSA published MPs' staffing spend. It was recognised that whilst IPSA had a duty to be transparent over the costs incurred by MPs, the Board were also conscious of a need to continue improvements made to the way in which this information was presented and contextualised; and how decisions made with regard to the publication of staffing spend could result in MPs feeling unable to remunerate their staff fairly for work undertaken. On the minimum pay policy, the Board wanted to see a clearer rationale stated in relation to the suggested minimum pay level of the National Living Wage plus two percent. Finally, the Board were clear in asking for the number of MPs' staff roles and job descriptions to be reviewed following on from feedback heard from MPs' staff representatives that providing such a large number of roles to select from did not reflect the realities of work in MPs' offices and could inadvertently lend support to poor management practices.

7. Outcomes of MP Pension Consultation

- 7.1 The Head of Policy presented the outcomes of the recent consultation on providing additional flexibility for an MP to access some of their pension when they reach retirement age. The consultation had received three responses from MPs, and the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund (PCPF) had provided IPSA with some initial comments ahead of the Trustees' formal response. All MPs responding to the consultation agreed with the proposals and raised no new issues. The PCPF suggested that IPSA should consider whether to allow MPs to take their pension lump sum at the minimum pension age (MPA) of 55 rather than the normal retirement age (NRA); and to consider any unintended consequences which may arise from interaction between the additional flexibility provided to MPs to take their pension lump sum and existing death-in-service provisions.
- 7.2 The Board agreed to implementing the proposals as outlined in the consultation, subject to any further significant issues raised by the PCPF Trustees' formal response, but with MPs to be enabled to take their pension lump sum at the MPA of 55. The Board asked for an assessment of risk to be made in relation to any potential negative consequences with regard to death-in-service provisions, noting that changes should only be made if legal advice indicates a risk of discrimination or other legal issue. The Head of Policy indicated that a response from the PCPF trustees was expected by mid-to-late October and that the Board would receive an update on this at its November meeting.

8. Updates to the Strategic Risk Register

- 8.1 The Head of Internal Audit and Risk presented a series of updates to the Strategic Risk Register, noting that a review had been commissioned by the Audit, Risk, and Assurance Committee (ARAC) due to significant overlap having been identified between some risks. The review had resulted in the amalgamation of three risks concerning the external environment, stakeholder reputation, and IPSA's role in supporting trust in democracy into a single 'Trust in Democracy' risk; the division of the business-as-usual risk into 'Operational', 'Finance', and 'Regulatory' risks; the creation of two new risks, concerning 'Commercial' and 'Governance'; and the broadening in scope of the 'Change' risk to encompass all change activity. The Committee had agreed to the proposed changes being raised with the Board following a further review of causes and impacts.
- 8.2 The Board approved the updates to the Strategic Risk Register, noting the importance of ensuring clarity of ownership and responsibility. The Head of Internal Audit and Risk outlined the next steps in embedding the new Strategic Risk Register, including agreeing risk profiles for the new risks, consideration of risk appetite, and ensuring the effectiveness of controls.

9. Compliance Officer's Quarterly Report and Consultation Report

- 9.1 The Compliance Officer summarised the contents of his Quarterly Report relating to the first quarter of 2025-26. During this period a total of twenty-five new cases had been opened, and of twenty-two complaints received, ten had been found to be within the Compliance Officer's remit. Updates were provided on police referrals and ongoing assessments. The Board discussed the time limit within which the Compliance Officer had to act upon cases, particularly where police referrals resulted in cases remaining open for a number of years. It was established that the Compliance Officer must have regard to proportionality and personal circumstances, but that delays resulting from the time taken for police services to complete their investigations did not prevent the Compliance Officer from taking reasonable action following their conclusion. The Board noted the report with thanks, asking for future reports to include a longer-term analysis of the trend in complaints.
- 9.2 The Compliance Officer presented the outcomes of the recent consultation on the fifth edition of the Procedures for Investigations, noting that this had received no responses. The Board approved all proposals contained within the consultation.

10. Chief Executive's Report

- 10.1 The Chief Executive presented his report to the Board containing a summary of activity since the previous Board meeting in July. The Director, Finance provided an update in relation to the recruitment of a new Head of Commercial. The Board received an update from the Director, MP Services, Strategy and Change in relation to the support being provided to MPs struggling to

secure suitable office premises, including a pilot scheme through which IPSA would take on the role of leaseholder. The Director, MP Services, Strategy and Change also updated the Board on plans for IPSA to procure a centralised broadband service for MPs from July 2026.

- 10.2 The Board noted an update on the Communications Strategy with thanks, asking that success measures be devised so as to provide greater assurance on matters such as positive news coverage and public confidence in MPs' spending. The Director, MP Services, Strategy and Change confirmed that a refreshed version of the KPI dashboard would include such measures.
- 10.3 The Director, MP Services, Strategy and Change presented the KPI dashboard. The Board queried the decrease in MP satisfaction rate recorded in the latest pulse survey as compared with that in the most recent annual survey. The Director, Policy and Engagement explained that the annual survey received more engagement from MPs and their staff, and it was worth considering whether pulse surveys were the most effective method through which IPSA could gauge general satisfaction levels. The Board asked for clarification as to what 'best in class' results were in relation to diversity and inclusion measures, and the Director, MP Services, Strategy and Change confirmed that these would be included on the dashboard going forward. The Board were pleased to see comparatively few instances of mental health absence being reported and credited the People team on their work in this area.
- 10.4 The Director, MP Services, Strategy and Change provided an update on Improving IPSA Programme activity, noting that a review of business rates payments was being undertaken as part of the additional support being offered to MPs in relation to the sourcing of constituency office premises; and that the first iteration of the IPSA Online front-end portal was being piloted with a small group of Office Managers with functionality currently focused on improvements to the reimbursement process. An update was also provided on the alternative reimbursement project, with the Director, MP Services, Strategy and Change outlining how an assessment of a prospective mileage pilot had rendered it non-viable from a value for money perspective, but that progress was being made in relation to a centralised broadband service previously noted and in expanding Travel Office provision to the direct booking of hotels for MPs and their staff. The Board asked that the Improving IPSA Assurance Group consider monitoring and ongoing assurance in relation to Improving IPSA Programme costs.
- 10.5 The Board noted the annual record of commitments made to the Speaker's Committee for IPSA (SCIPSA), asking that future reports include an account of actions taken in relation to these commitments and a RAG rating reflecting their status and importance.
- 10.6 The Board noted the Improving Customer Service report focused on payroll activity with thanks.
- 10.7 The Board formally recorded its thanks to the outgoing Chief Executive for the demonstrable progress achieved during his tenure in the role.

11. Financial Report

- 11.1 The Director, Finance summarised a report covering IPSA's financial performance up to August 2025, noting that whilst spend against subhead B was in line with the 2025-26 main estimate, MPs were spending a higher proportion of their capped budgets, which alongside an increase in contingency funding, meant that IPSA may need to submit a supplementary estimate. Analysis of MP spend data would continue, as it was possible that at least some of the higher rates of spending were down to annual charges having been paid in the first half of the financial year. The Board sought assurance that IPSA was doing what it could to anticipate MP spending trends and to provide challenge if and where needed in relation to high ongoing spending commitments. The Director, Finance highlighted that MPs were not spending beyond the capped budgets which IPSA provided them with. As part of its annual estimate process, IPSA sought to use previous spending data to more accurately estimate MPs' annual spend against budgets and therefore requested less than the total amount of budget made available to MPs each year. This process was more challenging in 2025-26 given the high turnover of MPs at the 2024 General Election and a lack of spending data relating to new offices at the time the main estimate was provided to SCIPSA. The Director, MP Services, Strategy and Change noted initiatives underway to provide MPs' offices with better budget management tools and the work undertaken by MP Services Account Managers in conducting mid-year reviews of MPs' spending.

12. Board Programme of Work

- 12.1 The Director, Finance noted that the Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) would be considered by ARAC in October, and asked that, subject to ARAC approval, the Board be willing to sign off the ARA by correspondence ahead of its November meeting. The Board confirmed that this was ok.

Annex One

In attendance: Ian Todd, Chief Executive
Karen Walker, Director, MP Services, Strategy and Change
Lee Bridges, Director, Policy and Engagement
Thomas Fitch, Director, Finance
Chief of Staff
Head of Policy
Remuneration Policy Specialist (Items 3 to 6)
Policy Manager (Item 4)

Head of Internal Audit and Risk (Item 8)

Matt Walker, Compliance Officer (Item 9)