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Minute

Minutes of the IPSA Board Meeting – 23 August 2010

Present:	Sir Ian Kennedy (Chair)	Kate Mathers (Director of Operations)
	Scott Baker (by telephone)	John Sills (Director of Policy)
	Jackie Ballard	Tony Lord (Policy)
	Ken Olisa	Mark Anderson (Communications)
	Isobel Sharp	Taffy Yiu (Publications)
		Martyn Taylor (Secretariat)
Apologies	Andrew McDonald (Chief Executive)	Kiran Virdee (Secretariat)

1. Welcome

1.1. The Chair welcomed Board Members to the IPSA Board meeting. Andrew McDonald sent apologies.

2. Minutes and matters arising

Paper: Minute

2.1. The Board approved the minutes of the 20 July Board meeting.

3. Operational Report

Paper: IPSA/230810/1

3.1. Martyn Taylor presented an update on IPSA's operational activities. The Board noted:

- that significant progress was being made on the validation of MPs' expense claims, both in the number of claims processed and the speed at which they had been processed;

- that the new call handling system had resulted in improvements in the number of calls being answered and a drop in the call abandonment rate;

- that changes would be made to the call handling system alerting callers to peak-call times and to their place in the queue; and

- that the turnaround in the handling of correspondence (emails and letters), with only a handful of items over five working days old, was to be commended.

3.2. Board members who had attended a team lunch welcomed the positive feedback they had heard from new members of staff about the induction training.

4. Streamlining payments and claims processes

Paper: IPSA/230810/2

4.1. The Board considered a paper proposing a number of ways in which the payment processes for certain expenses incurred by MPs could be streamlined in order to reduce the administrative burdens for both IPSA and MPs.

4.2. The Board agreed the following:

- <u>Payments to landlords</u>: that IPSA would make rental payments for constituency offices and residential accommodation directly to landlords if testing and piloting proved that this could be done safely and securely, with a robust audit trail and with a requirement that MPs periodically declare their leases are still in force;

- <u>Wider use of the IPSA travel card</u>: that IPSA would expand the travel card facility, opening it up for payments for council tax and certain utilities once IPSA had carried out the necessary assurance work with Barclaycard that it could maintain close audit arrangements on the use of the card, including ensuring any inadvertent or inappropriate use of the card would not be reimbursed and could result in sanctions. MPs would also need to continue to reconcile their credit card receipts against their statements;

- <u>Payments against invoice</u>: that IPSA would expand the arrangement whereby IPSA pays expenses on the submission of invoices, rather than waiting for receipts. This would be limited to expenses incurred of over £200. These claims would again need to be backed by receipts.

5. First annual review of the Scheme

Paper: IPSA/230810/3

5.1. Tony Lord presented a paper setting out the broad shape and themes of the first annual review of the expenses scheme.

5.2. The Board noted:

- the need for clarity on the reasons for reviewing any particular aspects of the rules;

- the need for a full impact assessment of the rules, including establishing the pinch-points of the current rules against IPSA's stated objectives of fairness, workability and transparency; and

- the importance of engaging public opinion, including improving the user-friendliness of the IPSA website.

6. Key and operational performance indicators

6.1. The Board considered a paper setting out draft key and operational performance indicators. The Board agreed that there should be no more than eight Key Performance Indicators with a larger sub-set of operational indicators which would inform the former.

7. Any other business

7.1. The Board asked that some time be spent at their strategy session in September on communications.

7.2. The Board requested a seminar be arranged with administrators of the expenses system used in the Scottish Parliament.

The meeting was closed.