

## Minutes of a meeting of IPSA's Board

Tuesday 25 February 2020

**Board Members:** Richard Lloyd (Interim Chair)

Sir Robert Owen

Rt. Hon Jenny Willott

Will Lifford

**In attendance:** Marcial Boo, Chief Executive

Vicky Fox, Director of Regulation and Insight

Alastair Bridges, Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Head of Communications

Head of Policy and Assurance

Executive Assistant and Board Secretary (Minutes)

**Apologies:** Georgia Wilson, Director of Improvement and MP Support

**Status:** Submitted for approval at the meeting of the Board on 18 March 2020

## **1. Welcome and Declarations of Interest**

- 1.1 The Interim Chair opened the meeting and invited the Board and staff to declare any interests not previously recorded. No such declarations were forthcoming.

## **2. Minutes and Actions List**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 24 January were approved, subject to one amendment. All actions were either completed or noted as 'in progress'.

## **3. MPs' Remuneration 2020-21**

- 3.1 The Head of Policy and Assurance introduced her paper which set out a recommended increase of 3.1% in MPs' basic salary and in the additional remuneration received by Committee Chairs from 1 April 2020. This figure was in line with the Board's determination to index MPs' salary to the average change in public sector earnings.
- 3.2 The Board noted that linking MPs' salary to an objective indicator was important and that this could be further discussed during its meeting in March, when the Board would discuss the scope and timing of the next review of MPs' pay. The communications plan was discussed, and some additional suggestions were agreed.
- 3.3 The Board approved the recommendations.

## **4. Scheme Consultation**

- 4.1 The Head of Policy and Assurance informed the Board of the results of the Scheme consultation launched in October 2019, which sought views on changes to the Scheme in relation to office subletting requirements and security assistance. The paper presented revised rules for the Board's approval, which would be given effect on 1 April 2020.
- 4.2 The Board enquired into the detail of how IPSA is currently notified about subletting arrangements. The Head of Policy and Assurance responded that the assurance review recommended that a more formal process be implemented. Since this has now been introduced, the revision to the Scheme serves to make it reflective of existing operational process.
- 4.3 The Board suggested that all MPs be asked to notify IPSA of existing subletting arrangements. Guidance should also be made explicit on the financial obligations

assumed by MPs who enter into such agreements. The Welsh Assembly was specifically cited as a potentially useful source of guidance.

- 4.4 On security assistance, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services noted the financial implications of the proposed changes. The Board noted the points raised and committed to consider such implications within its wider review of security work and collaboration with the House, which will be undertaken in 2020-21.
- 4.5 The Board agreed to the recommended changes to the Scheme on subletting and security assistance.

## **5. Staffing Budget**

- 5.1 The Head of Policy and Assurance introduced her paper which recommended approving a report on the staffing budget review for publication, which included a significant uplift to the staffing budget available to MPs. The overall proposals would enable cost-of-living salary increases for MPs' staff and provide better pay progression. The budget also included greater provision for training and health and wellbeing support to staff. The recommendations were based on evidence and an independent benchmarking review, which had been written up into a staffing budget report. This report was proposed for publication. A future assurance review was also proposed to assess how the budget uplift was used in practice.
- 5.2 The Board welcomed the package as highly reasoned work based on robust evidence and independent benchmarking. It was noted that MPs would be able to offer a cost of living increase of 3.1% for almost all staff.
- 5.3 The Board were particularly pleased to see a focus on staff welfare, with funds being made available to support it. The issue of MPs' staff wellbeing was one which the Board took very seriously and wished to work on with other stakeholders in the House.
- 5.4 The Head of Communications outlined a draft communications plan to inform MPs and their staff of the budgets, subject to their being approved by SCIPSA. A number of key stakeholders would be contacted in person. These included MPs' staff representative groups with whom IPSA was now building effective working relationships.
- 5.5 The Board highlighted the importance of citing the evidence behind the recommendations, including the staffing budget report, summary of the

independent benchmarking review, as well as the table of new salary bands for MPs' staff. The communications plan was approved, subject to being updated in light of this discussion.

- 5.6 The Board approved the recommendations and the publication of IPSA's staffing budget report. It thanked the Head of Policy and Assurance for a coherent and thorough piece of work based on strong evidence.

**6. Board Programme of Work 2019-20 and Any Other Business**

- 6.1 The Board considered its programme of work for the remainder of the financial year. An item on governance was added to the April 2020 agenda.

- 6.2 The Chief Executive updated the Board on progress made in responding to IPSA's staff survey results. A series of internal meetings had been held, including with the Staff Focus Group. The Senior Management team would also meet on 27 February to continue action planning. The question for the Board was whether it wished to receive a formal update on 18 March before action planning had been concluded. The Board agreed that a progress update would be useful in March, as well as subsequently.

- 6.3 The Board also agreed to receive a paper on 18 March on the outcome of and next steps following the Board's Strategy Away Day which was about to take place.

- 6.4 The Board put on record its thanks to all involved in the preparation of the 2020/21 corporate plan and budget estimate submitted to SCIPSA.

- 6.5 The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 18 March 2020.

**END**