IPSA
Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority

Minutes of a meeting of IPSA's Board

10 March 2026

Board Members:	Richard Lloyd OBE (Chair)
	Dame Laura Cox
	Lea Paterson CBE
	Cliff Rana JP
	Sir Charles Walker

See Annex for record of attendees.

Status: Submitted for approval at the meeting of the Board on 19 May 2026

1. Guest Speaker – Alberto Costa MP, Chair of the Committee on Standards

1.1 The Board welcomed the Chair of the Committee on Standards, Alberto Costa MP, to discuss IPSA's role as both a regulator and service provider in supporting democracy and serving the public. The Chair of the Committee on Standards considered IPSA's role within the context of the wider House of Commons standards landscape and noted how IPSA's statutory basis helped to provide appropriate checks and balances to its work. The Board, in discussion with the Chair of the Committee on Standards, considered how increased cooperation between the different standards bodies could be improved, particularly given how decisions made by one organisation could impact upon others. Finally, it was considered how IPSA could seek to directly engage with the public as part of its five-year plan.

2. Pitching the Five-Year Plan

2.1 The Chief Executive presented an updated version of the five-year plan, noting that this was anchored around how IPSA could look to improve public trust in democracy, reduce the administrative burden experienced by MPs, and use its influence to encourage progress within the wider standards landscape. The plan confirmed that IPSA would focus on four strategic priorities over the next five years – building public confidence through improving transparency and understanding; funding democracy and delivering well by improving the efficiency and quality of regulatory support to MPs; creating a blueprint for staffing and property to make the processes simpler and less burdensome; and improving the experience for candidates, and departing and new MPs at the next General Election. The Board was asked to test the validity and the vision of what was being proposed within the five-year plan.

2.2 The Board considered what it was realistic to achieve within the five-year period covered by the plan, discussing the likely balance between mandation and optionality with regard to centralised services; and how value for money would not necessarily always result in reduced monetary costs but would also be secured through reducing or removing the administrative burden on MPs thus giving them more time to focus on their parliamentary work. IPSA needed to be clear that it would not be committing to providing every MP with a model office within five years but would be looking to test and steadily roll out its proposition in a way which was both responsive to need and respectful of the varied ways in which MPs chose to run their offices. As such, it was suggested that pathways be constructed for those who wanted IPSA to take on more administration, those who wanted a choice as to what IPSA did on their behalf, and those who preferred to manage all their administration themselves.

2.3 The Director, Standards and Information outlined how a communications and engagement plan would be developed alongside further revision of the five-year plan. The Board agreed that the narrative underpinning IPSA's communications needed to be confident in stating how the plan was rooted in IPSA's statutory remit.

2.4 The Board were supportive of the foundations upon which the five-year plan was constructed, recommending some minor amendments to wording and tone, and a greater recognition of external environment risks. The overriding priority of the five-year plan was seen to be the need to give more time back to MPs and their staff to focus on their parliamentary work. A further iteration of the plan would be presented to the Board in May.

3. Declarations of Interest, Minutes, and Actions

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

3.2 The minutes of the Board meeting of 20 January were approved.

3.3 The Board noted the completed and outstanding actions.

4. Principal Risk Appetites and Ownership

4.1 The Head of Risk and Internal Audit presented a review of principal risk appetite and ownership following a recent discussion at the Audit, Risk, and Assurance Committee (ARAC). The review included coverage of three new principal risks concerning trust in democracy, governance, and commercial risk; alongside new risk appetite statements for all principal risks. The Board approved the principal risk appetite statements, subject to some minor amendments discussed at the recent ARAC meeting. It was clarified that any material changes in risk appetite that resulted from ARAC discussions of risk would need to be brought back to the Board, otherwise a further review would be presented in a year's time.

5. Compliance Officer's Quarterly Report

5.1 The Compliance Officer presented their quarterly report to the Board covering activity undertaken during the third quarter of 2025-26. During this quarter a total of forty-one new complaints were received, thirteen of which had been within remit – an increase from the ten complaints that had been within remit in each of the previous two quarters. An update was provided on referrals to the police.

5.2 The Compliance Officer presented updates from IPSA's leadership team on action taken in relation to recommendations made in the Compliance Officer's annual report. The Board noted the updates.

6. Chief Executive's Report

6.1 The Chief Executive presented her report to the Board, noting the work that was being undertaken with the National Audit Office and the MP pension scheme administrators to resolve the outstanding issue relating to sign off of IPSA's 2024-25 annual report and accounts; and that the Speaker's Committee for IPSA (SCIPSA) had reviewed and agreed to IPSA's 2026-27 main estimate.

6.2 The Board asked for an update in relation to the migration of IPSA Online onto the Cloud. The Chief Executive noted that work had been paused while IPSA waited for confirmation from the supplier that an essential customisation could be supported on the Cloud and considered this work alongside the procurement of a new payment card supplier. The Board asked to be kept updated as to developments.

6.3 The Director, MP Services presented the KPI dashboard, highlighting that the number of recipients opening IPSA Bulletins had increased, and that performance against IPSA's service level agreements for email responses and call handling remained strong, with an improved quality assurance framework shifting the focus from the delivery of good customer service to the building of effective relationships. The Board queried why the cost of the IPSA's finance function was tracked as a KPI when the cost of other business areas were not tracked in the same way. The Chief Executive confirmed that a review of KPIs would take place later in the year.

6.4 The Board noted an update on progress made in relation to IPSA's transformation programme.

6.5 The Chief Executive presented the Scheme of Delegation, which had been reviewed in line with the three-yearly cycle and updated to align with a principles-based approach. The Board approved the Scheme of Delegation subject to a minor amendment clarifying the segregation of duties.

6.6 The Board noted the financial report.

7. Board Programme of Work

7.1 The Board noted the programme of work, highlighting that the start of discussions concerning 2027-28 budgets may need to be brought forward.

8. Board Annual Evaluation

8.1 The Chief of Staff presented the Board annual evaluation, noting the outline of a stakeholder engagement plan for Board members, which would be further developed and integrated into the communications and engagement plan requested in relation to the five-year plan; and providing an update on the upcoming Board effectiveness review.

Annex One

In attendance:	Karen Walker, Chief Executive
	Lee Bridges, Director, Standards and Information
	Karen Lacey, Director, MP Services
	Alberto Costa MP, Chair of the Committee on Standards (Item 1)
	Senior Policy Researcher to Alberto Costa MP (Item 1)
	Matt Walker, Compliance Officer (Items 1, 2, and 5)
	Chief of Staff
	Head of Standards and Transparency
	Head of Risk and Internal Audit (Item 4)
Apologies:	Thomas Fitch, Director, Finance and Commercial