



## Minute

### Minutes of a meeting of the Board of IPSA Tuesday 4 March 2014

Present	Sir Neil Butterfield Liz Padmore Anne Whitaker Tony Wright  Andrew McDonald, Chief Executive  Nick Lee, Head of Board and Chief Executive Office	Mark Anderson, Head of Communications [item 4] Belinda Brown, Director of People, Performance and Pay Karen Hennessy, HR Manager [item 3] Philip Lloyd, Director of Finance and Operations [items 1 – 6] John Sills, Director of Policy and Communications [items 1 – 6] Judith Toland, Director of Change [items 1 – 6]  Briony Carew, Policy Manager [item 4] Tony Lord, Head of Policy [item 4]
Apologies	Ian Kennedy, Chair	
Status	As approved for publication at the meeting of the Board on 19 March 2014.	
Publication	Approved for publication. Sections 5 and 6 not for publication.	

**1. Welcome**

- 1.1. The Chief Executive welcomed the Board to the meeting. He reported that (owing to illness) the Chair was unable to attend the meeting and had asked him to chair on his behalf.

Declarations of interests

- 1.2. There were no new declarations of interest.

**2. Minutes of previous meetings and matters arising**

*IPSA/140304/1A – Minutes of a meeting of the Board, 20 February 2014;*

*IPSA/140304/1B – Minutes of a meeting of the Board, 22 January 2014*

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of IPSA, 20 February 2014

- 2.1. The Board approved for publication the minutes of the meeting of the Board of 20 February for publication, subject to a small number of corrections.

**Nick Lee to recirculate and then arrange for the publication of the minutes of the meeting of the Board of 20 February 2014.**

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of IPSA, 22 January 2014

- 2.2. The Board approved for publication the minutes of the meeting of the Board of 22 January 2014 for publication, subject to a small number of corrections.

**Nick Lee to recirculate and then arrange for the publication of the minutes of the meeting of the Board of 22 January 2014.**

Action list

- 2.3. The Board noted that the action list would next be reviewed at the meeting of the Board on 19 March.

Matters arising

- 2.4. The Board noted that, as agreed at the meeting of the Board of 20 February 2014, the Chair had signed off, on behalf of the Board, minutes of the meetings of 24 October, 11 November and 17 December 2013.

2.5. There were no other matters arising.

### **3. Staff survey 2013**

3.1. The Head of HR introduced a presentation setting out the 2013 findings of the annual survey of IPSA staff. She reported, in particular, that:

- there had been a significant improvement both in the response rate and overall engagement score against previous years;
- there had been improvements in employees' perceptions, especially as regards the expectation of staff, views of the future and pride in IPSA itself; and
- an action plan had been developed to address the issues identified in the survey. At the same time, work was under way to develop an employee charter.

3.2. The Board noted that:

- improvements in results could, at least in part, be attributed to organisational changes since the last survey had been undertaken;
- nevertheless, the results of the survey – which needed to be taken seriously – reflected significant work to address issues previously identified and represented a significant overall improvement.

#### **Nick Lee to circulate full report of results of IPSA staff survey.**

### **4. MPs' Scheme of Business of Business Costs and Expenses: Report sign-off**

*IPSA/140304/2 + annexes A – Review of MPs' Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses: Final decisions*

4.1. The Head of Policy introduced a paper setting out the final decisions needed following the recent review of the Scheme. He reported, in particular, that:

- it had not been possible, in the time preceding the meeting of the Board, to identify and put on a tie; and
- once approved, the report on the consultation, along with the final draft of the revised Scheme, would be published on 12 March.

#### **Accommodation budgets**

4.2. The Head of Policy reported that:

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- since 2010, while the accommodation budget had remained relatively static, the cost of accommodation across the UK had increased. In London, the cost had increased on average by more than 10%; but
- there were, nevertheless, properties available to rent within the current budget in the majority of locations within reasonable travelling distance of Westminster; and
- an increase of 2.5% would help to meet the increase over the course of the preceding year in the cost of utilities and rental.

### 4.3. The Board agreed:

- to increase the London Area accommodation budget by 2.5% so as to take account of the change in cost of accommodation over the preceding year in the London Area, where the majority of MPs claimed for the cost of rental accommodation; and
- to increase the accommodation budget in the five non-London Area bands by the same proportion.

### Political campaign expenditure

### 4.4. The Head of Policy reported that:

- the Electoral Commission, in their response to IPSA's consultation, had called upon it to clarify that any expenditure or any activities that might be construed as campaign expenditure under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) should not be claimable under the Scheme. The rules currently only referred to 'any material' in this context;
- the Electoral Commission had also called upon IPSA to amend its rules to clarify that such activities which could be construed as election expenses within the Representation of the People Act 1983 were not claimable; and
- these changes were proposed so as to make clear – for the avoidance of doubt – that the Scheme rules were consistent with legislation on campaign expenditure and political donations.

### 4.5. The Board agreed, subject to the development of guidance for validators on the practical implications of the proposed changes, to approve amendments to the Scheme to ensure that the rules were consistent with the Electoral Commission's rules on political donations and the provisions of PERA.

**Tony Lord to circulate a note setting out the substantive impact, if any, of the proposed changes to the Scheme with respect of political campaign expenditure.**

Other changes

4.6. The Board agreed:

- to amend the rules (and guidance) on advances to clarify that, if an MP ceases to be an MP before an advance made to them by IPSA is repaid in full, any outstanding amount would be repayable on the date that they left office;
- to amend the Scheme to make clear that resettlement payments were distinct from the Winding-Up budget; and
- to amend the Scheme to make clear that rules relating to expenditure during a General Election applied during this dissolution period.

Report on the consultation on the *MPs' Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses*

4.7. The Board noted that:

- changes to the volunteer arrangement that required MPs to indicate the time limit on a volunteer agreement did not preclude their indicating that such an agreement was extendable if such a formulation was agreed with the volunteer in question; and
- it would be important to make clear that changes to the rules to clarify IPSA's powers regarding MPs' staffing budgets did not preclude IPSA's meeting costs arising when an MP's staff member took maternity, paternity or adoptive leave, or was on leave as a result of long-term illness.

4.8. The Board approved the report on the consultation, subject to a number of amendments.

*MPs' Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses*

4.9. The Board noted that:

- while the Scheme made provision for meeting the cost of Employer's and Public Liability Insurance (EPLI), this was provided centrally by the House of Commons and so no claims for such insurance would be paid while this was the case;
- while it was the case that IPSA reserved the right to publish the level of individual reward and recognition payments, it had not yet made a decision whether or not to do so. This would be considered as part of the forthcoming review of the policy on publication;

- the current version of the Scheme, which allowed MPs to employ one connected party (typically a family member or partner) did not preclude future changes to those rules, subject to the need for consultation on any such changes.

4.10. The Board approved the sixth edition of the *MPs' Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses* (including the proposed budget limits), subject to further consideration of the changes proposed by the Electoral Commission.

#### MEPs' resettlement scheme

4.11. The Head of Policy introduced a paper setting out the MEP's resettlement scheme under section 3 of the European Parliament (Pay and Pensions) Act 1979 for the six opted-out MEPs for which it had some responsibility. He reported, in particular, that:

- the scheme, which would apply only to the election due to take place in May 2014, was modelled on that currently available to MPs, albeit without the conditionality that applied to the latter (i.e. that resettlement payments would only be made to those losing their seats having failed to secure re-election) and which IPSA was unable to impose on MEPs; and
- a further scheme of resettlement would be put in place for the elections to the European Parliament expected to take place in May 2019 so as to reflect the changes to the MPs' resettlement scheme due to take effect after May 2015.

4.12. The Board agreed to make the revised scheme of resettlement for Members of the European Parliament.

#### Model volunteer arrangement

4.13. The Board approved the model agreement for volunteers.