

Minutes of a meeting of IPSA's Board

Tuesday 24 November 2020

By conference call

Board Members: Richard Lloyd (Interim Chair)

Rt. Hon Jenny Willott

Will Lifford

In attendance: Ian Todd, Chief Executive

Alastair Bridges, Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Lee Bridges, Director of Regulation and Insight

Karen Walker, Director of Strategy and Change

Georgia Wilson, Director of Improvement and MP Support

Head of Communications (except part of Item 5)

Head of Policy and Assurance (except part of Item 5)

Compliance Officer (Item 3)

Senior Policy Adviser (Item 6)

Policy and Research Officer (Item 6)

Executive Assistant and Board Secretary (except part of Item 5)

Executive Assistant and Board Support Officer (except part of Item 5)

Apologies: Sir Robert Owen

Status: Submitted for approval at the meeting of the Board on 16 December 2020

1. Welcome and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Interim Chair opened the meeting and invited all to declare any interests not previously recorded. No such declarations were forthcoming. The Interim Chair noted the apologies of Sir Robert Owen.

2. Minutes and Actions List

- 2.1 The minutes of the Board meeting of 28 October were approved. All actions completed to date were noted.

3. Compliance Officer's Annual Report and Lessons Learned Report

- 3.1 The Compliance Officer presented her Annual Report and a review of lessons learned from investigations. The former is appended to IPSA's Annual Report and Accounts and provides a factual summary of the Compliance Officer's functions, financing, use and protection of data, and operational activities during the financial year. The latter served to offer an analysis of issues surfaced in investigations and on lessons which IPSA could learn from common themes arising.
- 3.2 The Board sought and received specific detail and thanked the Compliance Officer for her Annual Report. A year-on-year numerical comparison of compliance investigations and referrals to the Police would also prove helpful. It also welcomed the lessons learned analysis of the Compliance Officer as valuable to support IPSA's continuous improvement and, particularly, to reconsider internal meeting governance, strengthen the accuracy and consistency of advice to MPs' offices, and refine user processes which commonly feature and prove problematic in referrals. It would also prove useful when reviewing the next iteration of the IPSA Scheme.
- 3.3 The Executive committed to review the lessons learned report of the Compliance Officer, with particular regard to findings on IPSA's contingency process.
- 3.4 The Director of Strategy and Change referred to a recent audit of meetings and governance which aimed to ensure that decisions were taken in the right place and that staff were better empowered. Work on tone of voice, improving our knowledge management, and continuously seeking user feedback was also central and critical to IPSA's wider transformation programme.
- 3.5 The Board noted the reports with thanks and was keen for more frequent lessons learned reviews to be tabled for its consideration.

4. Chief Executive's Report

- 4.1 The CEO introduced his report, which provided a slimmer, more strategic update to the Board on significant achievements, operational obstacles, and on forward priorities. The KPI data report had also been refined to provide a more focused reflection of IPSA's business-critical performance indicators. In December, the CEO Report and KPI data would be aligned to the strategic pillars of the corporate plan.
- 4.2 Major projects, such as the MPs' pay review and work to refresh IPSA's strategy and purpose, continued at pace. Operationally, proactive support to MPs' offices had led to significant progress in payment card reconciliation and, therefore, more efficient assurance of the use of public funds. Priority areas remained in smoothing the handling of MPs' property registration and in more effectively recovering aged debt.
- 4.3 The Board welcomed progress on reducing caseloads. It sought and received further detail and assurance on cybersecurity during the remote-working period and in relation to the data migration of legacy systems. It also received an update on IPSA's data protection practices, latest reporting on data breaches, and on the 2019/20 year-end process.

5. Strategy, Vision, and Purpose

- 5.1 On the draft 2021/22 corporate plan, the Director of Strategy and Change presented a document designed, as a published document, to be more engaging to stakeholders and the public. The plan recognises the significant increase in workload faced by MPs' offices and refers consistently to eligible claims as 'Business Costs', which serves a more accurate and helpful term for the public. The proposed purpose, vision, and strategy had been co-created with IPSA staff with encouraging feedback both internally and in consultation thus far with MPs and their offices.
- 5.2 At the meeting of the Speaker's Committee for the IPSA (SCIPSA) on 9 December, a chart identifying current challenges and the solutions planned to be implemented in rest of 2020/21 and 2021/22, and the tangible difference that this will make to MPs, their staff, and IPSA, would be presented.
- 5.3 The Board welcomed the plan as a more engaging presentation of what IPSA aims to achieve. It asked the Executive to reconsider the measures of success before publication in the New Year, as part of an iterative process which involved consultation with stakeholders. It also asked that IPSA be explicit on the time savings which would flow from a number of the planned changes and how IPSA intends to

measure public confidence in itself. Specific comments would be sent to the Director of Strategy and Change in advance of the SCIPSA meeting.

- 5.4 On the draft budget, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services outlined a broad outline, taking into account the impact of the pandemic on MPs' business costs and the impact of IPSA's ambitious organisational design and change programme on its own costs. The investments would lead to a better service provided to users and more efficient processes designed to support even higher compliance with IPSA's regulatory framework. In any event, IPSA's costs would remain at c.5% of the combined Subhead A and Subhead B budget if secured.
- 5.5 The Board noted the draft budget with thanks and offered a series of steers. Subject to amendments agreed at the meeting, the Board agreed to review the next iteration of the corporate plan and budget in advance of the private SCIPSA meeting. The Board also discussed organisational design and its alignment with strategy.

6. MPs' Pay Review

- 6.1 The Senior Policy Adviser introduced a paper reflecting on feedback received in the statutory consultation on MPs' pay, which IPSA was required to conduct in the first year of each Parliament.
- 6.2 On indexation, the Board discussed and noted the very difficult economic circumstances which surrounded the pay review and the continuing context of the coronavirus pandemic. Proposals for alternative arrangements that had been received during consultation were discussed.
- 6.3 Pending further clarity on the wider public sector pay approach and further exploration of pay award data from alternative sources, the Board (in its full complement) would make a determination at its meeting of 16 December. This, and the full outcome of the consultation, would be published at a time to be agreed.
- 6.4 On the impact of the McCloud pension judgment and on plans to undertake an external equality audit, the Board endorsed the recommendation to include these issues within the scope of the review as originally consulted on. It agreed that the loss-of-office payment remained appropriate and, given recent consultations, did not require reopening.

7. Financial Position and Management Accounts

7.1 The Director of Finance and Corporate Services presented the financial position as at the closure of October's books. The forecasts remained stable, with manageable but tight organisational headroom. Progress had been made on debt recovery, but this remained a priority area for improvement.

7.2 The Board noted the report and thanked the Director of Finance and Corporate Services for a better presented and more informative debt dashboard.

8. Board Programme of Work 2020-21 and Any Other Business

8.1 The Board noted its Programme of Work for 2020-21.

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