

Minutes of the IPSA Board Meeting – 15 June 2010

Present:	Sir Ian Kennedy (Chair)	Andrew McDonald (Chief Executive)
	Scott Baker	Philip Lloyd (Director of Finance)
	Jackie Ballard	Richard Barr (Fol adviser)
	Ken Olisa	Ed Owen (Communications)
	Isobel Sharp	Martyn Taylor (Secretariat)
		Kiran Virdee (Secretariat)

1. Welcome

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed Board Members to the IPSA Board meeting.

2. Minutes and matters arising

Paper: IPSA/150610/1

- 2.1. The Board requested some amendments to the minutes of the 7 June Board meeting. The minutes would be re-circulated for final sign-off.

3. Chief Executive's Report

Paper: IPSA/150610/2

- 3.1. The Board considered a report tabled by the Chief Executive.
- 3.2. The Chief Executive advised the board that IPSA was facing significant organisational pressures but was getting a grip on the volume of emails to be answered, a problem exacerbated by problems with management information. Some 200 emails had been cleared on 14 June. He advised the board that there had been in excess of 800 visits to the IPSA documentation centre based in Parliament.
- 3.3. An external advisor, Geraldine Terry, was carrying out an organisational review of IPSA's operations and would be presenting a draft report to the Chief Executive in the next week.
- 3.4. The Chief Executive reported on his meeting with the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

- 3.5. The Board requested the Chief Executive:
- explore the functionality of sending holding responses to MPs; and
 - seek to reduce the turnaround time for emails in due course
- 3.6. The Board stressed the importance of supporting IPSA staff in whichever ways possible and offered to attend team meetings with staff.
- 3.7. The Board further considered a paper from the Chief Executive setting out a number of proposals to enhance the service delivery to MPs.
- 3.8. Following a full and lengthy discussion on the details of the proposed package of additional services, the Board agreed to provide MPs with:
- one-to-one hands-on help for MPs needing guidance on the use of the online claims system;
 - one-to-one surgeries for MPs with IPSA officials from September including advice on the Scheme and their individual circumstances;
 - published guidance and frequently asked questions;
 - an extension to the £4,000 advance facility already available to MPs so that it will be available to them until the end of the financial year; and
 - a loosening of the requirement for proxies to be members of MPs' staff.
- 3.9. The Board agreed to consider the question of whether IPSA should make direct payments to third party suppliers as part of the annual review of the expenses scheme later in the year.

4. IPSA Budget

Paper: IPSA/150610/3

- 4.1. The Board considered and approved a revised draft of IPSA's budget memorandum. The revisions included the additional anticipated costs for staffing and office costs following the recent announcement that IPSA would honour current arrangements on both fronts if the requisite evidence is provided, and the likely additional costs of the service enhancements specified under 3.8.
- 4.2. The Board thanked Isobel Sharp for the time she had spent with the finance team on the budget.
- 4.3. The Board further stressed that it was important to emphasise that the additional costs of the service improvements would be incurred in response to concerns expressed by MPs.

5. Board Openness

Paper: IPSA/150610/7

- 5.1. The Board held a discussion about the relative virtues of recording dissenting views and agreed that in unusual cases of significant and strongly felt disagreement, a dissenting opinion may be recorded formally. The Board also agreed to revisit this subject in due course.

6. Freedom of Information request

Paper: IPSA/150610/6

- 6.1. The Board considered the approach to a Freedom of Information request and weighed varying interests involved. The Board asked Andrew McDonald to apply its preferred approach to the request, involving Sir Scott Baker, in his role as Qualified Person under S.36 of the Freedom of Information Act, as appropriate.

7. Annual report outline

Paper: IPSA/150610/4

- 7.1. Due to time constraints the Chair asked Board members to submit comments on the tabled paper to Martyn Taylor.
- 7.2. The Board also asked for a meeting to be set up with relevant IPSA staff to develop the annual report in early July at which Isobel Sharp and Ken Olisa would be present.

8. House of Commons performance award scheme

Paper: IPSA/150610/8

- 8.1. The Board considered the tabled paper and agreed this was a matter for the IPSA executive.

9. Communications on the consultation papers

Paper: IPSA/150610/5

- 9.1. The Board requested the publication on the IPSA website of a paper responding to a number of erroneous and misleading claims that have been made about IPSA and the new rules on expenses.
- 9.2. The Board also agreed there should be wider Board involvement in IPSA's communications.

10. Any other business

- 10.1. There was no other business.

The meeting was closed.