

Minutes of a meeting of IPSA's Board

Wednesday 28 June 2017

Present: Ruth Evans, Chairman
Sir Robert Owen
Liz Padmore
Anne Whitaker
Rt. Hon Jenny Willott

In attendance: Marcial Boo, Chief Executive
John Sills, Director of Regulation
Alastair Bridges, Director of Corporate Services
Vicky Fox, Director of MP Support Services
Head of Communications
Head of Policy
IPSA Account Manager

Apologies: Naomi Stauber, Chief of Staff

Status: Submitted for approval at the meeting of the Board on 13 July 2017

Publication: Approved for Publication.

1. Welcome and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those attending.
- 1.2 The Board received apologies from IPSA's Chief of Staff.
- 1.3 The Chairman invited the Board and members of staff to declare any interests not previously recorded. No new interests were declared.

2. Minutes of previous meetings and matters arising

Minutes

- 2.1 The Board approved the minutes of the last meeting without amendment.

Actions arising from the previous meeting

- 2.2 The Board noted that the actions arising from previous meetings were on track.

3. Gifts and Surveys assurance report.

- 3.1 The Board received two draft assurance reports from IPSA's Head of Policy, the first of which focussed upon gifts and surveys. The Board noted the hard work of the policy team in producing the report. The Board was broadly content with the report, asking only that a number of minor amendments be made to the report in order to present its findings more clearly.

4. Travel and Subsistence Assurance Report

- 4.1 The Board reviewed the second assurance report and requested a number of amendments relating to the report's style and tone. The Board was keen that the report's covering statistics page was reviewed so that the numbers could provide an effective overview of the report.
- 4.2 The Board also asked that further information be provided in respect of the increase in the cost of hotels for MPs' staff that had been highlighted within the report. The Chief Executive agreed to include this information in his report to the Board in July.

ACTION: IPSA's Chief Executive to submit a more detailed analysis of hotel costs for MPs' staff to the Board in July.

- 4.3 The Board were otherwise content for the report to be published as part of IPSA's planned annual assurance report in November.

5. Assurance report work programme

- 5.1 IPSA's Director of Regulation submitted IPSA's planned programme of assurance work to the Board for review, explaining that its formation was based upon key issues of public concern and the use of IPSA's judgement as to what areas might require greater assurance.
- 5.2 The Board noted the plan, asking only that the scheduled review into MPs' office premises had a clearly defined scope, given that it could potentially consider both MPs' compliance with our rules, and value for money considerations.

6. IPSA Online

- 6.1 IPSA's Change Leader presented a report to the Board in IPSA's programme of improvements. The Board was informed that testing of IPSA's new integrated expenses, payroll and finance system was underway. It was agreed that, at the Board's next meeting, a demonstration of the system would be provided.

ACTION: IPSA's Board to receive a demonstration of IPSA online at their next meeting.

- 6.2 The Board was keen to know more about the risks facing the project, and asked that the IPSA Online Programme Board's risk evaluation be circulated to them in July.

ACTION: IPSA's Board to receive IPSA Online Programme Board's risk evaluation at its next meeting.

- 6.3 The Board noted the progress that had been made on the project, thanking the Change Lead, her team, and the Executive for their work. The Board noted that they were now more assured about the progress of the project.

7. Compliance Officer's report

- 7.1 The Compliance Officer for the IPSA presented his report to the Board, updating them on his work, including on a number of open investigations and the amount of time spent in relation to Freedom of Information requests. The Board noted the ongoing actions of the Compliance Officer.
- 7.2 The Board approved the Compliance Officer's intention to update his website in order to make clear the distinction between his carrying out an assessment and an investigation.

8. Chief Executive's report

- 8.1 The Board noted the Chief Executive's update in respect of IPSA's delivery of support to new, departing and re-elected MPs during the General Election, placing on record

their thanks to the Director of MP Support Services in particular for her leadership and preparation.

- 8.2 The Director of MP Support Services explained that all new MPs had been met by an IPSA representative within four days of their election. Of those MPs who were newly elected, 50 had already received substantive training from their IPSA account manager. 63 of the MPs who were not returned had also met with IPSA staff, whilst drop in sessions had been held regularly in the House of Commons for MPs and their staff who had any queries.
- 8.3 The Board agreed that lessons had been learnt from the last election in 2015 and that, despite significantly fewer staff and less preparation time, IPSA's service had still been delivered effectively. They also agreed with the Executive that IPSA should consider in future whether it might be beneficial to be structured in a manner in which it can react to a General Election at any time.
- 8.4 The Board also noted the work of the Payroll team during the election, and asked to learn more about the team given the effort and dedication they had shown in responding to the election.

ACTION: IPSA's Board to hold an introduction and update session with IPSA's Payroll team.

- 8.5 The Board also noted IPSA's strong operational performance during May 2017, according to its key performance indicators, despite the introduction of General Election preparation alongside business as usual activities.
- 8.6 The Board noted the budget management figures provided by IPSA's Director of Corporate Services, including the additional resource that had been allocated to cover the cost of overtime, and recalling secondees as a result of the General Election. The Board also noted the forecasted cost of the IPSA online programme, agreeing that it would be useful for further work to be carried out in the autumn of 2017 in order to produce further detail on the benefits that IPSA, MPs and the public can expect to see from the implementation of the IPSA Online improvements.

ACTION: IPSA's Board to receive in the autumn a revised assessment of the benefits of the IPSA Online programme.

9. Any other Business

- 9.1 The Chair informed the Board that she and IPSA's Director of Policy and Regulation had met with Lord Bew, the Chair of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, and that IPSA would be responding to the Committee's open consultation on MPs' outside interests. The Board were content that IPSA do so.

Meeting closed.