

Minutes of a meeting of IPSA's Board

Monday 15 May 2017

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

In attendance: Marcial Boo, Chief Executive
Naomi Stauber, Chief of Staff
John Sills, Director of Regulation
Alastair Bridges, Director of Corporate Services
Vicky Fox, Director of MP Support Services
Head of Communications
Change Lead
PA Consulting

Apologies: None

Status: Submitted for approval at the meeting of the Board on 25 May 2017

Publication: Approved for Publication.

1. Welcome and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those attending.
- 1.2 No apologies were received.
- 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 minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 27 April were approved, subject to some minor amendments.

Actions arising from the previous meeting

- 2.2 The Board noted the actions that had been completed since the last meeting.

3. IPSA Online Progress and Timing

- 3.1 The Board convened to receive a comprehensive update on the work that had been undertaken to date to implement the IPSA 2017 improvement programme. It also considered the next steps towards the delivery of IPSA's new systems and processes and the timeline for doing so, particularly in the light of IPSA's need now to prioritise the General Election taking place on 8 June.
- 3.2 The Board noted that, since the start of the programme in 2015, it had received monthly progress reports from IPSA's Chief Executive. The programme is an Executive responsibility and it is the Board's role to hold the Executive to account for the delivery of the programme, in accordance with the business case that it approved in 2015 and revalidated earlier this year.
- 3.3 The IPSA 2017 improvement programme comprises five elements. IPSA considered each to be essential to improving its regulatory and operational responsibilities. Three of the five have already been achieved. First, by April 2016, an account management approach to IPSA's support to MPs had been implemented. Second, in November 2016, IPSA's new public-facing website had been launched. And third, in March 2017, following a long consultation and detailed deliberation, a new Scheme of MPs' Business Costs had been launched too.
- 3.4 The remaining two elements of the programme are, first, to launch a new 'MP Portal' by December 2017. This will be an online interface through which MPs can access information about their budgets, claims and other financial business with IPSA.

Second, to implement a new 'ERP' system that will bring together IPSA's finance, payroll, HR and expenses systems into a single IT system. This will bring efficiencies to IPSA, improved data quality and a more unified experience for MPs. IPSA first planned to phase-in the ERP system from April 2017. However, late last year, IPSA revised the go-live date to October 2017 to build in sufficient time to engage and train MPs effectively in the new system.

- 3.5 The Board noted that, on 19 April, Parliament voted to hold a General Election on 8 June 2017. This will involve considerable additional work for IPSA. In 2015, IPSA recruited an extra thirty temporary staff members to cope with the increased demands of supporting both the MPs who departed parliament and those who were newly elected. However, for this election, with no time to recruit and train new staff, IPSA must rely solely on its existing staffing complement.
- 3.6 The Board further noted that, on 30 March 2017, IPSA experienced a data breach that led to a wholesale re-evaluation of its approach to data security. As a consequence, IPSA immediately changed its policies and procedures and developed a comprehensive action plan to strengthen its data protection and information management policies, processes, training, governance and controls, pending recommendations from the Information Commissioner's Office. This is also an important project which must be prioritised.
- 3.7 The Chief Executive noted that IPSA is a small organisation with limited staffing resource. In the light of these new demands, and the requirement to continue to deliver its business as usual functions alongside them, a rapid reassessment of the organisation's priorities was undertaken. The Executive concluded that IPSA's priority for the coming period must be the delivery of the General Election. This is a responsibility that cannot be delegated or delayed, and is of fundamental and immediate importance to the MPs that IPSA has a responsibility to support. Second, IPSA must continue to implement its comprehensive action plan to strengthen its arrangements for data protection and information security.
- 3.8 The Board discussed the risks associated with continuing with the improvement programme at the same pace, whilst also meeting the new demands now placed on IPSA. It agreed that it was important to manage any risk to the quality of the final product and to increasing further the workload for IPSA's staff. It received the views of the PA Consulting colleagues in attendance, and offered its individual and collective views on the timescale for the implementation of the ERP system, which the Executive would then consider in the light of further discussion with the suppliers.
- 3.9 Overall, the Board agreed with the approach being taken to the IPSA 2017 improvement programme, to enable IPSA to continue to improve IPSA's work to support MPs through its systems and processes as well as deliver the General Election and its other priorities.

4. Any other business

- 4.1 The Chairman asked if there was any other business for report by the Board or the Executive. No further business was raised.

Meeting closed.