

## Minutes of a meeting of IPSA's Board

Monday 18 May 2015

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**Present:** Sir Ian Kennedy, Chairman  
Sir Neil Butterfield  
Liz Padmore  
Anne Whitaker  
Professor Tony Wright

**In attendance:** Marcial Boo, Chief Executive  
John Sills, Director of Policy and Communications  
Judith Toland, Director of Operations  
Naomi Stauber, Head of Board and Chief Executive Office  
Tony Stower, Head of Policy and Strategy  
Alan Little, Head of Finance  
Matthew Lumby, Head of Communications

**Apologies:** None

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**Status:** Submitted for approval at the meeting of the Board on 24 June 2015

**Publication:** For publication.

## **1. Welcome and Declarations of Interest**

1.1 The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those attending.

1.2 The Chairman noted that there were no apologies.

1.3 The Chairman invited Board and staff members to declare any interests not previously recorded. No interests were declared.

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

### Minutes

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2015 were approved as a correct record.

### Actions arising from the previous meeting

2.2 The Board noted that, following the General Election, the Scottish National Party (SNP) were now the third largest party. The SNP will need to consider whether and, if so, how it wishes to arrange and fund pooled services resources. The Board noted that the Chief Executive was to meet the Leader of the SNP in Westminster, Angus Robertson MP.

### Actions arising from the previous meeting

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

## **3. Implementing IPSA's strategy over the coming Parliament**

3.1 IPSA's Chief Executive introduced the report which presented proposals to improve IPSA's regulatory and administrative systems in order to achieve its strategy for the coming Parliament. The Board was invited to review and comment upon the broad approach, in particular in relation to IPSA's regulation and the fundamental review of the Scheme, its administration and the improvements thought to be necessary; and the risks and the financial impact that must be borne in mind as more detailed plans are developed.

3.2 The Board considered the proposals and noted, in particular, that:

- It was important, as part of the fundamental review of the Scheme, to make the rules clearer. The Board agreed that simplifying the language of the Scheme, and making other changes wherever possible to ease comprehension, would allow MPs to focus less on understanding complex rules and focus more on delivering value for money for the taxpayer.
- IPSA must also do more to promote value for money among MPs, and to encourage MPs to think about, and to choose, options for spending that demonstrate better value for taxpayers' money. Equally, IPSA must look at its own performance in terms of value for money and continue to ensure, as it has

done to date, that it is an efficient and cost-effective organisation in its use of resources.

- The number of fundamental principles of the Scheme could helpfully be reduced, and be more concise. The Board will receive a revised set of principles to consider at its next meeting.
- The General Election has caused IPSA to make significant changes to the way it administers the Scheme. These changes have improved the support it provides to MPs and has led to efficiencies. IPSA must continue along this path of continuous improvement and, if possible, retain some of the particularly high-performing General Election staff in any new model of support for MPs.
- IPSA must consider its role in relation to MPs' staff and how it can provide more effective support to this group within its remit. MPs are currently supported, in respect of HR, by the House of Commons HR Advice Service. However, MPs' staff receive no formal HR support. There is no suggestion that IPSA should be the body to provide advice to MPs' staff, but it is an area that needs to be addressed in the new Parliament, in consultation with the House of Commons.
- IPSA should seek to make its publication of MPs' business costs and expenses more accessible, to allow MPs and the general public easily to gain access to information about MPs' expenditure, with links to past years' data. This would enable MPs to provide their constituents with evidence of how they have spent public money. IPSA is already strongly transparent in its work, but it should nevertheless continue to improve its accessibility in line with technological developments.
- It will be important to seek the views of MPs (and their staff) about IPSA's Scheme, to feed into the fundamental review.

3.3 The Board agreed with the broad approach presented and noted that it would receive more detailed plans in due course.

#### **4. IPSA's Finance and Payroll Processes**

4.1 IPSA's Head of Finance presented the report which highlighted some of the areas for improvement that had been identified in the final quarter of the last financial year. The Board was informed that, whilst best practice is not being adhered to in some areas, and work must be undertaken to address these problems, the organisation is not currently at any financial risk.

4.2 The Board noted that the Chief Executive, and the Head of Finance, had already taken action to address and rectify the areas that required improvement. A joint finance and payroll plan for 2015-16 had been developed to implement improvements through the year. Resources had also been allocated internally to

support the improvement programme, which will also inform work on improving processes across the organisation.

- 4.3 The Board noted the information presented, and the actions being taken by the Executive to address the issues that had been identified.

## **5. Statutory Review of MPs' Pay: Final Consultation Document and Key Messages**

- 5.1 IPSA's Head of Policy and Strategy presented the final consultation document for the statutory review of MPs' pay for the Board's review and approval. The final document had been amended in the light of the Board's suggestions and comments at its last meeting on 22 April.

- 5.2 The Board welcomed IPSA's Head of Communications to his first meeting, and received his presentation on the proposed approach to communications for each stage of the consultation.

- 5.3 The Board agreed the consultation document, subject to a few minor amendments, and asked to be sent the document for its final clearance, prior to publication.

**ACTION: Head of Policy and Strategy to circulate the final amended consultation document for the Board's review and approval.**

**ACTION: Head of Communications to brief the Board prior to the launch of the consultation.**

## **6. Court of Appeal's Judgement**

- 6.1 IPSA's Director of Policy and Communications presented the report which detailed the Court of Appeal's judgement that had been published on 28 April 2015. The Board noted that IPSA's appeal against the Upper Tier Tribunal's decision to uphold the judgements of the First Tier Tribunal and the Information Commissioner that IPSA should release redacted copies of the three receipts requested by Ben Leapman, was dismissed.

- 6.2 The Board further noted that the Court of Appeal had agreed with the Information Commissioner that recorded information should be deemed to include "visual" information, such as logos on an invoice, as well as "linguistic" information like words and figures.

- 6.3 The Board agreed that IPSA should not appeal to the Supreme Court, and that the redacted images of the three receipts requested under FOI to Ben Leapman should be provided. The Board noted that, as the Court of Appeal made clear, this was an important test case with implications not just for IPSA but for all other public bodies. It had therefore been right to test the point of law through an appeal, as the Court of Appeal stated, to see whether images added anything additional to all the information about MPs' expenditure that IPSA already release.

6.4 The Board considered the financial, operational and strategic risks of its decision not to appeal to the Supreme Court, and noted, in particular, that IPSA had projected a budget of £2.15m, as agreed by the Speaker's Committee for IPSA, to cover the possibility of publishing all receipts, including the existing back catalogue. IPSA is not, however, proposing to move immediately to "active" publication.

## **7. General Election Results and Next Steps**

7.1 IPSA's Director of Operations updated the Board on the team's progress post-General Election, in respect of the induction of new MPs and the provision of support to those who were not re-elected.

7.2 The Board noted, in particular, that as of 22 April:

- The team had met all 182 new MPs (apart from one Sinn Fein Party MP). All the necessary data had been collected for new MPs to be set up on IPSA's systems, and all MPs had been assigned a personal IPSA contact. The team were in the process of arranging follow-up meetings, to provide training and continuing support. The vast majority of new MPs had also opted to use the IPSA payment card. The team had received positive feedback from both the new MPs and House of Commons officials, who noted their appreciation of the service delivered by IPSA.
- In respect of the MPs who were not re-elected, the team had been in contact with each of them to arrange a meeting at the earliest opportunity, to support them during the winding-up period. The Departing Members Area had operated extremely well and the former MPs who had been supported to date had been complementary about IPSA staffs' level of service, sensitivity and professionalism.
- In respect of the MPs who had been returned at the General Election, IPSA was providing a higher level of support immediately following the election, alongside the specific services for the new MPs and those who were not re-elected. In addition to extended hours of the MP Support phone line (for all MPs), the team was running a Returning Members Area in Portcullis House between 18 to 22 May, to provide additional training, support and advice.

7.3 The Board congratulated the Director of Operations and her team on their significant achievements and thanked them for their hard work.

## **8. Chief Executive's Report**

8.1 The Chief Executive introduced a paper setting out the organisation's activities since he last reported to the Board in April. He noted, in particular, that:

- The report included the new model for reporting on IPSA's performance information. This has replaced the balanced scorecard, and provides a more

robust framework for assessing, monitoring and reporting on IPSA's work. Some of the measures are still being developed for some of IPSA's regulatory functions, and to measure aspects of its organisational performance. These will be completed by July.

- The Board suggested that, in addition to the measures incorporated into the report, the Chief Executive should review his own risk register and consider whether any of those indicators could helpfully be included.
- The Chief Executive met the Clerk of the House of Commons and discussed some of the areas where IPSA's responsibilities cross over with those of the House, and where there is an opportunity for both bodies to work together to improve on current practices.
- The management accounts for the first month of the year had not been provided to the Board. The Board requested to be updated on the financial position prior to the next meeting.

8.2 The Board noted IPSA's performance for April 2015, and the list of the Chief Executive's and Chairman's meetings with MPs and officials since his last report.

**ACTION: Chief Executive to provide the Board with an update on the financial position.**

## **9. The Board's Programme of Work from April to September 2015**

9.1 The Board noted its programme of work scheduled for the coming months.

## **10. Any other business**

10.1 The Chairman enquired if there was any other business for report by the Board or the Executive. No further business was raised.

Meeting closed.