



## Minute

### Minutes of a meeting of the Board of IPSA Wednesday 25 June 2014

Present	Sir Ian Kennedy, Chair Sir Neil Butterfield Liz Padmore Anne Whitaker  Marcial Boo, Chief Executive  Peter Davis, Compliance Officer [items 1 – 7]  Nick Lee, Head of Board and Chief Executive Office	Belinda Brown, Director of People, Performance and Pay [items 1 – 8] Philip Lloyd, Director of Finance and Operations [items 1 – 8] John Sills, Director of Policy and Communications [items 1 – 8] Judith Toland, Director of Change [items 1 – 8]  Head of Communications [items 4 – 8] Head of Policy [items 1 – 6]  Publications and General Election Manager [item 6]
Apologies	Tony Wright	
Status	Final, as approved for publication at the meeting of the Board of 10 July 2014.	
Publication	For publication no later than 23 July 2014. Section 9 not for publication.	

## 1. Welcome

1.1. The Chair welcomed the Board to the meeting.

### Declarations of interests

1.2. There were no new declarations of interest.

## 2. Minutes of previous meetings and matters arising

### Minutes of previous meetings

2.1. The Head of Board and Chief Executive Office reported that, owing to the pressure of time, it had not been possible to prepare for approval minutes of the previous meeting of the Board. The Board noted that outstanding minutes would be brought to the Board for approval before the end of July.

### **Nick Lee to arrange for the Board to approve outstanding minutes of previous meetings of the Board.**

### Action list

2.2. The Head of Board and Chief Executive Office reported that, owing to the pressure of time, it had not been possible to prepare an action list. The Board noted that the action list would be circulated out of committee the following week.

### **Nick Lee to circulate revised Board action list.**

### Matters arising

2.3. There were no other matters arising.

## 3. Compliance Office key performance indicators

### *IPSA/140625/3 – Compliance Office Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)*

3.1. The Compliance Officer introduced a paper setting out proposed revisions to the key performance indicators (KPIs) relating to the work of his office.

3.2. The Board noted that it was important to monitor qualitative indicators of performance, which might not be captured by quantitative KPIs. Measuring indicators of this kind was not, however, straightforward and could be resource-intensive.

3.3. The Board agreed that:

- given the scale of the Compliance function within IPSA, it would not be proportionate for it to report separately on its performance against a set of KPIs; but, nevertheless,
- it would be important for the Compliance Officer to continue – as he currently did – to report regularly on the work of his office, providing management information and data as appropriate in support of those reports.

#### **4. Compliance Officer: Review of investigative procedures**

*IPSA/140625/4 + annexes A – B – Review of the procedures for investigations of the Compliance Officer for the IPSA*

- 4.1. The Director of Policy and Communications introduced a paper setting out proposed revisions to the procedures for investigations by the Compliance Officer. He noted, in particular, that while the procedures were a matter for the Board (having carried out appropriate public consultation), the proposals for consultations had been drawn up jointly by the IPSA and the Compliance Officer, and reflected the latter's experience since he took office.
- 4.2. The Compliance Officer noted that the existing procedures had been introduced in February 2012. He had not, at the time they were introduced, been in a position to make a judgement about their efficacy but he had since then identified a small number of areas where they could be improved.
- 4.3. The Board noted that the proposals for consultation constituted minor amendments intended to improve the effectiveness of the Compliance function, without removing the transparency that was an important component of the Compliance Officer's work.

#### Meetings with MPs

- 4.4. The Compliance Officer noted that the requirement that his meetings with MPs as part of an investigation should be in public was a departure from the requirements of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 and had the potential to impede the effectiveness of an investigation if it acted as a deterrent against such meetings taking place or against open dialogue with those concerns.
- 4.5. The Board agreed to consult on the removal of the requirement that meetings between the Compliance Officer and MPs as part of an investigation should take place in public.

Announcements of investigations

4.6. The Compliance Officer reported that he was proposing that, in future, no public announcement should be made when an investigation was opened. He noted that:

- it was – in his view – neither fair to MPs nor proportionate to publish the fact an investigation had begun before any finding had been made, not least given the potential for this to be portrayed as suggesting individual wrongdoing even before he had been able to complete the due process. Such publication could also impede the conduct of his investigations if MPs felt, as a consequence of such publicity, obliged publicly to defend their position rather than engaging with his investigation; and
- he was recommending, therefore, that the findings of an investigation (adverse or otherwise) should only be published once this was complete.

4.7. The Board noted that:

- since – under the proposals – the outcome of investigations would in any case be published, there would be no overall change in the level of transparency about the work of the Compliance Officer. Transparency remained a critical component of the work of his office, and it was important to make public the outcome of an investigation whatever its outcome;
- the proposed amendments would be fairer to MPs because they would not expose them unreasonably to criticism; and
- the likely outcome of the revised procedures, if they were adopted, was that more cases currently resolved at assessment stage and currently not made public would be dealt with at the investigation stage, meaning there would be greater transparency about the work of the Compliance Officer.

4.8. The Board agreed to consult on proposals only to publish details of investigations once they had been concluded.

Other matters

4.9. The Board noted that complaints to the Compliance Officer needed to be submitted in writing, so as to provide a permanent record of the fact a complaint had been made.

**Head of Policy to prepare consultation on changes to the Compliance Officer's procedures for approval at the meeting of the Board in September 2014.**

## **5. Compliance Officer's policy for a general election**

*IPSA/140625/5 + annex A – Compliance Officer's policy for a general election*

5.1. The Compliance Officer introduced a paper setting out his proposed approach to the conduct of investigations during the period leading up to and during a general election. He reported, in particular, that:

- his procedures already provided him with discretion to delay or suspend investigations if the circumstances required it, and no new policy was necessary to enable him to apply this discretion during the period leading up to or during a general election; but,
- nevertheless, it could be argued that his adopting a policy would provide reassurance as to how he would handle requests for investigations in such circumstances.

5.2. The Board noted that:

- given the powers already available to the Compliance Officer, there was no compelling reason for adopting an additional policy for a general election; and
- it was important that the Compliance Officer retained the discretion to proceed with an investigation if the circumstances and the seriousness of the matters raised justified his doing so.

5.3. The Board agreed:

- not to adopt an additional policy for the handling of investigations during the period leading up to or during a general election; and
- to include, in the draft revised investigative procedures for the Compliance Officer, an explanatory note setting out the Compliance Officer's approach in such cases.

## **6. Review of publication policy: Report signoff**

*IPSA/140625/6 + annexes A – C – Review of publication scheme*

6.1. The Head of Communications introduced a draft report for publication following the recent consultation on IPSA's publication scheme. He noted, in particular, that:

- the report reflected the Board's discussions at its meetings in June 2014; and
- once approved, the report would be published in mid-July. Given that relatively few responses to the consultation had been received and given that no major changes

to the earlier proposals were envisaged, he did not anticipate significant interest in the publication.

6.2. The Board noted that work was separately under way to review the presentation of MPs' business costs and expenses ahead of the publication of annualised data in September 2014.

6.3. The Board approved the report on the consultation on IPSA's publication scheme for publication.

**Head of Communications to arrange for the publication of the report on IPSA's publication scheme**

**7. Compliance Officer's report**

*IPSA/140625/7 + annex A – Compliance Officer's report*

7.1. The Compliance Officer introduced a report on his work over the preceding month.

7.2. The Board agreed to note the report of the Compliance Officer.

**8. Chief Executive's report**

*IPSA/140625/8 + annexes A – D – Chief Executive's report*

8.1. The Chief Executive introduced a report setting out his work over the previous month. He reported, in particular, that data relating to IPSA's performance showed a year-on-year improvement in key areas of its operations.

8.2. The Board noted that:

- it was important both to measure quantitative performance but also gather qualitative data about the experience of users of its systems and processes;
- certain streams of work were behind schedule, reflecting tight resourcing. Work was, however, under way, to bring these back on track and significant progress was expected to have been made by the time of the meeting of the Board in July;
- it was important to acknowledge e-mails and letters when they were received if, as a result of their complexity, they could not be resolved swiftly. There were examples of certain items of correspondence being significantly delayed and work was under way to review the process for handling of such items to ensure this was robust; and

- IPSA had, earlier that month, introduced a new flexible job descriptions tool. This reflected calls from MPs and their staff to introduce greater flexibility, and had been well-received.

#### Finance report

8.3. The Director of Finance and Operations introduced a report setting out IPSA's management accounts to 31 May 2014. He reported, in particular, that:

- expenditure was as expected, with a slightly underspend forecast for the end of the financial year; and
- the Estimate for 2014/15 had now been approved by the Speaker's Committee for the IPSA.

8.4. The Board noted the importance of considering financial and operational performance data in the same report.

8.5. The Board agreed to note the report of the Director of Finance and Operations.

#### **Nick Lee / Marcial Boo to review presentation of financial and performance data in the context of the Chief Executive's report to the Board.**

#### Preparation for the General Election

8.6. The Director of Programmes reported on work to prepare for the General Election. She reported, in particular, that:

- one-on-one meetings had been held with MPs who had already announced their intention to stand down, many of whom were keen to put in place arrangements to wind down their offices;
- she had attended a seminar for MPs' staff in Manchester organised by the House of Commons, which had been well-received by those who had attended; and
- she was continuing, as previously, to brief key interested parties on IPSA's preparations for the General Election.

#### Britain Thinks / Fabian Society – reconnecting people and politics

8.7. Liz Padmore reported that she had attended a seminar to discuss how best to reconnect with voters. She noted, in particular, that she had mentioned IPSA's

proposals for MPs to produce reports annually, which had been well-received by those attending the seminar.