

- a. that with regard to ensuring suitable support for those with disabilities, the Access to Work scheme and grant should be explored;
- b. that it would be desirable to institutionalise formal, twice-yearly, meetings between the IPSA Board and the House

3. Chief Executive's verbal report

3.1 The verbal report on progress was given by the Implementation Programme director in the Chief Executive's absence.

3.2 The Board made the following observations:

- a. A user-group of MPs' staff to test the new system would be desirable, as would a forum for MPs themselves to test the system.
- b. A robust induction and training process needs to be in place for new MPs and new staff.
- c. The system should be tested against MPs' experiences – particularly taking into account their needs on the first day after an election, in their first week, first month and first quarter.
- d. Clear communication was needed regarding the position of taking the Oath prior to being able to make any expenses claims – particularly that MPs who are delayed in taking the Oath will be reimbursed for expenses incurred from the time of election.

4. Implementation Programme Contingency Planning

4.1 The Board considered the paper on contingency planning

5. IPSA Implementation Advisory Panel

5.1 The Board considered a paper on the panel's role and origins. The Board noted the benefits in the executive taking advice prior to the Board's establishment but were anxious to ensure that it was the Board which determined policy and that any advice which the executive might receive was suitably balanced.

5.2 The Board recommended a change to the wording of the paper at 3.1, substituting "consideration" for "approval".

6. Consultation – paper and programme

6.1 The Board noted the proposed schedule for the consultation and requested the executive to check that all relevant organisations had been included in the consultation process, including, for example, Operation Black Vote and the ex-Members Group.

6.2 The Board agreed that any shadowing of MPs should be with retiring MPs. It agreed that there was merit in the Chairman attending meetings accompanied by Board members, but that each meeting should be considered on merit.

6.3 The Board requested a briefing for meetings, covering the key IPSA principles and proposals in the consultation document.

6.4 The Board requested dates for meetings to be set by the end of the week.

7. Communication Strategy

7.1 The Board noted the paper on the development of a communications strategy. The Board requested more operational guidance and advice on what publicity and media presence it should seek during the consultation period and immediately following it, including the development of relevant responses whilst noting that it was important to keep clearly in mind what IPSA has to achieve: a workable and fair expenses scheme.

7.2 The Board agreed that the strategy would require considerable rethinking if proposed legislation was passed handing additional powers to IPSA.

7.3 The Board further agreed that its longer-term ambition should be that IPSA serve as an example to other parts of the world.

8. Open Board Meetings paper (unscheduled Board paper)

8.1 The Board noted the paper on the options and estimated costs of holding open and transparent board meetings.

8.2 The Board agreed that it was important that it acts as transparently as possible and “operates in the sunshine”. With this in mind it agreed that the minutes of every board meeting should be published as the *de minimis* position. In addition, it requested further work on exploring the practices adopted elsewhere, such as dial-in services in the case of major commercial companies. If a satisfactory solution is found, it would be put into action as soon as practicable

9. Any Other Business

9.1 The Board asked to see comparative expenses schemes from other Commonwealth countries, including Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

9.2 The Board asked to see the latest position on the Constitutional Renewal and Governance Act.

9.3 The Board was reassured that an opinion survey would be conducted during the consultation period.

10. Board Appraisal (closed session)

The meeting was closed.