

Minutes of the IPSA Board Meeting – Wednesday, 2 February 2010

Present:	Sir Ian Kennedy (Chair)	Scott Woolveridge (Director of Operations)
	Scott Baker	John Sills (Director of Policy)
	Jackie Ballard	Bob Evans (Director of Finance)
	Ken Olisa	Anne Power (Director of Communications)
	Isobel Sharp	Tony Lord (Head of Policy) (item 6)
		Belinda Brown (Performance and Governance) (item 4)
		Philip Lloyd (former Director of Finance) (item 4)
		Victoria Elliot (Change and Project Manager) (item 4)
		Louise Edwards (Policy) (item 5)
		Alan Lockwood (interim Compliance Officer) (Item 5)
Apologies:	Andrew McDonald, Chief Executive	Martyn Taylor (Secretariat)
		Kiran Virdee (Secretariat)

1. Welcome

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed Board Members. Andrew McDonald, the Chief Executive, sent apologies.

2. Minutes and matters arising

Paper: Minutes; Ongoing Actions

- 2.1. The Minutes of the 15 December Board meeting were approved, subject to a number of minor amendments.
- 2.2. The Board requested that Parliamentary Questions answered by IPSA be published on IPSA's website by the end of the financial year.
- 2.3. The Board expressed its desire to engage with the Scottish Parliament and requested a meeting be set up, if necessary by telephone conference.
- 2.4. The Board requested that a paper on openness be tabled at the 22 February Board meeting.

3. Chief Executive's Report, incorporating the Board update and communications

Paper: IPSA/020211/2-4

- 3.1. Scott Woolveridge presented the Chief Executive's Report in Andrew McDonald's absence.
- 3.2. The Board agreed that the Chair should be made aware by members of the Board of approaches to or by the media to them and that IPSA's communications team provide assistance and advice as required.
- 3.3. The Board requested that, as per the standing orders for Board meetings, Board members be given 48 hours notice of items requiring substantive discussion, and such items should be included on the agenda.
- 3.4. The Board considered the KPIs and, following reports in the media of MPs being significantly out of pocket as a result of the slow processing of claims, sought reassurance that IPSA was processing claims within its twelve working day target. This assurance was given and the Board was advised that there were a large number of claims in the online system that had undergone their first stage of submission to IPSA by MPs, but for which additional evidence was required had not been received by IPSA. The Board further noted that IPSA had not for some time received complaints from MPs themselves that they were significantly out of pocket as a result of the slow processing of claims. The Board requested further detail on the claims for which no or further relevant evidence had been forthcoming.
- 3.5. The Board noted that IPSA had been issued with a County Court summons for payment of two claims. One claim had, however, never been submitted to IPSA, either electronically or otherwise, the other claim had already been paid.
- 3.6. The Board welcomed the work underway to replace IPSA's website and looked forward to being involved in its development.
- 3.7. The Board expressed its wish to be actively involved in IPSA's broader communications strategy and the importance of maintaining a feedback mechanism from the public by way of periodic opinion polls.

4. Business models

Paper: IPSA/020211/5

- 4.1. Victoria Elliot was introduced and Belinda Brown and Philip Lloyd presented a paper with options for possible future approaches for IPSA to carry out its tasks.
- 4.2. The Board considered the paper and requested the following:
 - a breakdown of the costs of IPSA's current activities, including a "per expense transaction" cost;

- consideration of where the rules of the expenses scheme may be simplified and where they may be overly intrusive, such intrusiveness be reduced;
- that IPSA continue to develop its payment mechanisms;
- consideration of whether certain predictable expenses would be administered better by way of the provision of certain block amounts, relying more heavily on audit by way of assurance;
- that the presentation of costs incurred by MPs are improved and greater clarity is drawn to distinguish between office costs (the costs of running and staffing an MP's office) and personal expenses, such as travel and overnight accommodation;
- that – without prejudice to seeking to reduce IPSA's costs in both operational and non-operational areas – it was important to emphasise that the total cost to the public purse for supporting MPs was significantly lower than under the previous system; and
- that IPSA, as it develops and improves its service provision, continues to consider alternative models for delivering its services.

5. Compliance Officer review procedures

Paper: IPSA/020211/6

- 5.1. Louise Edwards presented a paper asking the Board to agree guidance from IPSA to the Compliance Officer on procedures for the publication of statements of reviews conducted under provisions of the Parliamentary Standards Act.
- 5.2. The interim Compliance Officer, Alan Lockwood, stated he was content with the draft guidance, which was approved by the Board.

6. Legal costs

Paper: IPSA/020211/7

- 6.1. Tony Lord introduced a paper which made recommendations for dealing with potential employment legal actions that may have arisen in the past year and are not covered by the House of Commons' arrangements, or by future coverage of legal risks insurance.
- 6.2. The Board agreed the following:
 - for a limited period, until 31 March 2011, legal representation costs, as well as legal advice, is claimable from the GAE budget under 10.4.d.ii, professional services. Where the GAE budget is insufficient, contingency applications would be considered;

- the limited period would relate only to actions and potential actions arising since 7 May 2010. After 1 April 2011, actions arising before 31 March 2011 would only be supported where the MP has notified IPSA;
- compromise agreements and settlement costs would not be claimable; and
- pending the outcome of the review of the rules, should the cost of the premium for legal insurance become claimable from 1 April 2011, no insurable legal costs arising after this date would be claimable.

7. Fees Office cost comparison

- 7.1. The Board considered the question of the comparative cost of IPSA and the cost of the old House of Commons Fees office.
- 7.2. The Board agreed that the costs of each could not be compared on a like for like basis. Moreover, the detail of the Fees Office costs had been hard to establish and the National Audit Office had recently qualified their accounts. It had been impossible to extract sufficient figures to establish the true costs, such that trying to make comparisons with IPSA was not fruitful.

8. Finance Report

Paper: IPSA/020211/9

- 8.1. Bob Evans presented IPSA's financial report. The Board noted IPSA's financial position for the period to the end of December 2010 and the forecast to the end of the year. The executive was asked to consider which activities should be halted in the event that the position become less favourable.
- 8.2. The Board asked to be kept closely abreast of the development of IPSA's budget estimate for 2011/12.

9. Any Other Business

- 9.1. The Board was presented with a timetable setting out the sign-off process for the review of the expenses Scheme.

The meeting was closed.