



## Minute

### Minutes of a meeting of the Board of IPSA Tuesday 17 December 2013

Present	<p>Sir Ian Kennedy, Chair [items 1 – 4]          Sir Neil Butterfield          Liz Padmore          Anne Whitaker          Tony Wright</p> <p>Andrew McDonald, Chief Executive</p> <p>Peter Davis, Compliance Officer for the IPSA [item 7]</p> <p>Nick Lee, Head of Board and Chief Executive Office</p>	<p>Mark Anderson, Head of Communications [items 3 – 11]          Belinda Brown, Director of People, Performance and Pay          Karen Hennessy, HR Manager [item 2]          Philip Lloyd, Director of Finance and Operations [items 3 – 11]          John Sills, Director of Policy and Communications [items 3 – 11]</p> <p>Tony Hodges, Policy and Communications Officer [items 3 – 6]          Tony Lord, Head of Policy [items 3 – 6]          Joe Reddington, Audit and Assurance Officer [item 9]</p>
Apologies	None.	
Status	As approved the Board following the meeting of the Board on 20 February 2014.	
Publication	Final for publication no later than 19 March 2014. Sections 2, 5 and 10.5 – 10.6 not for publication.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.

### **3. Minutes of previous meetings, action list and matters arising**

*IPSA/140220/2 – Action list*

#### Minutes of a meeting of the Board, 5 December 2013

- 3.1. The Head of Board and Chief Executive Office reported that the minutes of the previous meeting were not yet ready for circulation.

**Nick Lee to circulate the minutes of the meeting of the Board of 5 December 2013.**

#### Action list and matters arising

- 3.2. The Head of Board and Chief Executive Office reported that:

- the minutes of the meeting of the Board of 24 July 2013 had, as a consequence of an oversight, not been made available on IPSA's website; and
- this would be addressed following the meeting of the Board.

- 3.3. The Board noted that the contract with Calyx Managed Services with respect to IPSA's IT had been extended (and the contract with m-hance would shortly be extended), as previously agreed, for a further year.

- 3.4. There were no other matters arising.

### **4. Pay and pensions: Report back**

- 4.1. The Director of Policy and Communications reported that:

- the final report, setting out IPSA's decisions on MPs' pay and pensions from 2015, had been launched on 12 December; and
- this had prompted considerable media interest, and some political reaction, although most MPs had – understandably – not commented on the announcement.

- 4.2. The Board noted that having made a decision, which it would review as part of its statutory review in the first few months of the next Parliament, it would be important now to move on to other issues.

**Mark Anderson / John Sills to bring forward proposals for handling of pay and pensions issues ahead of the 2015 statutory review.**

## **6. Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2010: Implications for the MPs' and MEPs' pension scheme**

6.1. The Head of Policy introduced a paper setting out the implications for MPs and MEPs' pensions of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2010. He noted, in particular, that:

- while the legislation enabling same-sex couples to get married, would not affect a significant number of individuals within the pension scheme, IPSA nevertheless was required to consult on changes to it so as to ensure that those in same-sex marriages did not lose out as a consequence of the changes. Changes were also necessary to ensure those who changed gender in law after marrying were not unfairly disadvantaged by their decision to do so; and
- because the proposed amendments, while minor, would nevertheless change the MPs' and MEPs' pension scheme, IPSA was required to consult on them.

6.2. The Board noted that:

- if IPSA were not to consult on introducing these changes it would be open to legal challenge;
- in any case, the consultation on the changes would be very low key; and
- if agreed by the Board, the changes arising from the consultation would arise in two tranches across the coming year, reflecting the differences in the timing of the implementation of different parts of the Act.

6.3. The Board agreed to consult on changing the MPs' and MEPs' pension scheme to treat survivors of a same-sex married couple equally with the survivor of a civil partnership (i.e. like a widower) and to protect the expectations of wives of husbands who legally change gender, consistent with the approach being taken in other public service schemes.

### **Tony Lord to arrange for a consultation on changes to the MPs' and MEPs' pension scheme.**

## **7. Compliance Officer's report**

*IPSA/131217/4 + annex A – Compliance Officer's report*

7.1. The Compliance Officer introduced a paper setting out his activities over the preceding month. He reported, in particular, that he had recently received a number of requests from MPs for him to review decisions by IPSA, in addition to complaints from members of the public.

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

## 8. Finance report

*IPSA/131217/5 + annexes A - B – Finance Report*

8.1. The Director of Finance and Operations introduced a report setting out the financial position as at 30 November 2013. He reported, in particular, that:

- with respect to MPs' pay, staffing, costs and expenses (subhead A), he expected an underspend of just over £3½m by the end of the financial year;
- with respect to IPSA's core operational costs (subhead B), he expected a slight underspend by the end of the financial year;
- with respect to project costs (subhead C), he expected to underspend by £¼m by the end of the financial year, principally because of changes to the timing of the review of MPs' accommodation; and
- providing the Speaker's Committee for the IPSA (SCIPSA) approved IPSA's Supplementary Estimate for 2013/14, IPSA was unlikely now to exceed its Estimate.

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

## 9. Annual user survey, 2013

*IPSA/131217/6 – Annual user survey, 2013 – findings*

9.1. The Head of Communications introduced a paper setting out the findings of the annual survey of users (MPs and their staff) undertaken earlier that year. He reported, in particular, that:

- a broader range of responses had been received than in response to previous surveys, and MPs' proxies were now able to respond in their own right; and
- the responses indicated a slight improvement overall but also suggested a significant difference in the perceptions of MPs and their proxies.

9.2. The Board noted that:

- a number of respondents had suggested that IPSA open its 'phone lines in the morning. There was no reason, in principle, for it not to do so but if the current approach were to be changed consideration would need to be given as to how this

might be resourced and whether additional funding might be required in order to do so;

- while the time taken to make payments remained impressive, it was important to ensure that quality and accuracy remained high; and
- work was under way to improve the form of the reports already available through the online expenses system so as to improve their accessibility and enable MPs better to understand the status of their claims.

9.3. The Head of Communications noted that, by way of follow up, IPSA would be:

- identifying eight key findings where additional work could be done to address concerns raised, and setting out clearly what actions would be taken and when;
- writing to all MPs and their proxies, to make them aware of the results of the survey; and
- posting the report on its website.

9.4. The Board agreed to note the report on the annual user survey 2013.

## **10. Chief Executive's report**

*IPSA/131217/7 + annexes A – C – Chief Executive's report; IPSA/131217/8 + annexes A – D – Board Information Update*

10.1. The Chief Executive introduced a report setting out the work of the Executive since the last meeting of the Board.

### Upper Tier Tribunal

10.2. The Chief Executive reported that the Upper Tier Tribunal had on 16 December heard IPSA's appeal against the earlier decision of the Information Tribunal, and a decision was expected early in the new year.

### Office accommodation

10.3. The Chief Executive reported that:

- despite considerable efforts, there had to date been no interest in leasing IPSA's accommodation in Portland House; and
- work continued in an effort to identify a tenant to enable IPSA to move early to new accommodation ahead of the General Election.

Change Director

- 10.4. The Chief Executive reported that, following an appointment process, a candidate had been identified and would begin work early in 2014.

10.7. The Board agreed to note the report of the Chief Executive.

**11. Any other business**

11.1. There was no other business.

*Meeting closed.*