

**Minutes of the IPSA Board Meeting – 15 April 2010**

<b>Present:</b>	Ian Kennedy (Chair)	Andrew McDonald (Chief Executive)
	Scott Baker	Robin Galloway (Implementation Director)
	Jackie Ballard	Adrian Rickard (HR Director)
	Ken Olisa	Philip Lloyd (Operations Director)
	Isobel Sharp	John Sills (Policy Director)
		James Gerard (Implementation Policy)
		Ed Owen (Communications)
		Martyn Taylor (Secretariat)
		Kiran Virdee (Secretariat)
		Ruth Sloan (Implementation projects and processes)

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**1. Welcome**

- 1.1. The Chairman welcomed Board Members to the first IPSA Board meeting in the new Portland House offices, and introduced Kiran Virdee who has recently joined the IPSA Secretariat.

**2. Minutes and matters arising**

Papers: IPSA/140410/1, IPSA/140410/1A

- 2.1. The Board approved the minutes of the 10 March and 23 March Board meetings, subject to a minor clarification.
- 2.2. Final versions of the IPSA Board codes of conduct would be circulated by close today and, once agreed, published on the IPSA website.

**3. Chief Executive's report**

Paper: IPSA/140410/2

- 3.1. The Board considered the Chief Executive's report on IPSA's operational readiness, as follows:
- finalising the IT system, expenses scheme guidance and associated induction and training processes remains the principal focus;

- the first tranche of staff transfers from the House of Commons has taken place; and
  - numerous Members of Parliament have contacted IPSA – both Board members and the executive – with queries and concerns about the scheme.
- 3.2. The Board congratulated the Chief Executive on achieving the advanced state of readiness IPSA is in.

#### **4. Preparations for Go Live – update**

Paper: IPSA/150410/3

- 4.1. The Board considered a paper updating members on the projects in hand to deliver a fully operational IPSA in time for May, as follows:
- testing of live payroll data was underway and proving successful and would continue, building in a variety of possible scenarios;
  - the online expenses system configuration would be finalised today with user acceptance testing beginning on Monday, 19 April; this testing would include operational helpline testing;
  - the testing should if possible call on retiring MPs in order to gain better insight into how actual users are likely to find the system; and
  - the arrangements for loans and advances to MPs would be set out in the expenses scheme guidance and processes were being put in place.
- 4.2. The Board requested that the IPSA implementation project plan remain a standing item at Board meetings.

#### **5. Further policy considerations**

Papers: IPSA/150410/6; IPSA/150410/6A

- 5.1. The Board considered papers on a number of policy matters requiring resolution as follows:
- the guidance would be set out clearly for each part of the expenses scheme in an easily usable format;
  - key concerns raised to date were on the staffing budget and cost of renting constituency offices. The Board requested further advice on these points; and
  - the Board requested further advice on the role of the Compliance Officer as set out in the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010, and the recruitment of the office-holder.
- 5.2. On the question of the recovery of capital gains, or the level of public subsidy, from MPs who continue to claim mortgage interest subsidies during the transitional period between May 2010 and August 2012, the Board sought further advice, including legal advice on recovering notional gains and the

accounting procedure for any recovered monies. A further paper would be circulated out of committee.

## **6. Appraisal of scheme**

Papers: IPSA/150410/4; IPSA/150410/4; IPSA/150410/4

- 6.1. The Board welcomed the largely positive response to the publication of the new rules for MPs' expenses. It placed IPSA in a positive position at the start of a new Parliament.
- 6.2. Advice on the policy implications of the passing of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act, particularly on setting MPs' pay and pensions, would be put to the Board at an early stage. The Board requested that this include advice on greater public involvement in any deliberation process. **Action 4:** John Sills/Martyn Taylor
- 6.3. The Board recognised that the outcome of the General Election could also impact on the scope of IPSA's work.

## **7. Performance-related pay**

Paper: IPSA/150410/7

- 7.1. The Board considered a paper, introduced by Adrian Rickard, on performance-related pay for IPSA staff. The Board decided that:
  - pay progression up the pay-scale should be based on performance as opposed to age or length of service;
  - there should be a scheme for small, discretionary rewards both for individuals and for teams.

## **8. IPSA strategic planning**

Papers: IPSA/150410/5; IPSA/150410/5A; IPSA/150410/5B

- 8.1. Philip Lloyd introduced a paper on IPSA's forward planning. The Board considered this paper on the following basis and decided that:
  - there be an objective on public engagement;
  - IPSA focuses on some clearly measurable objectives;
  - a timetable for themed audits be brought to a future Board meeting; and
  - that the forward plan is considered by the Board on a three-monthly basis.

## **9. Miscellaneous papers**

Papers: IPSA/150410/9; IPSA/150410/10; IPSA/150410/11

- 9.1. The Board considered a paper on how IPSA would be engaging with MPs in the run up to and immediately after the General Election. This included what induction

sessions and training would be provided for MPs and their staff and the degree of Board members' involvement in these sessions.

9.2. The Board also considered a short paper setting out the work underway on a publication scheme for freedom of information purposes, and decided as follows:

- publication criteria need to be clear and stated explicitly;
- the presumption should be publication subject to data being exempted that might put MPs' security at risk or increase the risk of identity theft;
- a clear policy on redactions is required; and
- the policies adopted by the devolved administrations should be looked in to.

9.3. Subject to a few minor changes, the Board agreed the standing orders for IPSA Board meetings. These will be published on the IPSA website.

## **10. Any other business**

10.1. The Board requested a meeting to consider IPSA's budget.

10.2. The Board requested further advice on what visitors to the website will be able to do with the data on MPs' expenses.

The meeting was closed.