**CSPL (16) 88**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINTH MEETING**

**THURSDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2016 AT 10:00AM**

**ROOM GC05.1, 1 HORSE GUARDS ROAD,** **LONDON, SW1A 2HQ**

**MINUTES**

Present: Lord Bew, Chair

Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP

Sheila Drew Smith OBE

Monisha Shah

Jane Ramsey

Richard Thomas CBE

Professor Mark Philp, Chair, Research Advisory Board

Secretariat: Lesley Bainsfair, Secretary

Renny Mendoza, Senior Policy Advisor

Maggie O’Boyle, Press Officer

Apologies: Dame Angela Watkinson DBE MP *(on leave of absence)*

Paul Croney, Governance and Communications Co-ordinator

**1. Registers**

The Committee reviewed the register of interests, and the registers of external meetings, gifts and hospitality.

**2. Minutes and matters arising**

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2016.

*Committee Membership*

The Committee welcomed the re-appointment of Margaret Beckett to the Committee for another 3 year term. It was also noted that a Liberal Democrat peer had been nominated by the Liberal Democrats to replace Lord Alderdice; confirmation was awaited from the Prime Minister’s office. Both appointments would be published on the website as soon as formal confirmation was received.

*PACAC Inquiry into ACOBA*

The Chair and Sheila Drew Smith reported on their appearance on 25 October 2016 before the House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee Inquiry into the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments. The Chair reported that he was meeting the Chair of PACAC later this month.

*Meeting with Chair and Chief Executive of Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC)*

Richard Thomas reported that he and the Chair had held a very positive meeting with Dame Vera Baird, Chair, and Nazir Afzal, Chief Executive of the APCC. The APCC had indicated they were willing to work with CSPL where they could.

**3. Ethics for regulators**

The Committee noted the lessons learned from *Striking the Balance*. Key points to note for the future were: the need for a further issues paper 3 months into any project; more liaison with others engaged in similar areas of work; the need to plan the follow up plan sooner; and more engagement with any academics commissioned to write papers. Finally, it was noted that reports may become vulnerable due to the small size of the Secretariat and it was essential to think about management of corporate knowledge and how to transfer project lessons learned to any new Secretariat.

**4. Referendum Seminar**

The Committee discussed the seminar to be held on 22 November 2016 jointly with the Constitution Unit, UCL. The Chair’s opening remarks setting out the purpose of the day in relation to CSPL were agreed.

**5**. **Public’s view of standards**

Professor Mark Philp introduced his paper looking at options for ensuring the Committee understands the public’s view of standards and how the Committee might monitor any changes following this matter being raised at the October Committee meeting. It was agreed that rather than collecting new data, the first step should be to analyse the data we do have and to exploit current resources. It was agreed that the Research Advisory Board would meet in early December and report back to the Committee.

**6. Law Commission Consultation on Misconduct in Public Office**

The Committee approved the submission to the Law Commission on the second stage of their consultation on misconduct in public office, subject to an amendment noted on the first page of the submission.

**7. Parliamentary Commissioner’s Review of MPs’ Code of Conduct**

The Committee approved the submission to the consultation on the MPs’ Code of Conduct subject to strengthening the language in some areas.

**8. CSPL Code of Practice**

The Committee approved the final revised Code of Practice, subject to replacing ‘ videoconferencing’ with ‘teleconferencing’.

**9. Budget Update**

The Committee noted the update on the budget which was currently on target. It was noted that there may be some overspend at year end due to fees that were outstanding. It was agreed that the Secretariat should bid for an additional member of staff in the current planning round.

**10. Standards Check**

The Committee noted the standards check.

**11. Forward word programme and forward grid**

The Committee noted the forward work programme and forward grid.

**12. AOB**

The Committee noted that the Communications update.

**Date of next meeting**: Thursday 15 December 2016 at 10:00.

At the end of formal business, the Committee welcomed Professor Richard Rose who presented his research into politicians’ standards and the public’s views - what proportion of MPs and public officials are deemed to act inconsistently with public standards of how they ought to behave; and what punishment, if any, is appropriate for those who are found to be behaving inconsistently with public standards.

The Chair thanked Professor Rose for his interesting and insightful presentation.

**CSPL Secretariat**

**October 2016**