

October 2011

Horserace Betting Levy Board – Government Appointed Member

John Penrose, the Minister for Tourism and Heritage, has appointed Paul Bolt as an Independent Member of the Levy Board, for up to three years commencing 3 October 2011.

Paul Bolt

Paul was a member of the Senior Civil Service from 1989 until 2011. He was Head of the Management Division at the Home Office from 1989-92, and then joined the Department for National Heritage (DNH), which was the predecessor of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). He led policy development successively for libraries and broadcasting, with periods leading financial and structural reviews of the Department's operation. From 1998 until 2001, as DNH was re-established as DCMS, he was Director of Strategy and Communications. In 2001 he left the Department to become Chief Executive of the Broadcasting Standards Commission. On his return in 2003, he was appointed Director of the Olympic Games Unit (2003-05), and Interim Secretary to the Olympic Board (2005-06). A period as a Director of the Capability Reviews Team at the Cabinet Office followed, and then he came back to DCMS as a Director, latterly with responsibility for sport, tourism, gambling and licensing (2008-11).

Background

The Levy Board is a statutory body established by the Betting Levy Act 1961 and now operating in accordance with the provisions of the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act 1963 (as amended). It is a non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Its role is to assess and collect monetary contributions from bookmakers via a percentage levy on gross profits from betting on British horse races. The Levy Board distributes levy proceeds on projects to improve horseracing and breeds of horses, and to advance equine veterinary science and education.

A group comprising representatives of the betting and racing industries is currently considering how the Levy process might be modernised. This could result in changes being made to the Board's structure and mechanisms. The Government has undertaken to retain the Levy and the Levy Board until such time as a viable commercial alternative is agreed between the betting and racing industries. The Independent Member role attracts £19,470 per year in return for 2-3 days per month on average. In the event an alternative is agreed which obviates the need for the Levy Board, the roles of Government Appointed Members will be terminated.

Appointments to the Levy Board are made by the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport, and follow the OCPA Code of Practice. All public appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for political activity (if any declared) to be made public, upon appointment and also upon reappointment. Mr Bolt has declared no political activity in the UK in the last five years.