**CSPL (18) 109**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIRST MEETING**

**HELD AT 10.00 ON THURSDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2018**

**IN** **70 WHITEHALL, LONDON**

**MINUTES**

Present: Lord Evans KCB DL, Chair

Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP

Dr Jane Martin CBE

Professor Dame Shirley Pearce DBE

Jane Ramsey

Rt Hon Lord Stunell OBE

Professor Mark Philp, Chair, Research Advisory Board

Lesley Bainsfair, Secretary

Ally Foat, Senior Policy Advisor

Stuart Ramsay, Senior Policy Advisor

Amy Austin, Policy Advisor

Maggie O’Boyle, Press Officer

Nicola Richardson, Incoming Senior Policy Advisor, observing

Aaron Simons, Incoming Senior Policy Advisor, observing

Apologies: Simon Hart MP

Monisha Shah (leave of absence)

Professor Allyson Macvean (Professor of Policing and Criminology, Bath Spa University); Professor Vassilios Papalois (Surgeon at Imperial College); Chief Constable Julian Williams (NPCC portfolio for ethics); and Rev Prof Scott Shackleton (Deputy Chaplain of the Fleet in Naval Command HQ Portsmouth) joined the Committee at the end of formal business to present their work in relation to ethics and integrity through the Police Ethics Network.

**1. REGISTERS**

There were no changes to the register of interests.

**2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2018 were agreed subject to noting that the Committee would be taking a close and serious interest in and was actively tracking developments in Westminster regarding harassment and bullying.

**Matters arising:**

**Chair’s update**

The Chair updated the Committee on his introductory meetings with key stakeholders held so far.

**Constitution Unit Seminar: regulating digital campaigning**

The Committee noted that the Constitution Unit had invited the Committee to attend their November seminar on regulating digital campaigning. Dame Shirley Pearce hoped to be able to attend for part of the seminar.

**3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS REVIEW**

The Committee discussed the final draft of the report. The Committee was grateful for the report which all agreed was a substantive piece of work which had captured the nuances and complexities of the subject.

Recommendations were discussed, final comments, points of clarification and drafting suggestions were noted.

**4. WESTMINSTER HARASSMENT**

The Committee considered developments in the issue of bullying and harassment in Westminster since their last meeting. The House of Commons Commission had responded positively to the Cox report - the response was strong in tone and agreed the need for change - but there was still a worrying lack of clarity around timescales and accountability, and how a truly independent complaints process would be delivered.

In the immediate term, the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, would reply to the Clerk of the House of Commons’ letter of 18 October, and copy the Chair’s reply to the Prime Minister with a covering letter stressing the Committee’s deep concerns. . The Committee would maintain its close and serious interest and this item would remain on the Committee’s agenda for the foreseeable future. The Committee would review next steps at the December meeting.

**5. INTIMIDATION IN PUBLIC LIFE: FOLLOW-UP**

The Committee noted a meeting with Facebook in which Facebook had updated the Committee on action they had taken following publication of Intimidation in Public Life. It was also noted that plans for the meeting with political parties to follow up recommendations directed against political parties had been finalised.

**6. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee discussed possible future reviews. A number of ideas were discussed and would be considered further before a final decision was taken about the Committee’s next project(s).

**7. STANDARDS CHECK**

The Committee noted the standards check for October/November 2018.

**8. FORWARD AGENDA AND FORWARD LOOK OF EVENTS**

The Committee noted the forward agenda and forward look of key events.

**9. AOB**

**Communications Update**

The Committee noted the communications update for October 2018.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

**Thursday 13 December 2018 to be held in Conference Room E, 70 Whitehall.**

**10. DISCUSSION WITH POLICE ETHICS NETWORK**

The Chair welcomed Professor Allyson Macvean, Professor of Policing and Criminology, Bath Spa University, Professor Vassilios Papalois (Surgeon at Imperial College) and Chief Constable Julian Williams (NPCC portfolio for ethics) and Rev Prof Scott Shackleton (Deputy Chaplain of the Fleet in Naval Command HQ Portsmouth), for a discussion on the work of the Police Ethics Network (PEN).

The background to the PEN was explained and its aims and achievements to-date.

PEN began in Avon and Somerset then had expanded to a regional and then national network. The origins lay in trying to translate an NHS ethics committee model to the police. The NHS and police were both valuable areas of the public sector with high expectations with ‘failure never forgiven and success rarely praised’. It seemed sensible to introduce the model to the police where ethics as a term and concept was a relatively new concept i.e. not that police did not have high standards, but to help them deal with the ethical challenges they faced daily and a deeper understanding around some of the complexities that the police face. This had fitted with concurrent developments in the police around the issue of ethics, including in particular the Code of Ethics established by the College of Policing.

PEN had intended to make explicit what had otherwise been implicit, that policing was an ethical practice. There was an academic ‘backbone’ and strength to the work, but it was police-led, -owned and -managed.

The challenge in ensuring a consistent approach, given the 43 different police forces in the country, was discussed. The influence of senior leaders in different forces was acknowledged, but PEN said that they had taken a ‘top down and bottom up’ approach, having a mix of ranks and grades on ethics panels. PEN also encouraged individuals to come to PEN for advice on specific dilemmas.

On behalf of the Committee, Lord Evans thanked Allyson, Vassilios, Julian and Scott for taking the time to visit and speak to the Committee. It had been a fascinating discussion and highly relevant to matters of interest for the Committee. It was agreed to stay in touch.

**CSPL Secretariat**

**November 2018**