**CSPL (19) 32**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIFTH MEETING**

**HELD AT 10.00 ON THURSDAY 21 MARCH 2019**

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

**MINUTES**

Present: Lord Evans KCB DL, Chair

Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP

Simon Hart MP

Dr Jane Martin CBE

Jane Ramsey

Monisha Shah

Rt Hon Lord Stunell OBE

Professor Mark Philp, Chair, Research Advisory Board

Lesley Bainsfair, Secretary

Nicola Richardson, Senior Policy Adviser

Aaron Simons, Senior Policy Adviser

Amy Austin, Policy Adviser

Lesley Glanz, Executive Assistant

Maggie O’Boyle, Press Officer

Apologies Dame Shirley Pearce DBE

**1. REGISTERS**

Members were asked to let the Secretariat know of any changes to their register of interests.

Members noted an exchange of letters between the Chair and the Secretary drawing to the Committee’s attention two of the Chair’s declared interests as adviser to Darktrace and Luminance Technologies, both of which included AI elements in their products and marketing. The Chair confirmed that he had no management or revenue responsibilities in either company and neither company saw the public sector as a key market. As such, he did not think there was any substantive conflict of interest, but agreed to keep this under review and would recuse himself from any discussions of decisions where a conflict might occur.

**2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2019 were agreed.

**Matters arising:**

**Chair’s update**

The Chair updated the Committee on a number of matters arising:

* follow up to the *Local Government Ethical Standards* report;
* the Constitution Unit’s report on *Doing Democracy Better: how can information and discourse in election and referendum campaigns in the UK be improved;* and
* recent tweets on honesty in public life.

**3. INTIMIDATION IN PUBLIC LIFE**

The Committee expressed their serious concern over the increasing levels of intimidation and abuse of people in public life. It was agreed to publish a statement on the Committee’s website, and to seek wider coverage of the Committee’s views.

It was noted that the second meeting with political parties to discuss the recommendation that there should be a joint code of conduct for political parties at times of general elections, would be held on 27 March.

**4. AI AND PUBLIC STANDARDS**

The Committee agreed the review’s terms of reference subject to two comments. The review would be launched on 25 March 2019.

**5. WESTMINSTER HARASSMENT**

The Committee noted a paper which updated members on various strands of work underway. A Committee blog would be published which set out the initiatives currently in place.

The Committee would actively maintain its close and serious interest in the issue, and review action on some areas still of concern, such as transparency, treatment of historic cases, and independence of any new system for considering complaints against Parliamentarians.

The Chair reported that he had contributed in a personal capacity to the House of Lords consultation on incorporating into the Lords Code of Conduct a new process for investigating allegations of bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct involving members. (The consultation was only open to peers, not to the public or organisations.)

**6. RISK REGISTER**

The 6 monthly update of the risk register was noted.

**7. 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF CSPL**

Options for marking the 25th anniversary of the Committee were discussed. A further paper would be brought back to the Committee for their consideration.

**8. STANDARDS CHECK**

The standards check for February/March was noted.

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

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

**10. AOB**

**Communications Update**

The Committee noted the communications update for February 2019.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

**Thursday 25 April 2019 to be held in Conference Room E, 70 Whitehall.**