

Attendees

The Committee

Anthony Browne, Chair
Laura Cox
Sheila Drew Smith
Jeremy Mayhew
Brian Morgan
Andrew Williams-Fry
Jonathan Cave
Stephen Gibson (StG)
Brian Morgan

RPC Secretariat

Hiroko Plant – Head of the Secretariat

Present for specific items

The Rt Hon Lord Henley

BRE

Chris Carr – Director
Joanna Rodin – Deputy Director

A. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

Minutes of November Committee meeting

1. Comments and corrections were provided on the minutes of the March meeting. Once the minutes have been revised, they will be sent for agreement via correspondence and then published on the RPC website

Register of interests

2. Comments were provided on the Register of Interests (RoI). No additional interests were declared; SDS is no longer the Chair of the National Approved Letting Scheme or a committee member at Safe Agent. The RoI will be revised and published on the RPC website within a fortnight of the meeting.

Register of Gifts and Hospitality

3. The register of gifts and hospitality was agreed; there were no new items to be added. The register will be published on the RPC Website within a fortnight of the meeting.

B. Lord Henley update

4. LH thanked the RPC for its work on EU exit impact assessments and its engagement with ministers, including the Rt Hon Kelly Tolhurst and the Rt Hon Greg Clark. CC was welcomed to his new role as Director of BRE.
5. The call-in process is operational with a number of measures currently being called in. The Minister offered his continued involvement in the process and updated the committee on the measures currently being called in.
6. The Minister was grateful for the work done by the RPC to assist departments during this time.

C. Engagement update

7. The chair and the committee engagement leads set out their activities since the last meeting. The chair had met with the British Chambers of Commerce where they discussed the call-in process, Brexit, and the possibility of holding a business groups roundtable. The chair had also met with the Rt Hon Kelly Tolhurst (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility) to discuss the RPC's work on the small and micro-business assessment (SaMBA)
8. LC met with the Office for Civil Society where an offer for the RPC to be included in its newsletter was accepted.
9. JC attended a European Commission conference on better regulation in Brussels.

10. SG met with Chief Economist from DfE. The Department is supportive of the RPC's role. A significant number of new economists will be joining the DfE in October and SG noted the training offered by the RPC.

D. BRE/policy updates

Directors Report

11. CC introduced himself to the committee as the new BRE director.

Innovation and Regulation

12. CC updated the committee on BRE's work on innovation friendly regulation and hoped to be able to share the work with the committee in the near future.

Finance and KPIs

13. The RPC's budget has been allocated and it will be preparing for the autumn spending review.

EU-exit and implications

14. The BRE are working with DExEU on methodological issues for regulations implemented both before the UK leaves the EU and after. The RPC secretariat have been consulted on this policy under development and the BRE will share with the committee as soon as possible.
15. The RPC has been working with the DIT on scoping assessments for free trade agreements. The RPC's scrutiny of scoping assessments is not yet confirmed but the BRE will work with the RPC on this point.

E. How to make pipeline and call-in more transparent

16. It was noted that business groups are asking whether the RPC is using the call-in process. It was agreed that information regarding existing call-in cases would be published. The RPC and BRE will also review how the call-in process is working so far.

F. When is an IA not an IA

17. Early proposals were discussed for changing the way the RPC scrutinises impact assessments which are outside of the better regulation framework. It was agreed that any move away from the 'fit for purpose vs not fit for purpose' system for measures outside of the framework should explicitly align with the current system. Departmental better regulation units should also be involved in any decision.

G. PIR update (14:30-14:45)

18. The RPC has not scrutinised any PIRs this year and the committee expressed concern about government evaluation. A plan for an evaluative report on the PIR system was presented which would include the RPC's recommendations for a change to the current system. It was suggested that this report should align with BRE's work on PIRs but remain an RPC project

H. Standards and consistency (14:45-15:00)

19. The evidence suggests that the RPC has kept up standards and remained consistent in how it scrutinises regulatory measures. The departmental survey also indicates that departments agree with points in RPC opinions and its interpretation of the better regulation framework.

I. Guidance gaps (15:00-15:15)

20. The impact assessment toolkit was removed from the better regulation framework manual, and the committee is concerned that this has left gaps in current government guidance. It was noted that departments have expressed a preference to move away from prescriptive guidance and, therefore, and guidance produced by the RPC should avoid this. Possible gaps in the current guidance were discussed and it was agreed that this work should be taken forward at the methodology sub-group.

J. Centre of Excellence (15:15-15:30)

21. Possible ways to rebrand the RPC as a Centre of Excellence for regulatory analysis were discussed. It was agreed that the RPC should focus on producing and publishing output before considering rebranding. The Chair agreed to lead this area of work.

K. 10-year anniversary (15:30-15:40)

22. The early plan for the RPC's 10-year anniversary was presented to the committee and the main details were agreed. It was, however, suggested that the list of possible speeches should be reduced.

L. Any other business & date of next meeting (15:40-15:45)

23. There was no other business.

24. The next Committee meeting will take place on 8 July 2019.