

Minutes of 9 November 2020 Committee meeting

Attendees	
The Committee	RPC Secretariat
Stephen Gibson (SG) – Interim Chair (Chair)	Stuart Sarson – Head of Secretariat (HoS)
Jonathan Cave (JC)	RPC staff
Laura Cox (LC)	
Sheila Drew Smith (SDS)	BRE - staff
Jeremy Mayhew (JM)	
Brian Morgan (BM)	Institute for Government - Representative
Andrew Williams-Fry (AWF)	

A. Introduction and matters arising

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. The minutes of the September Committee Meeting were agreed subject to one point of clarification to paragraph 14. The minutes are now published on the RPC website.
3. All action points had been completed.
4. **Register of Interests:** One new interest was declared and has been logged in the register.
5. **Gifts and Hospitality Register** – There were no declarations of any gifts and hospitality received since the September meeting.

B. Institute for Government (IFG)

6. Member of the Institute for Government presented IfG's role and the nature of work they undertook. He summarised their research comparing approaches to use of evidence in energy policy making in the UK, Germany, and Holland. He reported that it was difficult to compare the different models as each country's institutions and regulatory bodies were very different in size, nature, and remit. The UK should use what is most appropriate to policy making in the UK context, considering best practice elsewhere. The IFG expected to publish their report on this research shortly.
7. In relation to the RPC, the IfG was supportive of the Committee's role and suggested the following as areas for RPC focus:
 - Building expertise inside government.
 - Transparency.
 - Fostering a stronger evidence system.
 - More external independent review of evidence (precisely what the RPC already does).
8. The IfG concluded by suggesting that RPC should have a stronger role in scrutinising wider impacts such as on Net-Zero targets and wider environmental issues, and might benefit from having greater commercial and environmental expertise (an area of expertise lacking in most government departments).
9. SG thanked the IfG representative and said that the Committee looked forward to seeing their report (planned for publication in early December).

C. Engagement updates

10. The Chair summarised the following engagements since the previous meeting:

- Campaign for Economic Growth
- TUC
- International Trade Committee (ITC) of the Department for International Trade (DIT) Select Committee
- Regwatch Europe
- Infrastructure and Projects Authority

11. Other Committee members reported the following engagements:

- Chief Economist, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).
- Meetings with a number of “Think Tanks” including the Institute for Fiscal Studies.

12. The Committee welcomed these meetings and stated that there was much to learn from the IPA and that the RPC should work with them in the future.

D. Secretariat Updates

13. An update was given on the work of the Secretariat:

- **Workload** – The RPC is busier now. The number of cases has been increasing and given the reduction in staff numbers over the first part of the year, it would be important to keep an eye on capacity. The situation would be monitored to ensure no adverse impact on delivery.
- **Templates** – The Secretariat has now started producing draft opinions using the new templates. Although none have yet been issued, there are some in the pipeline. Some departments have expressed some misgivings about the new summary table approach, and we will report to the Committee on how initial opinions using the new format are received.

E. BRE Update

14. BRE provided an update on the proposed approach to considering changes to the Better Regulation Framework and the business impact target (BIT).

F. AOB

15. There were no items of AOB.