**CSPL (17) 97**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY-NINTH MEETING**

**THURSDAY 19 OCTOBER 2017 AT 10:00**

**ROOM 322, 70 WHITEHALL,** **LONDON, SW1A 2AS**

**MINUTES**

Present: Lord Bew, Chair

Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP

Sheila Drew Smith OBE

Simon Hart

Dr Jane Martin CBE

Jane Ramsey

Monisha Shah

Rt Hon Lord Stunell OBE

Lesley Bainsfair, Secretary

Ally Foat, Senior Policy Advisor

Dee Goddard, Senior Policy Advisor

Stuart Ramsay, Senior Policy Advisor

Maggie O’Boyle, Press Officer

In attendance: Will Moy, Director, Full Fact, for item 8.

Claire Milne, Researcher/Writer, Full Fact, for item 8.

There were no apologies

**1. REGISTERS**

There were no changes to the register of interests.

**2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2017 were agreed.

**Matters arising:**

**Metro Mayors**

It was noted that, as discussed at the September meeting, the Committee would no longer hold a roundtable for the 6 metro mayors, but would seek to hold one to one meetings with the individual mayors. It was hoped to meet with the Mayors of West of England and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough before the end of the year, and to meet the remaining four mayors in 2018.

**Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACoBA)**

The Press Officer declared her interest as press officer also for ACoBA.

It was noted that the Chair would meet the Chair of the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC), at the Chair of PACAC’s request, to discuss informally issues around ministers and civil servants and the business appointments rules. This followed on from PACAC’s report of April 2017.

**3. REVIEW INTO THE INTIMIDATION OF PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES**

Detailed suggestions regarding the tone, emphasis and wording of the draft report were noted. Options for a title of the report were discussed. Proposed recommendations were considered and discussed.

It was agreed to hold an additional meeting of the Committee at 2pm on Monday 6 November (venue to be confirmed) to discuss the next draft before the final draft report was presented to the Committee at their 16 November meeting.

**4. SELFLESSNESS VERSUS PROFIT**

Sheila Drew Smith introduced a paper considering possible tension between the principle of ‘selflessness’ and the profit motive and which considered how realistic was the expectation that companies providing public service could do so *solely* in the public interest. This issue arose in the 2014 work on Private Sector Providers and again during the course of interviews for the follow up work to ethical standards for public service providers.

The Committee was grateful to Sheila Drew Smith for drawing attention to this matter and looked forward to a full discussion and decision at the 16 November meeting. A full discussion was not possible at this meeting in view of the shortage of time.

**5. STANDARDS CHECK**

The Committee noted the Standards Check.

**6. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD GRID**

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

**7. AOB**

The Committee noted the Communications Update.

**Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee (DCMS) Inquiry into Fake News**

Simon Hart declared an interest as a member of the DCMS Select Committee.

The Committee noted that the DCMS Select Committee was undertaking an inquiry into fake news. It was agreed not to submit evidence to this inquiry in view of the Committee’s current review into intimidation and so as not to pre-empt any of the review’s recommendations.

**Integration Strategy**

The Committee noted that the Secretariat would stay in touch with the Department of Communities and Local Government about the Department’s integration strategy.

**Office Move**

It was noted that the Secretariat would be moving offices (but staying within 1 Horse Guards Road) in November, (date of 17/18/19 November subsequently confirmed).

**DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS:**

**Monday 6 November 2017 at 2pm (additional meeting) to be held in Room GC05.1, 1 Horse Guards Road.**

**Thursday 16 November 2017 to be held at 70 Whitehall.**

**8. DISCUSSION WITH WILL MOY, DIRECTOR OF FULL FACT**

The Committee welcomed Will Moy, Director of Full Fact and Claire Milne, Researcher, Full Fact.

Will outlined the work of Full Fact, a fact checking organisation with 3 key objectives: (a) fact checking to enable the public to judge information for themselves; (b) a scrutiny function; and (c) an evidence base for use of facts in public debate. The discussion ranged across a number of issues from the Committee’s public attitudes surveys where the principle of honesty remained a priority for the public for those in public office, to the impact of social media, and the changes in the ethical and broadcast landscape.

The Committee were extremely grateful to Will for a fascinating and insightful conversation and noted Full Fact’s interest in the Committee opening a discussion on the importance of honesty and openness in terms of misinformation. The Chair thanked Will Moy and Claire Milne for their time and a such a rewarding discussion.

**CSPL Secretariat**

**October 2017**