**CSPL (17) 108**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH MEETING**

**HELD ON THURSDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2017 AT 10:00**

**IN 70 WHITEHALL,** **LONDON, SW1A 2AS**

**MINUTES**

Present: Lord Bew, Chair

Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP

Sheila Drew Smith OBE

Simon Hart MP

Dr Jane Martin CBE

Jane Ramsey

Monisha Shah

Rt Hon Lord Stunell OBE

Professor Mark Philp, Chair, Research Advisory Board (for item 3)

Lesley Bainsfair, Secretary

Ally Foat, Senior Policy Advisor

Dee Goddard, Senior Policy Advisor

Stuart Ramsay, Senior Policy Advisor

Maggie O’Boyle, Press Officer

There were no apologies

**1. REGISTERS**

There were no changes to the register of interests.

**2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meetings held on 19 October and the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 6 November were agreed subject to two amendments.

**Matters arising:**

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

The Chair reported that he and Sheila Drew Smith were to attend an informal seminar hosted by the Chair of PACAC to discuss the business appointment rules and ACoBA. The Chair would report back on the meeting at the next Committee meeting to be held on 14 December.

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

Final drafting suggestions from the Committee were noted. The Secretariat would issue a revised version of the report, taking account of final drafting suggestions by the Committee.

The proposed format for the launch of the report was noted subject to an amendment to the suggestions of those who might be on the panel.

**4. SELFLESSNESS VERSUS PROFIT**

The Committee considered Sheila Drew Smith’s 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.

Final decisions about how to present any finesse to the ‘Selflessness’ descriptor would be taken with reference to the publication of the follow up work to ethical standards for public service providers.

**5. HARASSMENT IN WESTMINSTER**

The Committee continued its discussion from the extraordinary meeting of 6 November of the news of harassment and bullying at Westminster. The Committee noted their strong concern about the emerging breaking news. It was agreed that the Committee would take a close interest in the actions that political parties and Parliament were taking to deal with the scandals. The Secretariat would also prepare a scoping paper, looking at the current situation, best practice in HR/employment law, the governance arrangements, and processes put in place. The paper would consider whether there was a need for another body to step into the space, what the role if any, of the CSPL might be. It was suggested that this might be prepared for the new year.

It was also noted that the Chair had been invited to appear before the Leaders’ Working Group on an Independent Complaints and Grievance Policy for Parliament.

**6. STANDARDS CHECK**

The Committee noted the Standards Check.

**7. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD GRID**

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

**8. AOB**

The Committee noted the Communications Update.

**Conference of National Association of Local Councils**

Jane Martin reported her speech to the NALC which had been well received.

**Communities and Local Government Select Committee inquiry**

The Committee noted for information the summary of evidence received by the Communities and Local Government Select Committee inquiry on the overview and scrutiny functions in local government.

**Letter from the Commissioner of Public Appointments (CPA)**

The Committee were grateful to the Rt Hon Peter Riddell, CPA, for his letter updating the Committee on the public appointments governance code. The missing attachment - the CPA’s letter to Permanent Secretaries - would be circulated separately. It was agreed to invite Peter to attend a meeting in the new year.

**Office Move**

It was noted that the Secretariat would be moving offices on 17 November.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS:**

**Thursday 14 December 2017 to be held in Room 322, 70 Whitehall.**

**CSPL Secretariat**

**November 2017**