**CSPL (17) 65**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY-SIXTH MEETING**

**THURSDAY 15 JUNE 2017 AT 10:00**

**ROOM GC05.1, 1 HORSE GUARDS ROAD,** **LONDON, SW1A 2HQ**

**MINUTES**

Present: Lord Bew, Chair

Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP

Sheila Drew Smith OBE

Dr Jane Martin CBE

Jane Ramsey

Lord Stunell OBE

Sir David Norgrove, Chair, UK Statistics Authority (for item 1)

Vanessa Holden, Acting PS to Chair, UK Statistics Authority (for item 1)

Professor Mark Philip, Chair, Research Advisory Board (for item 2)

Isabel Taylor, PhD student at University of Nottingham (ESRC student part-funded by the Committee) (for item 2)

Lesley Bainsfair, Secretary

Dee Goddard, Senior Policy Advisor

Ally Foat, Senior Policy Advisor

Stuart Ramsay, Appointed Senior Policy Advisor (observing)

Maggie O’Boyle, Press Officer

Apologies: Monisha Shah

The Chair welcomed Ally Foat and Stuart Ramsay to the Secretariat.

**1. DISCUSSION WITH UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY (UKSA)**

The Committee welcomed Sir David for a general discussion on the proper use of statistics.

The Committee noted one of the UKSA’s main purposes was to prevent the misuse of official statistics. In this context, the UKSA had two main tools at is disposal; first, their Code of Practice; and second, a ‘hierarchy of contacts’ with those concerned. This might start with informal discussions with departments and progress to a letter from either the Director General of Regulation or the Chair. In addition, ahead of the 2015 general election, the Office of National Statistics published a series of papers that together provided an overview of key social and economic changes in the UK over the last three decades. Support from other organisations was important too e.g. the UKSA had seconded a member of staff to Full Fact for the period of the 2017 general election.

It was noted that the UKSA was about to launch a consultation on their new draft Code of Practice. Both the UKSA and the Committee welcomed Lord Stunell’s suggestion that the Code might reference the 7 Principles. The Secretariat would pursue this.

The Chair thanked Sir David for his time and a clear and constructive discussion which was of great help to the Committee in having a better understanding of this important issue.

**2. POLITICAL TRUST**

Isabel Taylor presented her draft PhD papers on political trust, which investigate the political causes and consequences of trust in political parties and institutions. Isabel highlighted the key points from her research.

In particular Isabel discussed her findings on how support for political institutions in general influences voter attitudes to government policies, especially redistributive policies. Further, Isabel presented her ongoing work on disentangling voter attitudes to political parties, government performance, economic performance and trust in government.

The Committee thanked Isabel for her full presentation which clearly set out some of the fascinating complexities around this subject.

**3. REGISTERS**

There were no changes to the register of interests.

**4. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2017 were agreed.

**Matters arising:**

**Induction of new MPs**

The Chair reported that he had spoken at the presentations on standards induction organised by the House authorities for new MPs. The presentation had been well attended and received; the Press Officer would tweet details of the event.

**5. STRATEGIC PLAN, ANNUAL REPORT AND BUSINESS PLAN**

The Committee approved the draft strategic plan, annual report and business plan (*Setting the Standard*) subject to some final amendments which were noted. Some additions to the guest list for the horizon scanning seminar to be held on 10 July (which would coincide with the launch of the Annual Report), were noted.

**6. STRIKING THE BALANCE: FOLLOW UP SURVEY**

The Committee noted the revised timeline for publication for the follow up to the *Striking the Balance* report.

**7. MPs’ OUTSIDE INTERESTS**

The Committee noted the consultation had been reopened following the general election. The consultation would run until 13 September 2017; the seminar with interested parties would be held on 12 September. Suggested additions to the 12 September guest list and to those who might be invited to separate meetings were noted.

**8. ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE PROVIDERS: FOLLOW UP**

The Committee noted the update on the follow up work to ethical standards for public service providers which was reported by Sheila Drew Smith.Two further interesting meetings had been held since the last meeting: with the Cabinet Office’s Civil Service Leadership Academy Team; and with the CBI.

**9. METRO MAYORS’ INDUCTION**

The Committee noted the proposals for the proposed event with new metro mayors. Letters had been sent to the 6 metro mayors inviting them to an event to be arranged for later in the year; the letter had been placed on the website.

**10. STANDARDS CHECK**

The Committee noted the Standards Check.

**11. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD GRID**

The Committee noted the forward agenda and forward look of key events, including proposed meeting dates for 2018.

The Committee agreed the suggestions to invite the Electoral Commission and Full Fact to (separate) meetings later in the year.

**12. AOB**

The Committee noted the Communications Update.

The Committee agreed that it would be useful to find out more about Ofcom’s Content Board which is a committee of the main Ofcom board and sets and enforces the quality and standards for television and radio.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 20 July 2017**

Room GC05.1, 1 Horse Guards Road.

**CSPL Secretariat**

**June 2017**