

RPC meeting – summary minutes

Monday, 16 September 2013

Present: Michael Gibbons (Chairman), Alex Ehmann, Jeremy Mayhew, David Parker, Ian Peters, Martin Traynor, Sarah Veale, Ken Warwick; secretariat.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting and reviewed the action points arising.

2. September update paper

The Committee welcomed the secretariat's work to ensure the RPC continues to operate in line with Cabinet Office requirements for non-departmental public bodies . The Committee discussed the ongoing work in relation to proposals for placing the RPC on a statutory footing.

3. Fast track – BRE interim evaluation and RPC internal review

The Committee discussed how to contribute to the BRE interim evaluation of the fast track system. In considering how to respond to the evaluation, the Committee recognised the challenges in providing accurate assessments of impacts on RPC resource as a result of the changes, but felt it would be important to highlight that to be overly focused on resource costs and timetables could undermine the delivery of effective scrutiny. In addition to discussing how internal systems could be streamlined further to achieve quicker RPC turnaround times, members felt that the changes to the scope of fit for purpose ratings at the final stage, introduced at the same time as the fast track, should be subject to further discussion with ministers.

4. Methodological issues

The Committee discussed a number of individual regulatory proposals which had raised interesting methodological questions. It was agreed that the secretariat should develop a case log to help inform consistency of application and support the development of an easy to access body of case history to inform conversations with departments on challenging questions.

5. Challenger Businesses

Members reviewed the Challenger Businesses paper prepared by the secretariat. Members welcomed the report on progress to date and agreed the proposed next steps. In agreeing these members wanted to reconfirm their commitment to the programme and welcomed the proposals to engage proactively across government.

6. FSB presentation

Sara Higham of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) presented to the Committee. She introduced the work of the FSB, explaining the membership and current focus. She reiterated the value the Federation places on the work of the RPC, and how they support a strengthening of the Committee's role or an expansion in remit.