

Regulatory Policy Committee - meeting minutes

Monday 13 October 2014
1 Victoria Street, London

Present: Michael Gibbons (Chair), Jeremy Mayhew, Ian Peters, Martin Traynor, David Parker, Sarah Veale, Ken Warwick; Secretariat.

Apologies: Alex Ehmann

Also attending: Scott McAusland (communications advisor)

1. Minutes of the previous meeting, updates and matters arising

The Committee welcomed Kimon Doulis to the RPC secretariat.

Members approved the minutes of the previous meeting, subject to minor drafting changes.

Members requested that more information should be provided regarding the outcomes or conditions placed on measures that have by-passed the scrutiny process.

2. Life of an opinion

Ian Bishop introduced the paper which provided the Committee with information on the length of time opinions take at each stage of the scrutiny process, and provided some views on how this relates to overall turnaround times.

Members expressed specific thoughts on areas where the process could be improved, including:

- Initial triage of submitted IAs to rate the complexity;
- Notice to be given to the lead member as to when an opinion can be expected for review;
- Secretariat to communicate to lead member if issues arise that could impede their ability to review before 20 days;
- Secretariat to review if methods of identifying priority measures for review.

3. Survey results

Magda Barawas presented the findings from the Quarterly Impact Assessment Survey. The RPC quarterly online impact assessment survey is part of a commitment in the RPC business plan to monitor engagement and collaboration with Whitehall departments.

This was the first time the RPC secretariat had conducted the survey, covering April to June 2014. The results of the survey provided some interesting data and the members agreed that there was value in continuing to run it as a quarterly survey, especially as trends over time will make the

information even more useful. The Committee were asked for their agreement on areas that should be monitored for future surveys, these included:

- Levels of training and views on the usefulness of the various forms of guidance available;
- Concerns about how the Committee makes decisions and issues RAG ratings for individual IAs; and
- The overall clarity of the RPC scrutiny process.

In addition, members suggested the following actions:

- Flow/Gantt style chart detailing the scrutiny process be developed to help departments and other stakeholders understand the RPC processes;
- Split the question regarding “agreement with RPC comments” to whether the participant received a “Red” or “Green” opinion, and whether they are from a policy or economist team.

4. Framework Analysis – workplan

Magda Barawas presented to the Committee the proposed workplan and questions to be used to inform the RPC analysis of the operation of the Better Regulation Framework.

The Committee felt that the priorities of the five principles could be better explained. They had questions regarding scope and questioned what was meant by ‘time limited’. Members asked if it was possible to have a chronology of measures by department to inform what will roll over to the next parliament, and the extent to which this could create legacy issues for future measures of the level of regulation/deregulation.

Members asked if there was an update around Government’s Accountability for Regulator Impact (ARI) policy and, if so, whether business was aware of it and if it was being used? They agreed that these questions should be put to the Better Regulation Executive (BRE).

5. Annual Report

Ian Bishop, Lisa Hughes and Mohammad Zayyad presented the item on the next annual report. They suggested a high-level structure and content to the Committee for agreement.

Members expressed specific thoughts for actions, including:

- clarity in the discussion of the large pension measures;
- the need to balance the report between discussion of 2014 and an overarching narrative about the whole parliament;

- inclusion of a dated timeline detailing the history and changing role of the RPC from its inception, if this could not be taken forward sufficiently through other channels (such as the website, LinkedIn and/or Wikipedia);
- to avoid repetition of views previously expressed when giving comment on Statement of New Regulation (SNR) 9; and
- early consideration of suitable dates/venues for the launch and ministerial involvement.

6. Methodology

The Committee noted that the current system does not allow for the methodology paper to reflect the conclusions of the methodology sub-group, which only meets earlier the same day.

The members agreed that providing a verbal summary of the conclusions of the methodology sub-group at the Committee meeting was helpful. The conclusions would also be provided in a short summary note following the meeting.

7. AOB

None raised.