**CSPL (18) 46**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIFTH MEETING**

**HELD AT 10.00 ON THURSDAY 19 APRIL 2018 IN**

**70 WHITEHALL, LONDON**

**MINUTES**

Present: Lord Bew, Chair

Simon Hart MP

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

Apologies: Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP

Dame Shirley Pearce DBE

**1. REGISTERS**

Jane Ramsey reported for information that her husband, Jonathan Slater, Permanent Secretary Department for Education, had been appointed Integrity Champion by the Cabinet Secretary. There was unlikely to be an overlap with the work of the Committee as the Integrity Champion role focussed more on anti-corruption, but the Committee was grateful for Jane’s declaration.

**2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2018 were agreed.

**Matters arising:**

**Westminster Harassment**

The Committee agreed to maintain its watching brief on the issue. In support of this, the Secretariat would prepare a paper reviewing the House authorities’ action against best practice.

**3. FOLLOW UP TO ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE PROVIDERS**

The Committee approved the final draft report on the continuing importance of ethical standards for public service providers.

The Committee noted the plans for the publication of the report on 10 May 2018.

**4. MPs’ OUTSIDE INTERESTS**

The Committee fully discussed the second draft of the report on MPs’ outside interests.

The Committee debated the draft conclusions and recommendations. (The Committee noted its previous resolution that political members would not formulate recommendations for this report.) The need to emphasise the importance of transparency and clarity in particular was agreed. It was noted that further meetings as part of the evidence gathering were to be arranged.

The final draft of the report would be presented to the May Committee meeting.

**5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS REVIEW**

Jane Martin reported good progress on the review of local government ethical standards. A very useful and positive roundtable had been held with Monitoring Officers and Independent Persons in Birmingham on Wednesday 18 April. Themes of the roundtable discussion included: variations in codes of conduct; conflicts of interest; the need for flexibility in resolving standards issues; management of complex relationships.

A further roundtable with academics, experts in the field and think tanks would be held on Tuesday 24 April.

**6. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted the paper setting out ideas for the Committee’s future work programme. It was agreed to defer any final decision about the Committee’s next major review until a new Chair had been appointed.

**7. ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee noted the draft outline for the 2017/18 Annual Report. It was agreed to publish the Annual Report in July.

**8. PACAC INQUIRY INTO PRE-APPOINTMENT SCRUTINY**

The Committee agreed to contribute to PACAC’s inquiry into pre-appointment scrutiny. A draft response would be circulated for members’ comments as the deadline for submissions to the the inquiry was 4 May.

**9. STANDARDS CHECK**

The Committee noted the standards check for March 2018.

**10. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD LOOK OF EVENTS**

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

**11. AOB**

**Communications Update**

The Committee noted the communications update for April.

**Circulation of Committee papers**

The Committee discussed the proposal to reduce the number of Committee papers distributed in hard copy. The Committee concluded it was unsatisfactory to have electronic copies of some papers and hard copies of others. And that having all papers electronically as an email attachment was not helpful. The Secretariat would ask Cabinet Office IT again about the possibility of securing Boardpad or a similar application for electronic circulation and management of Committee papers.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

**Thursday 17 May 2018 to be held in Conference Room E, 70 Whitehall.**

**CSPL Secretariat**

**April 2018**