**CSPL (18) 66**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SEVENTH MEETING**

**HELD AT 10.00 ON THURSDAY 21 JUNE 2018**

**IN** **70 WHITEHALL, LONDON**

**MINUTES**

Present: Lord Bew, Chair

Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP

Simon Hart MP

Dr Jane Martin CBE

Professor Dame Shirley Pearce DBE

Jane Ramsey

Rt Hon Lord Stunell OBE

Lesley Bainsfair, Secretary

Ally Foat, Senior Policy Advisor

Dee Goddard, Senior Policy Advisor

Stuart Ramsay, Senior Policy Advisor

Amy Austin, Office Manager

Maggie O’Boyle, Press Officer

Apologies: Monisha Shah

**1. REGISTERS**

Committee members were asked to let the Secretariat know of any changes to their register of interests.

**2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2018 were agreed subject to one clarification and adding that political members had not been involved in forming conclusions or recommendations of the MPs’ Outside Interests report.

**Matters arising:**

**Westminster Harassment**

The Committee noted that the Chair had requested an update from the Leader of the House of Commons on the work of the Independent Complaints and Grievance Policy Working Group.

The Committee considered recent stories in the press regarding the voting position of lay members on the Committee on Standards. The Secretariat would seek clarification from the House. The Committee’s current position agreed at this meeting was:

*The Committee recommended the appointment of lay members to the Standards Committee in its 2009 report and we remain of the view that any self-regulatory regime must include a strong, resilient and robust independent element.*

*As then, we would prefer the lay members to have a vote but if this raises insuperable Privilege or similar issues, we expect to see at the least the publication of any dissenting opinion.*

*Lay members must be able to play a full part as members of the Committee. We await the recommendations of the working groups and reserve the right to revisit this issue in any future review if necessary.*

**3. MPs’ OUTSIDE INTERESTS**

The Chair thanked Jane Ramsey for all her work in leading the project; Dee Goddard for leading the work in the Secretariat; and all Committee members for their active support, particularly Monisha Shah, and political members for their honest advice and sharing of their experience.

(Political members did not take part in the drawing of conclusions or formulating of recommendations of the report.)

The communications plan for online publication of the report on 3 July 2018 was agreed.

The Committee noted a recent blog by Jane Ramsey on the results of focussed, qualitative public opinion research to test the public’s view on these issues.

**4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS REVIEW**

The Committee noted themes that had emerged from the public consultation, and agreed the project plan for the next period of the review.

The planned visits to councils were discussed and it was agreed it would be helpful for more than one Committee member to attend the site visits if possible. This would enable a shared ownership of the evidence and aid in Committee discussions of the issues.

Consideration would be given to how best to include public opinion about local government ethical standards.

**5. ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE PROVIDERS: LESSONS LEARNT**

The Committee noted the paper setting out lessons learnt from the Committee’s most recent published report, *The Continuing Importance of Ethical Standards for Public Service Providers.*

**6. ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee noted some revisions to the draft Annual Report. A revised draft would be circulated to Committee members for approval by email.

**7. STANDARDS CHECK**

The Committee noted the standards check for May/June 2018.

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

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

**9. AOB**

**Communications Update**

The Committee noted the communications update for May 2018

**Whistleblowing**

The Committee noted that Lord Bew had had a telephone conversation with Dr Minh Alexander who had requested the Committee review the issue of whistleblowing.

**Freedom of Information (FOI) Request**

The Committee noted that an FOI request had been made to the Committee for the MPs’ Outside Interests report and a paper on Westminster harassment. It was noted that the reply would point the applicant to the published report in the case of the former; and that the paper on harassment had not yet been drafted in the case of the latter.

**Dates of 2019 meetings**

The proposed dates of 2019 Committee meetings were noted.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

**Thursday 19 July 2018 to be held in Conference Room E, 70 Whitehall.**

**CSPL Secretariat**

**June 2018**