

#### Attendees

**Chairman**

Michael Gibbons

**RPC Secretariat**

**Committee Members**

Jonathan Cave

Alex Ehmann

Nicole Kar

Jeremy Mayhew

Martin Traynor

Sarah Veale

Ken Warwick

**Better Regulation Executive officials**

#### 1. Margot James

1. The committee were delighted to welcome the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial strategy – Margot James. The chairman introduced the committee and commented that he and the Minister had a productive introductory meeting earlier that morning. The chairman then invited the Minister to say a few words.

#### Introduction from the Minister

2. Margot James introduced herself and explained her background had been pharmaceuticals and small business. She explained to the committee that since the early days of her business career she has gradually moved from finding all regulations tiresome to seeing the value in good regulation that serves a purpose.

#### Small and Micro Business Assessment (SaMBA)

3. One of the key areas of RPC work the Minister expressed a strong interest in is the SaMBA. She informed the committee that this is a part of the RPC's work she would be championing. She also agreed with members of the committee who suggested that the SaMBA was not being done well enough by a number of departments.

#### PIRs

4. The Minister agreed with the committee's assertion that PIR numbers should improve. She wanted to ensure the committee saw more of them. She is keen to help departments not see PIRs as a slap on the wrist but more of an opportunity to learn lessons from earlier legislation. She encouraged the RPC to share the insights gained from PIRs across government as this would be well received.

## **RegWatchEurope**

5. The Minister was delighted to hear the RPC is a member of RegWatchEurope and seen as a leader in the field of independent scrutiny. She asked to be kept abreast of developments and was keen to have some involvement in the RPC's year in the chair of RegWatch.

## **Wider societal and environmental impacts**

6. The committee asked the Minister for her views on whether the RPC's scope could – and should – be widened to allow impact assessments to be red-rated at final stage if the assessment of wider societal (i.e. non-business) impacts was not fit for purpose. The committee explained that although these impacts are included they are not allowed affect the rating of the IA at final stage despite the analysis often being poor.
7. The Minister shared the Committee's wish to see better assessment of wider impacts. She added that there is likely to be much greater purchase on this issue – especially environmental impacts – now that the department is the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). She has asked the Better Regulation Executive (BRE) to look at this with the RPC.

## **2. De-brief**

8. The Chairman provided the committee with a recap of his morning meeting with the Minister.
9. She has asked the RPC to send her the most recent departmental performance league table and a list of PIRs – both those seen and those due with the RPC. She is keen to understand where departments could do better and wanted to use the tables as a lever to improve both performance and compliance.
10. The Minister is very interested in the RegWatch work. She has asked to be kept up to date and hoped to join the RegWatch board meeting due to take place in London during 2017.

## **3. Minutes and matters arising**

### **Minutes of the previous meeting**

11. The committee highlighted their concerns with the large number of redactions from the September minutes and requested that the minutes be amended. The secretariat was also asked to produce a guidance document on what should be/is redacted from the minutes.

### **Matters arising**

12. The committee discussed some of their initial thoughts on a possible role for the RPC in exiting the European Union, having been encouraged by both Margot James and David Davis that there would be some potential for an RPC role. The secretariat was asked to prepare a paper for the November committee meeting setting out the different roles the RPC could fulfil in supporting a successful exit from the European Union. This role would probably centre on assessing the

economic analysis underpinning any impact assessments produced in relation to exiting the European Union in the RPC's capacity as the Independent Verification Body. At no point would the RPC comment on any aspect of policy.