

Attendees

The Committee

Anthony Browne (AB) – Chair
Jonathan Cave (JC)
Laura Cox (LC)
Sheila Drew Smith (SDS)
Stephen Gibson (SG)
Jeremy Mayhew (JM)
Brian Morgan (BM)
Andrew Williams-Fry (AWF)

RPC Secretariat

Hiroko Plant (HP) – Head of the Secretariat

Present for specific items

Martin Traynor (MT) – Small Business Crown Representative (item D)
Rebecca Park (RP) – UK Finance (item E)
Matthew Conway (MC) – UK Finance (item E)

BRE

Chris Carr (CC) – Director
Joanna Rodin (JR) – Deputy Director

A. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

1. AB informed attendees that he is a prospective parliamentary candidate. Advice has gone to the Secretary of State regarding electing a Deputy Chair.
2. HP is leaving the RPC at the end of September and joining the Land Registry. The Chair thanked HP for all her great work at the RPC under testing political circumstances.
3. The Chair outlined a number of changes to the Secretariat since the last meeting and welcomed the new starters.

Minutes of July Committee Meeting

4. The minutes of the July meeting were agreed with no changes. They will be published on the website within a fortnight of the meeting.

Register of Interests

5. A number of changes were noted. The changes will be made to the register and the updated version will be published on the RPC website within a fortnight of the meeting.

Gifts and Hospitality Register

6. The Gifts and Hospitality Register was agreed; there were no new items to be added. The Register will be published on the RPC Website within a fortnight of the meeting.

B. BRE Update

8. BRE noted the possibility of an autumn election which could mean a new Secretary of State (SoS) and Minister for Better Regulation.
9. AB and CC are both meeting separately with Nadhim Zahawi MP, the Minister for Better Regulation, on 23 September.

Business Impact Target

10. The Business Impact Target (BIT) report has received write-round clearance and will be published at the earliest opportunity.
11. An election would bring with it the additional obligation to publish a BIT report covering the whole parliament.

Call In

12. BRE provided an update on progress with the call in of the agriculture and fisheries bills. With a new SoS in place at DEFRA, CC will reiterate the previously given ministerial commitment on submission of the bills to the RPC. BRE will escalate, if necessary, before the next Committee meeting and provide an update.

Innovation

13. A pilot was launched in August with a number of departments. There may be a delay in practice given that very little legislation is coming through at the moment. To ensure the innovation test doesn't become a 'box ticking' exercise, BRE are working hard to design it in such a way that it is considered early, during the development of policy. BRE agreed to involve the RPC in the ongoing policy design.

C. Engagement Updates

14. SG met with the Chief Economist from DWP, Laura Webster. Laura noted there has been a notable shift in recent times towards proactively engaging with the RPC and gave positive feedback on members of the secretariat. Staff at DWP have also enjoyed the RPC's training courses.
15. The Secretariat presented a new Whitehall engagement plan to the Committee which suggested testing satisfaction levels through a targeted survey.
16. AWF briefed the Committee on the progress of the business stakeholder survey which will be sent to stakeholders before the next meeting.

D. SME Slides

17. AB introduced Martin Traynor who was a member of the RPC from 2012-2018 and has now been appointed the Crown Representative for Small Business.
18. There is a manifesto commitment that £1 of every £3 spent on government procurement would be spent with small businesses. MT discussed the work being done to fulfil this commitment, including making contract opportunities more transparent, cutting red tape, ensuring fair payment terms and splitting large contracts.
19. MT encouraged the RPC to continue to promote a culture of consideration for small and micro businesses (SMBs) across government. It was agreed that MT and the RPC would swap best practices for engaging with SMBs through relevant trade associations.
20. The Committee thanked MT for his presentation.

E. UK Finance

21. AB introduced Rebecca Park and Matthew Conway from UK Finance.
22. HM Treasury are currently reviewing the regulatory framework for financial services and have issued a call for evidence. The call for evidence focusses on improving coordination between regulatory authorities.
23. RP outlined, with examples, a number of challenges faced by the sector, including infeasible implementation dates and timescales, multiple initiatives which require common implementation resources, lack of coordination with other regulated sectors, and infeasible consultation periods. RP also suggested possible solutions to some of these challenges, including greater consultation, common commencement dates, routine scrutiny from the RPC, and involvement of the CMA on measures affecting competition.
24. The Committee listened to the concerns of UK finance and thanked UK Finance for their presentation.

F. Post-Implementation reviews (PIRs)

25. The RPC is producing a report on the current PIR system which will contain recommendations for change. The draft recommendations were presented to the Committee; these include: a publicly accessible tracking system for upcoming evaluations, a platform for stakeholders from wider society to request reviews of policy areas, more of a focus on holistic reviews, ensuring high-quality monitoring and evaluation plans are included in impact assessments, and a more flexible set of criteria used to trigger reviews.
26. The Committee commented on the recommendations and requested that the ideas be developed further with input from BRE.

G. Any Other Business & Date of Next Meeting

27. There was no other business.
28. The next committee meeting will take place on 11 November 2019.