

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE
TWO HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIRST MEETING
HELD AT 10.00 ON THURSDAY 17 OCTOBER 2019
IN 70 WHITEHALL, LONDON**

MINUTES

- Present: Lord Evans KCB DL, Chair
Dr Jane Martin CBE
Dame Shirley Pearce DBE
Jane Ramsey
Rt Hon Lord Stunell OBE
- Professor Mark Philp, Chair, Research Advisory Board
Lesley Bainsfair, Secretary
Nicola Richardson, Senior Policy Adviser
Aaron Simons, Senior Policy Adviser
Ally Foat, Senior Policy Adviser
Amy Austin, Policy Adviser
Lesley Glanz, Executive Assistant
Maggie O'Boyle, Press Officer
- Apologies: Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP
Monisha Shah

1. REGISTERS

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 19 September 2019 were agreed.

Chair's update

The Committee noted the Chair's update.

Awareness of the Committee and its reports: The Committee approved the idea of producing one page summaries of the Committee's reports and areas of interest in order to promote and make more accessible the Committee's work.

Risk Register: The Committee noted the 6 month update of the risk register.

Appearance before the Home Affairs Select Committee: The Committee noted that the Chair and Jane Ramsey had appeared before the HASC to give evidence into their long-running inquiry into hate crime.

Electronic distribution of Committee papers: The Secretariat noted requests for some changes to the electronic distribution of papers.

3. AI AND PUBLIC STANDARDS

The Committee noted the progress on the review and discussed the draft report. The Secretariat noted drafting suggestions from members.

4. WESTMINSTER HARASSMENT

The Committee noted that the Commons Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards had proposed amendments to the confidentiality arrangements in place for complaints under the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme, and restated her concern about the lack of transparency for non-ICGS cases. This was a draft paper which had been published by the Commons Committee on Standards as an update for information.

Members agreed it was important to continue the Committee's close monitoring of the House's activities in response to issues of harassment and bullying. Meetings with key players in Parliament would be arranged.

5. INTIMIDATION IN PUBLIC LIFE

The Committee noted the paper setting out current work with The Jo Cox Foundation on the joint standard of conduct for political parties. It was noted that the joint standard was intended to apply to all members of political parties - so would include elected representatives at national and local government. Initial and current discussions were being held with parties holding seats in Westminster, but once the joint standard was agreed, other parties would be invited to sign.

Members discussed the idea in the future of examining codes in this area at the national and local level, comparing the codes and seeing how they worked together.

6. MPs' OUTSIDE INTERESTS

The Committee noted that a draft revised Code of Conduct for MPs, formulated by a sub-committee of the Committee on Standards, had been published by the Commons Committee on Standards. The full Committee on Standards had not yet commented on or approved the draft. As and when it does so, the draft Code of Conduct would be issued for internal and external consultation. It was agreed that the Committee should contribute to the consultation.

7. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

A number of areas were discussed for review. The Secretariat would prepare first scoping notes for three areas: revisiting the Principles in their 25th year; the culture of public standards; and elections/digital campaigning. The scoping notes would try as a first step to refine questions and areas for focus within these areas.

8. CSPL 25th ANNIVERSARY

The Committee noted progress with plans to mark the Committee's 25th anniversary. Members congratulated Rebecca Dobson on her excellent paper on mapping the standards landscape. Some final amendments were suggested before the paper was published later this year.

9. STANDARDS CHECK

The standards check for September/October was noted.

10. FORWARD AGENDA 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 September 2019.

Date of Next Meeting

21 November 2019.