**CSPL (21) 2**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**TWO HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-THIRD MEETING**

**HELD AT 10.00 ON THURSDAY 17 DECEMBER 2020**

**BY VIDEO CALL**

**MINUTES**

Present: Lord Evans KCB DL, Chair

Dr Jane Martin CBE

Dame Shirley Pearce DBE

Monisha Shah

Rt Hon Lord Stunell OBE

Rt Hon Jeremy Wright QC MP

Professor Mark Philp, Chair, Research Advisory Board

Lesley Bainsfair, Secretary

Amy Austin, Senior Policy Adviser

Nicola Richardson, Senior Policy Adviser

Aaron Simons, Senior Policy Adviser

Lesley Glanz, Executive Assistant

Maggie O’Boyle, Press Officer (part of the meeting)

The meeting was held by video call in view of COVID-19.

**1. APOLOGIES**

Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP.

**2. REGISTERS**

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

**3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2020 were agreed subject to noting that Monisha Shah had kindly accepted an extension to her term of appointment, to 31 March 2021.

**Chair’s update**

Members noted a number of points:

* The Chair and Dr Jane Martin had appeared before the Commons Standards Committee on 24 November, and before PACAC on 1 December.
* The Chair had accepted a personal invitation to speak at the Westminster Abbey Institute in January 2021.
* A letter from a group of academics to the FT expressing concern at ‘the apparent reluctance of the government to uphold the Nolan Principles’.
* CSPL had hosted an informal meeting of the Chairs of Independent Offices.
* A number of developments on bullying and harassment in Parliament.
* An invitation from the Welsh Parliament to contribute to their consultation on their code of conduct.

**4. REVIEW OF REGULATION OF ELECTION FINANCE**

The Committee noted good progress on the review of the regulation of election finance. The Committee would consider a further paper in January 2021.

**5. STANDARDS MATTER 2**

Members fully discussed the draft project plan and proposed focus of the review. The Secretariat took comments on board and would report back in January with a further paper.

**6. AI AND PUBLIC STANDARDS: FOLLOW UP**

The Committee noted the update on follow up work to the AI report and that the government’s response was still awaited though expected in January.

**7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS: FOLLOW UP**

The Committee noted follow-up work to the local government ethical standards report and agreed to publish local authorities’ responses to the Committee’s best practice recommendations with a short report in January.

The Committee welcomed the publication of the LGA model code of conduct, as recommended in *Local Government Ethical Standards.* There was still no response from the government to the report. This would be followed up.

**8. INTIMIDATION IN PUBLIC LIFE: FOLLOW UP**

The Committee noted that the planned three year update on *Intimidation in public life* had been published on 17 December. It was noted that the SNP, the Liberal Democrats, Plaid Cymru and the Green Party had now confirmed their support for the joint statement on conduct of political party members.

**9. COVID-19: WATCHING BRIEF**

The Committee noted its continued watching brief on risks to the Principles by COVID-19.

**10. STANDARDS CHECK**

The standards check for November/December was noted.

**11. FORWARD AGENDA**

The Committee noted the forward agenda.

**12. AOB**

**Communications Update**

The Committee noted the communications update for November 2020.

**CSPL Membership**

The Committee expressed concern about the lack of progress on starting the recruitment process to fill the vacant independent posts on the Committee. The Chair agreed to pursue.

**Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 21 January 2020 at 10.00 via video conference call.

CSPL Secretariat

December 2020