**CSPL (21) 46**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**TWO HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-EIGHTH MEETING**

**HELD AT 10.00 ON THURSDAY 20 MAY 2021**

**MINUTES**

Present: Lord Evans KCB DL, Chair

Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP

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

Maggie O’Boyle, Press Secretary

Lesley Bainsfair, Secretary

Amy Austin, Senior Policy Adviser

Nicola Richardson, Senior Policy Adviser

Aaron Simons, Senior Policy Adviser

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

**1. APOLOGIES**

No apologies were received.

**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 15 April 2021 were agreed.

**Chair’s update**

Members noted that:

* The Chair had met with the Minister for the Constitution and Devolution for an update on government work against intimidation in public life. And had held a separate meeting with the Minister as part of the Standards Matter 2 review.
* Recruitment for new members for the Committee was in hand.
* Two new blogs had been published in the past month: a guest blog by Jane Burgess, a civil service commissioner, clarifying the involvement of ministers in some civil service appointments; and a blog by the Chair reflecting on the complexity and history of standards bodies, in light of the Greensill affair and the Standards Matter 2 review.
* A meeting had been arranged with the Chairs of Independent Offices, part of the regular catch up with these standards bodies.

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

Members discussed the draft report, and amendments and comments were noted. Final amendments to the draft report would be confirmed by email.

**5. STANDARDS MATTER 2**

The Committee welcomed the (part) draft interim report for Standards Matter 2.

It was agreed to hold a second away day in the week beginning 31 May, with the aim of publishing the interim report in June 2021.

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

The Committee noted the government’s response to the AI and public standards report had now been published.

**7. Bullying and Harassment**

The Committee noted the House of Commons had: endorsed a revised regime of sanctions for breaches of the Code of Conduct, both in respect to the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme (ICGS) and non-ICGS cases; and agreed revisions to confidentiality arrangements so that the Commissioner for Standards now has leave to publish information about complaints received and matters under investigation.

The Committee also noted that the Lords Commissioner had published the names of 58 Peers who had not undertaken the valuing everyone training. Only 4 cases were deemed not appropriate for remedial action and would be covered by separate reports.

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

The Chair reported that he had written to the Chair of the Local Government Association about the LGA’s work on the model code of conduct and their civility in public life programme. A meeting would be arranged for later in the year.

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

The Committee noted its continued watching brief on risks to the Principles of Public Life by Covid. Cross-over with the SM2 review was highlighted.

**10. STANDARDS CHECK**

The standards check for May 2021 was noted.

**11. FORWARD AGENDA**

The Committee noted the forward agenda.

**12. AOB**

**Communications Update**

The Committee noted the communications update for April 2021.

**Diversity**

Monisha Shah spoke about the need for the Committee to be mindful of the contemporary narrative of race, cultural and other disparities, and how these are linked to bullying and harassment and the current debate around freedom of expression.

Monisha said that she hoped that the Committee would reflect on some of the more complex interplay of race and gender but also class and geography and think about what it meant for the wider standards world, and the detrimental impact it was likely to have on people from diverse and underrepresented communities being willing to take up roles in public life. Public bodies needed to represent the people they served. The public appointment process needed to do what it could to counteract such worrying trends.

Members thanked Monisha for this important reminder and fully took on board Monisha’s points. They would think about how this might be reflected in future work.

**Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 17 June 2021 at 10.00 via video conference call.

CSPL Secretariat

May 2021