**CSPL (21) 37**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**TWO HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SEVENTH MEETING**

**HELD AT 10.00 ON THURSDAY 15 APRIL 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 *(until 11.30)*

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

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 18 March 2021 were agreed.

**Chair’s update**

Members noted that the Chair would be meeting the Minister for the Cabinet Office for an update on government work against intimidation in public life. The Minister had also agreed to give evidence as part of the Standards Matter 2 review.

Members noted that the Chair had had an introductory call with the new Director General of the Propriety and Ethics Team, Cabinet Office, Darren Tierney.

Members noted that the vacancies on the Committee had now been advertised and there had been a good amount of interest.

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

Members welcomed the draft report which covered a complex subject comprehensively and with clarity.

The Secretariat noted drafting points and timing issues; a second draft would come to the May Committee meeting.

**5. STANDARDS MATTER 2**

The Committee discussed with concern the recent news stories about lobbying involving Greensill Capital; the Committee’s role to advise the Prime Minister on standards issues; and public engagement on the connected SM2 review. The Secretariat noted the Committee’s views on how best to engage in the debate and next steps for SM2. Members were encouraged to attend the planned away day to discuss SM2.

The Committee agreed the Chair should write to the Prime Minister with key recommendations based on evidence we have taken about the role of the Independent Adviser on Ministerial Interests. This was in view of the likely imminent appointment to the role.

The Committee noted progress with the review and agreed to move to a separate report the planned third section on best practice. A blog would be published summarising the academics’ roundtable held on 1 April 2021.

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

The Committee welcomed the government’s response to the AI and public standards report received late on Wednesday 14 April.

The Secretariat would look at the response in detail and report back to the Committee as necessary.

**7. Bullying and Harassment**

The Committee noted the House of Commons Commission had endorsed the changes to the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme as recommended by the 18 month review of the Scheme.

The Commission had also agreed that all MPs should attend the ‘Valuing Everyone’ training. Names of Members who had attended would be published from time to time.

Members noted it was important too, that MPs’ staff attended the training.

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

Members noted that the Minister for Local Government had written to the Society of Local Council Clerks apologising for the delay in the government’s response to the report, citing the 2019 general election and Covid.

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

The Committee noted its continued watching brief on risks to the Principles of Public Life by Covid.

**10. ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21**

The Committee agreed the draft outline for the 2020/21 annual report.

**11. STANDARDS CHECK**

The standards check for March/April 2021 was noted.

**12. FORWARD AGENDA**

The Committee noted the forward agenda.

**13. AOB**

**CPA Thematic Review on Remuneration and public appointments**

This review was noted by the Committee

**Communications Update**

The Committee noted the communications update for March 2021.

**Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 20 May 2021 at 10.00 via video conference call.

CSPL Secretariat

April 2021