**CSPL (21) 18**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**298th MEETING**

**HELD AT 10.00 ON THURSDAY 17 MARCH 2022**

**1 HORSE GUARDS ROAD, LONDON**

**MINUTES**

Present: Lord Evans of Weardale KCB DL, Chair

Ewen Fergusson

Professor Dame Shirley Pearce DBE (remotely)

Professor Gillian Peele

Rt Hon Jeremy Wright MP

Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP (remotely)

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

Maggie O’Boyle, Press Officer (remotely)[[1]](#footnote-0)

Baroness (Gisela) Stuart of Edgbaston joined the meeting ahead of formal business for an introductory meeting, following her appointment as First Civil Service Commissioner.

The Chair welcomed Baroness Stuart and congratulated her on her appointment as First Civil Service Commissioner. Baroness Stuart outlined her three priorities for the role: ensuring the Commission was fully functioning, which was on track; ensuring the Commission was working fully as a regulator and going beyond the basics of pure compliance; and in the context of the UK Civil Service, ensuring the Commission was doing everything it could to attract and keep people of the highest quality from across the UK. Other areas of discussion included the movement of people in and out of the Civil Service; departmental recruitment processes - making sure departments do the right thing; characteristics of the senior leadership of the Civil Service, what it should look like in the next five years; and how ethical standards fit into the role.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked Baroness Stuart for her time and a valuable and informative discussion. Baroness Stuart kindly agreed to return for another discussion with the Committee next year.

**1. APOLOGIES**

None 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 17 February 2022 were agreed.

**Chair’s update**

Members noted:

* The Chair’s participation in the Anti-Corruption and Responsible Tax APPG seminar on public standards, which took place on 3 March.
* A letter from the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to the Chair of PACAC which commented that the government response to the Committee’s *Upholding Standards in Public Life* report would be published shortly.
* The Chair’s arranged catch up meeting with Lord True, Minister of State, Cabinet Office.
* Progress on the Commons Standards Committee’s review of the fairness and natural justice in the House's standards system.
* The 2021 Annual Report of the Independent Expert Panel (IEP).
* The IEP Report on former Speaker John Bercow.

**4. LEADING IN PRACTICE**

Members noted an update on the Leading in Practice review which had been launched on 8 March.

**5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS FOLLOW UP**

Members noted that the LGA had produced a training pack for councillors. This was aimed at supporting councillors in the introduction and implementation of Codes of Conduct. The training was based on the LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct which was published in 2020 and updated in 2021. The LGA Model Code of Conduct was a recommendation of the Committee’s *Local Government Ethical Standards* report, 2019.

The Chair reported that he had been invited to a meeting with Minister Badenoch (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) on Friday 18 March, to discuss the government response to the Committee’s *Local Government Ethical Standards* report.

**6. STANDARDS CHECK**

The Committee noted the media coverage of standards issues which are circulated daily to members.

**7. FORWARD AGENDA**

The Committee noted the forward agenda.

**8. AOB**

**Independent member Vacancy**

The Chair shared the Committee’s concern about the lack of progress on recruitment for the independent member vacancy. The position had been vacant since the end of December 2021.

**Communications Update**

The Committee noted the communications update for February 2022.

**Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 21 April 2022 at 10.00. This meeting would be held virtually.

Members requested that future meetings should be able to be hybrid, enabling those who were unable to attend in person to join the meeting remotely.

It was agreed that the Committee should in future hold an annual strategy meeting (in person).

CSPL Secretariat

March 2022

1. Maggie O’Boyle provides part-time press support to the Civil Service Commission, the House of Lords Appointments Commission, the Office for the Commissioner for Public Appointments and the Committee on Standards in Public Life. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)