**CSPL (21) 63**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**306th MEETING HELD IN 1 HORSE GUARDS ROAD, LONDON**

**AT 10.00 ON THURSDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2022**

**MINUTES**

Present: Lord Evans of Weardale KCB DL, Chair

Ewen Fergusson

Baroness Finn

Professor Dame Shirley Pearce DBE

Professor Gillian Peele

Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP

Rt Hon Lord Stunell OBE

Professor Mark Philp (Chair, Research Advisory Board) (online)

Lesley Bainsfair, Secretary

Nicola Richardson, Senior Policy Adviser

Amy Austin, Policy Adviser

Lesley Glanz, Executive Assistant

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

William Shawcross CVO, Commissioner for Public Appointments and Kavalneer Walia, Chief Executive, Civil Service Commission joined the meeting ahead of the start of formal business.[[2]](#footnote-1)

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair welcomed William Shawcross, Commissioner for Public Appointments, and Kavalneer Walia, Chief Executive, Civil Service Commission, OCPA and HOLAC, to the Committee meeting.

The Commissioner gave an overview of his role a year into the post. William said, as regulator, he aimed to be effective but not officious. William was impressed by his staff and how the organisation was run and said that his interactions with departments over the past year had been positive.

The Commissioner said that he was concerned about two main areas. The first was delays in the system which were off-putting to candidates and harmful to the process itself. In terms of speeding up the process, more could be done to improve the administration of public appointments, including better forward planning for vacancies, and diary and stakeholder management. The Office for the Commissioner for Public Appointments was encouraging departments to share good practice. William would look into the question of whether certain types of appointments were subject to more delays than others.

The second area of concern was the need for greater diversity, in the broadest sense of the word. The Commissioner’s aim was to increase diversity, not just of protected characteristics, but also in terms of thought, experience and geographical background. It could discourage applications if there were a false perception of the sort of candidates who might be successfully selected.

The Chair thanked William for the discussion and his offer to revisit the Committee for a further discussion.

*(William Shawcross and Kavalneer Walia left the meeting.)*

The Chair welcomed Baroness Finn to her first meeting as the Conservative party member of the Committee. Baroness Finn introduced herself to the Committee.

**1. APOLOGIES**

None

**2. REGISTERS**

Members were asked to let the Secretariat know of any changes to their register of interests which had been circulated.

**3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2022 were agreed.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked Lord Stunell for his service to the Committee over the past 6 years. Lord Stunell’s term of appointment ended on 30 November 2022. Lord Stunell had been a valuable colleague and all members wished him well.

**Chair’s update**

The Committee noted:

* Jeane Freeman (SNP) had decided not to join the Committee as a political member. The Cabinet Office was seeking a new nomination from the Leader of the SNP.
* Interviews for the independent member had taken place.
* On 2 November, the Chair appeared with Baroness Finn; William Shawcross; Sir Bernard Jenkin MP; and Sue Gray, on the IfG panel discussion: *How should public appointments be reformed?*
* The Chair had given evidence to the Infected Blood Inquiry on 9 November.
* A blog had been published looking ahead to the publication in January of the Leading in Practice Review.
* The Chair had been interviewed on Radio 4's The World Tonight on 25 October. A large number of media requests to talk about leadership shown by politicians, the appointment of the Independent Adviser on Ministers’ Interests, peerages and ministers’ behaviour, had been declined.
* Future Committee guests: John Pullinger, Chair, Electoral Commission, will attend the Committee’s 15 December 2022 meeting; and Sir Robert Chote, Chair, UK Statistics Authority, will attend the Committee’s 19 January 2023 meeting.
* Science and Technology Committee inquiry on Governance of AI: the Committee would submit evidence based on the recommendations set out in its 2020 *AI and Public Standards* report.
* The Chair had attended the Electoral Commission’s parliamentary briefing held on 25 October on 2022 public attitudes research.
* Members discussed ideas for the Committee’s next review.

**4. COMMITTEE REVIEW OF ITS WAY OF WORKING**

Committee members had a first discussion about the effectiveness of the Committee. Members considered how well the Committee operated internally; the Committee’s effectiveness at carrying out its remit and how it went about its work; as well as its liaison and engagement with external stakeholders.

The Secretariat would prepare a paper for discussion at the December meeting.

**5.**  **RISK REGISTER**

Committee members noted the Committee’s risk register.

**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**

**Communications Update**

The Committee noted the communications updates for October 2022.

**Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 15 December 2022 at 10.00.

CSPL Secretariat

November 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)
2. Maggie O’Boyle declared her interest. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)