

IPSA Implementation Programme

Minutes of the First Programme Board

13:00 – 15:00, Tuesday 18 August 2009

Present

Vijay Rangarajan (Programme SRO)
Marco Pierleoni (Finance)
Louise Woodford (Change)
Geraldine Terry (NED)
Duncan Campbell (HR)
Annabelle Chalker (Comms)
Paul Kett (Programme Director)
Simon James (Programme Team)
Mark Buckmaster (Programme Team)
James Gerard (Programme Team)
Ruth Sloan (Programme Team)
Ben Bridge (Constitutional Law) (*on behalf of Karl Bannister*)
Matthew Hamlyn (HofC IPSA team)

Introduction/Role of the Programme

1. After welcome and introductions, the background to the decision to establish an Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA), and the subsequent cross-party talks and Parliamentary passage of the (Government) Bill was set out. Against this constitutionally complex background, it was essential that the governance arrangements of IPSA should be, and be seen to be, independent.
2. It was set out that the Programme Board would not be a decision-making executive, but rather a body which would advise, question and challenge the Programme Implementation Team.

Governance Arrangements

3. It was agreed that significant decisions would have to await the appointment of ICE, and ultimately the Chair and members.
4. In response to questions on finance, it was explained that programme costs would be coming out of the Constitutional Directorate budget. Discussions were outlined which were ongoing with HMT about how money should be accessed pending the establishment of IPSA: HMT had agreed in principle that MoJ could call on the contingency fund for IPSA-related expenses (which were small at present), on the understanding that these costs would later be reimbursed to MoJ by IPSA, though the final arrangements for this would be subject to further discussions about the detail.
5. It was noted that it was essential that we had tolerances in place which would allow us to avoid any delay in making the key decisions. It was agreed that it was

necessary to be ready to adjust our plans to take account of external events/influences where necessary.

Programme Definition Document

6. It was explained that there were a number of pressures driving the IPSA timetable - most notably, the General Election (which is assumed to be in May 2010 but could be earlier); and the publication of the Kelly and Legg Reports in November 2009.
7. There was a lengthy discussion about how the publication of the Kelly Report would feed into the establishment of IPSA, and the timetable for appointments. It was explained that the current timetable was designed to ensure that a Chair (and potentially other members) would be in place by the beginning of November; and it would not be possible to have the permanent Chief Executive (CE) in place at the same time, as (s)he must be appointed by IPSA (i.e. after the Chair and others have been appointed). It was agreed that what was essential was that IPSA should have, and be seen to have, a meaningful role in responding to the Kelly and Legg Reports; and that the ICE received the necessary Communications support to enable him to deal with this authoritatively and independently.
8. This led to a wider discussion about the role of the ICE. It was pointed out that the ICE and CE were likely to be called on to exhibit different strengths; to this extent, it might not be undesirable to have the two roles filled by different people with different skill sets. Equally, we might be obliged to provide the ICE with a level of support which it would not be appropriate to have in place in the longer-term, and the distinction between the ICE and the CE would safeguard against this. It was asked if the Act compelled us to appoint an ICE: though it does not, it was pointed out that his appointment was essential to enable decisions to be taken at an early stage. It was agreed that more thought should be given to the role of the ICE.

Vision/scope

9. The discussion moved onto vision/scope at this point, by suggesting that one (or several) of the key decisions the ICE would have to take would be in relation to the scale of the IPSA business model. This would touch on a number of difficult issues including automaticity v discretion (in terms of the structures IPSA itself would be putting in place); transparency; consultation; and HR functions.
10. The Vision Statement in the Programme Definition Document (Annex 0, section 3) was outlined. It was explained that the two immutables within which we had to work were the PS Act (which set out the 'what' rather than the 'how') and the 'as is' situation (i.e. how the system currently works). A third, but more variable, influence which would shape what we were trying to build was the world in which IPSA would be launched (which had already changed a great deal and could be expected to change further in the coming months). Taking account of these, 4 Strategic Objectives and corresponding Critical Success Factors (though a detailed timetable on hitting these would not be available until the next Programme Board) were identified.
11. It was suggested that it was necessary to distinguish between the vision for the Programme Implementation Team/Board and the vision for IPSA – the two were somewhat elided in the current PDD. It was agreed that IPSA should try to

separate the two, and suggested that IPSA look at how the Supreme Court Implementation Team managed this. **It was agreed that it was important to learn lessons from existing models, and suggested that a clear distinction was made between the vision for IPSA (including the decisions it would have to take and who would be responsible for these) and the vision for the Programme Implementation Team (including the decisions it would have to take and who would be responsible for these).**

12. It was asked if IPSA would be getting independent, external legal advice. Then agreed that, as with Communications, it was important that this function be, and be seen to be, independent. It was added that HR, estates and IT to the list of functions in relation to which we would need to put in place careful transitional arrangements. It was suggested that the PDD should set out which parts of IPSA it would be appropriate for the Government to advise on, and which parts it would not. It was underlined that we needed to be in a position to advise the Chair on issues such as this on his appointment.
13. In terms of strategic objectives, the importance of demonstrating independence was stressed – regarding this it was thought that IPSA might benefit from more CSFs for this objective, and that IPSA should be in a position to hit these in November. A related question was the extent to which IPSA might take account of the Kelly Report – which would, of course, depend on the timing of the Report. It was confirmed that while the Act required IPSA to put an allowance scheme (or schemes) in place, it did not place any restrictions on what this scheme had to look like, so it would be up to IPSA to determine the extent to which any scheme would take account of Kelly (though the body was required in law to formally consult him and others).
14. The question was asked what could be done to ensure that the business model for IPSA commanded support. Transparency in its development was one answer – perhaps in the form of a consultation. There was wide discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of the consultative approach, and which parties such an approach should involve (and at what stage). It was suggested that more work on the critical risks involved was necessary.
15. The action points for the Implementation Team were summarised: in addition to clarifying responsibilities for IPSA and the Programme Team within the vision, **we would work on: a series of business model options to present to the Chair on his appointment; a series of options for consulting on the business model, also to be presented to the Chair on his appointment; and contingency plans for responding to the Kelly and Legg reports.**

Risks

16. It was asked that colleagues feed any comments on section 12 of Document O directly to the team. He identified the most important critical risk to be an early General Election, **on which a series of contingency plans were needed, for the different possible timings.** The work of the growing risk workshop was touched on briefly, and it was said that the Programme Board would have more detailed plans on risk for consideration at the next meeting.

Appointment

17. The Board was asked to note that a renewal order would be needed to keep certain aspects of Act (including provisions relating to MPs' code of conduct relating to financial interests) in play after two years. This was likely to be sensitive.

Forward Look

18. The next meeting was previewed (15 September) which would cover: **risks and contingencies; an indicative budget; options for a transparent business model; more detail on the implementation timetable; and an update on the position of the House (including the 'as is' situation).**
19. It was asked if the next meeting could also consider a **Comms strategy**. It was said that it would. The need for the House and MoJ to work closely on this was reiterated; it was explained that **a series of MoUs** (between the House, MoJ and IPSA) were being worked on as part of the Programme, and that Comms would, of course, feature heavily in this.

AOB

20. The Board agreed that they were content to meet at least once a month, and for future dates to be placed in their diaries.
21. The plan of how to manage the transitional period between the old and new system in the spring was inquired about; it was said that we were currently **considering whether this substantive piece of work should be a separate work stream or a separate project within the Programme.**

25 August 2009