

PRESS RECOGNITION PANEL

Minutes of the 5th meeting of the Press Recognition Panel Board held on 25 March 2015 at 107-111 Fleet Street, London EC4A 2AB

Present: Dr David Wolfe QC (Chair), Harry Cayton, Carolyn Regan, Harry Rich and Tim Suter

In Attendance: Susie Uppal (Executive Director), John Price-Williams (Interim Communications Advisor), Gavin Sturge (Interim Finance Director), Sadie East (Communications Stakeholder Manager), Carol-Ann West (note taker)

Apologies: Emma Gilpin-Jacobs, Holly Perry (Interim Governance Manager)

BOARD MEETING – PUBLIC SESSION

1. The Chair **welcomed** the members of the public who were in attendance, all of whom confirmed that they were happy to be named having been present.
 - Alistair Brett, Early Resolution CIC
 - Alex Cisneros, the IMPRESS project
 - James Connal, Capital PR

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2015, outstanding actions and matter arising

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2015 were **approved**, subject to the word '*regulator*' being amended to '*register*' on page 2. The Chair would sign a copy of the minutes as a correct record.
3. The Board **agreed** that the words REDACTED TEXT should be removed from the minutes of the meetings with stakeholders.
4. The log of outstanding Board actions was **noted** and **agreed**. It was **noted** that work on actions 10, 11, 12 and 15 had temporarily slowed down owing to Holly Perry's absence.

Update on resourcing issues – paper PRP14(15)

5. The Board considered a paper which set out an update on progress since the 27 February 2015 meeting in relation to resourcing to support the proposals on the approach to recognition and the overall work programme.

6. The Board:

- **noted** the successful recruitment process;
- **noted** the update in relation to HR support;
- **noted** the update on premises arrangements and **agreed** that SU should find out from Regus if giving notice would result in needing to negotiate a new lease if the Panel decided to stay on at 88 Wood Street. Subject to that information, the Board **agreed** that notice should not be given at this stage as moving again would be disruptive during an important stage of the Panel's work;
- **noted** the update regarding Finance support; and
- **noted** the update regarding IT

Update on meetings with stakeholders – paper PRP15(15)

7. The Board:

- **agreed** that to invite the FT, Guardian and Independent and some hyper-locals to talk to the Panel;
- **noted** the correspondence from Simon Carne and asked the Executive Director to thank him for his very thought provoking response, which would be fed into detailed discussions in due course; and
- **agreed** that a revised schedule of the stakeholder meetings be circulated to the Board.

Governance Framework update – paper PRP16(15)

8. The Board **considered** a paper which presented an interim IT policy and an interim Treasury policy.

9. The Board:

- **agreed** the IT Policy as a working draft;
- **agreed** the draft Treasury Policy, subject to the following amendments;
 - under 1. Scope – delete '*equal to x months of expenditure in order*' is to be deleted, and amend '*investment earnings*' to '*security of investment*'.
 - under 3. Standards of Care (Delegation of Authority) – amend the first sentence to set out that the Board has authority to select any second bank and the Finance Director has authority

to manage any transactions between the savings and deposit accounts.

- **agreed** to delegate responsibility to the Governance Manager and Chair to finalise the drafts and arrange for publication on the Panel's website for public consultation;
- **agreed** the position in relation to restrictions on the Panel's activity during the General Election;
- **noted** the latest update on internal and external audit arrangements;
- **agreed** that a second bank account be set up and the Panel's funds split between that and its existing bank account and **agreed** that security was a more important consideration than the rate of interest offered by an account.

Finance Report March 2015 – paper PRP17(15)

10. The Board considered the Finance report, presented by Gavin Sturge.

11. The Board:

- **noted** the latest financial position and tax implications;
- **noted** that VAT could not be reclaimed and the tax was only payable on interest;
- **agreed** that GS should complete work with HMRC before leaving;
- **agreed** that SU should write to the National Audit Office to seek confirmation that NAO would be auditing the Panel's accounts;
- **agreed** that in future capital costs should be split out under IT expenditure.

Closing Discussion

12. The Chair invited the members of the public who were in attendance to make any observations and to raise any questions at this time.

13. Alistair Brett (Early Resolution CIC) stated that he believed that the issue of arbitration was key and asked if the Board was considering this.

14. The Chair responded that arbitration was covered by one of the criteria for recognition set out in the Royal Charter. The Panel would be looking over the next two to three months at how to interpret the criteria and arbitration would be considered further as part of that process. However it was important to note that the Panel was not able to go beyond the terms of the Charter. The Panel would welcome the contribution of Mr Brett and his colleagues as part of its work in the coming months.

Any other business

15. The Chair reported that there was no other business and closed the meeting at 2.15pm.

Date and time of next meeting

16. The Board **noted** that the next scheduled meeting of the Board would be held on 21 April 2015, starting at 10am.