

PRESS RECOGNITION PANEL
Minutes of the 6th meeting of the Press Recognition Panel Board
held on 21 April 2015 at 107-111 Fleet Street, London EC4A 2AB

Present: Dr David Wolfe QC (Chair), Harry Cayton, Carolyn Regan, Harry Rich (to paragraph 25) and Tim Suter

In attendance: Susie Uppal (Executive Director), Sadie East (Communications and Stakeholder Manager), Holly Perry (Interim Governance Manager),

Apologies: Emma Gilpin-Jacobs

Guests: John Speed, JS2 Ltd (paragraphs 17 to 28)

BOARD MEETING – PUBLIC SESSION

Welcome and Apologies

17. The Chair **welcomed** Members and attendees to the sixth meeting of the Press Recognition Panel Board, and extended a particular welcome to John Speed, of JS2 who was attending for the finance aspects of the discussion. The Chair reported that item 9 on the agenda, scheduled for discussion in the public session, had been discussed in the confidential session, and that a final draft business plan and budget 2015/16 would be presented in the public session of the 26 May 2015 meeting.
18. The Chair also **welcomed** the members of the public who were in attendance, both of whom confirmed that they were happy to be named as having been present:
 - Alex Cisneros, the IMPRESS project
 - James Connal, Capital PR
19. The Board noted that apologies had been received from Emma Gilpin-Jacobs, and that Harry Rich would need to leave part way through the meeting.

Declaration of members' interests

20. The Board noted that in the context of discussions held during the confidential session relating to the secondment of a member of staff of the Professional Standards Authority (PSA), Harry Cayton, as Chief Executive of the PSA, had declared an interest. The declaration of interest also applied to the discussions relating to premises, set out in paragraphs 17 to 19 of the resources update item, paper PRP20(15).

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2015, outstanding actions and matters arising

21. The minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2015 were **approved**. The Chair would sign a copy of the minutes as a correct record.
22. The log of outstanding Board actions was **noted** and **agreed**.
23. In relation to matters arising, the Board **noted** that:
- the first action in the log remained outstanding – the Chair would write to the House of Lords Communications Committee once Parliament reconvened following the General Election; and
 - Holly Perry had now returned from bereavement absence, and would progress the range of governance actions set out in the log.

Update on resourcing issues – paper PRP20(15)

24. The Board **considered** an update on actions taken since the 25 March 2015 Board meeting in relation to resourcing to support the overall work programme. The Chair, on the Board's behalf, **thanked** the team for their speed and collaborative focus since taking up post in late March and early April.
25. The following points were **noted** in discussion:

HR services

- the Executive Director would meet Peninsula on 23 April 2015 for a meeting to finalise the staff contract paperwork;
- work station assessments had been undertaken for all staff on 20 April 2015 and the necessary adjustments had been made;
- as part of the project planning work, the Executive Director would secure additional resource within her delegated limits in order to fill gaps and skills shortages for particular elements of the work programme;
- the Executive Director would give some thought to succession arrangements for each member of the team – in some areas, there was cover in place, but in other areas, gaps would result in issues emerging.

Premises

- the Panel was paying a premium for the flexibility of the Regus offering, and it was accepted that such flexibility would not be available for other options;

- there was limited time to search the market for alternative options, but if the PSA was able to set down some precise figures, this option might be worth pursuing, given the landscape would become clearer from September 2015;
- on the basis of the requirement to give Regus three months' notice, the Board would consider the issue further at the 30 June 2015 meeting, for a decision potentially taking effect in September 2015.

Finance support

- JS2 Ltd had been appointed to assist with financial support following Gavin Sturge's departure on 31 March 2015;
- John Speed of JS2 Ltd explained the nature of the services that the Panel would be provided with under the contract agreed – Megan Archer of JS2 Ltd was the Panel's client manager, and would provide the day-to-day support;
- management accounts would be filed monthly, and JS2 Ltd would have its own control functions and ledger;
- JS2 Ltd would be content to feed into the discussions at Board level in relation to internal and external audit arrangements, and establishing an audit and risk committee. The Executive Director confirmed that discussions with the National Audit Office were ongoing, and the Panel was awaiting the outcome of the NAO's due diligence checks.

Financial arrangements

- the amendments set out in the paper were **agreed**, including delegation of a monthly payroll limit of £100,000 to the Executive Director; and
- the segregation of duties, including the involvement of JS2 Ltd, was welcomed.

Information Technology

- the work to network the laptops and put in place central back up arrangements was taking longer than hoped, owing to issues with the internet speed.

Website

- phase one of the work had now been completed, and the Chair and members of the team were meeting Wave to discuss handover arrangements on 28 April 2015;
- phases two and three of the work linked with the work on visual identity discussed as part of item 4, paper PRP19(15);
- the website would be updated to include details of the new staff who had joined since the end of March 2015.

26. In summary, the Board:
- **noted** the further staff who had been engaged following the recruitment activity in March 2015, and that further gaps might need to be plugged in the short term;
 - **noted** the update in relation to HR activity;
 - **noted** the update regarding the Panel's premises arrangements, and **agreed** that a further update should be provided at the 30 June 2015 meeting;
 - **noted** the update regarding Finance support and the appointment of JS2 Ltd;
 - **noted** and **approved** the update regarding the Panel's finance arrangements;
 - **delegated authority** to the Executive Director to authorise monthly payroll to a limit of £100,000;
 - **noted** the update regarding IT; and
 - **noted** the update regarding the Panel's website.

Finance report April 2015 – paper PRP21(15)

27. The Board received a paper which set out a bank-reconciled set of accounts as at the financial year end, 31 March 2015 for the Board's consideration. John Speed reported that expenditure had been somewhat behind the forecast, principally on the basis that some expenditure had moved from March to April.
28. The Board:
- **noted** that in future, the update would comprise a one-page summary, with a detailed report examining variances to budget, and a narrative to explain major variances;
 - **noted** the position regarding the Panel's income and expenditure as at 31 March 2015, including the final year end net surplus after costs of £758,500;
 - **noted** that this would be the last report in the current format. In future, JS2 Ltd would be presenting the financial reports in a more detailed and expanded format;
 - **noted** that a further sum of money as due to be transferred from the Exchequer via the Ministry of Justice in the early part of the new financial year.

Governance Framework update – paper PRP23(15)

29. The Board considered a paper which presented an update on the second phase of Governance Framework documents for formal adoption, following eight weeks of public consultation which ended on 27 March 2015. The

Board **noted** that no responses to the consultation had been received.

30. The Board **approved** the following policies and position statements as final versions and **delegated authority** to the interim Governance Manager and Chair to publish the second phase of documents as final policies on the Panel's website:
- gifts and hospitality;
 - complaints handling;
 - political activity; and
 - Welsh Language Scheme.

Update on stakeholder meetings – paper PRP24(15)

31. The Board **considered** a paper which updated the Board on the latest position with regard to the meetings with those with an interest in the Panel's work, further to the update provided at the Board's 25 March 2015 meeting.
32. The following points were raised in discussion:
- reflecting on the meetings held so far, there was a slight mismatch in terms of attendees' expectations and those of the attendees - nevertheless, the meetings had been invaluable in terms of framing the Panel's thinking and to inform the work on the approach to recognition;
 - the outputs were being collated and were being factored in to the framing of the consultation document (reference to the sessions would be made in the introduction of the consultation document).
33. In summary, the Board
- **noted** the minutes of the stakeholder meetings held on 9 March 2015 (with IMPRESS, Hacked Off and the Media Standards Trust); 25 March 2015 (with Steve Barnett of the University of Westminster); and 30 March 2015 with academics;
 - **noted** the summary points raised at the meeting with academics and commentators held on 13 April 2015; and
 - **noted** the planned meetings with publishers (Independent, Guardian and Financial Times), very small publishers ("hyper-locals") and journalist organisations (National Union of Journalists and Association of European Journalists), as well as meetings in Glasgow (5 May¹) and Cardiff (6 May) and Belfast (date to be confirmed), and **noted** that the website would be updated to reflect the latest position;
 - **noted** that at the present time, no meetings had been scheduled with the News Media Association (which had declined the Panel's invitation

¹ Post meeting note: meeting now postponed.

to meet), Society of Editors (response outstanding) and Periodical Publishers Association (response outstanding); and

- **noted** that the Panel was continuing to try to identify a potential meeting date with IPSO².

Draft Communications and stakeholder strategy – paper PRP25(15)

34. The Board received a paper which attached a draft strategy for communications and engagement for the Board's consideration and approval.
35. The following points were raised in discussion:
- at paragraph 10, the Panel's statement of its mission and approach was described as 'draft' however this was in fact agreed;
 - references to developing a style guide would be removed from the action plan;
 - in relation to the key messages at paragraph 13, the fourth bullet would be moved up (working in the public interest by supporting and promoting a free press in a free and fair society);
 - in relation to sign-posting the public, a line would be added to indicate that the Board would make a decision about sign-posting at a later date;
 - it was **agreed** that there was considerable material within the strategy which could be usefully referenced in the draft recognition criteria consultation document;
 - in relation to media training, it was **agreed** that Tim Suter would run a Q and A session at the end of the Board meeting on 26 May, ahead of the consultation events starting in June.
37. The Board **agreed** the draft communications and engagement strategy, subject to reflection of the points raised in discussion.

Proposals for public consultation – paper PRP26(15)

38. The Board received a paper which set out a proposed approach to consultation and engagement to support the development of proposals for the standards and guidance for the process of receiving and deciding on applications for recognition.
39. The Board **noted** that the proposals were very much outline at this stage, on the basis that the consultation document had not yet been drafted.

² Post meeting note: meeting now scheduled for 12 May 2015.

40. The following points were raised in discussion:
- it was **agreed** that the first paragraph of Annex A (on the purpose of consultation) would be included in the consultation document;
 - the proposed eight-week consultation period was **agreed**;
 - it was **agreed** that the Chair would write to all contacts on the contacts database with an update on the plans for consultation, provide details of all those with whom the Panel intended to consult, and inviting suggestions for others individuals or organisations to add to the database;
 - the Panel **noted** the pre-consultation stage, the consultation activity proposed, and the post-consultation plans;
 - in relation to consultation activities, it was **clarified** that the Welsh Language Act did not apply to the Panel. In accordance with the Board's Welsh Language Scheme, the consultation document would be translated into Welsh;
 - the points in relation to meeting the public sector equality duty requirements were **noted**;
 - in relation to the consultation event, Glasgow would be added and it was **agreed** that an event in Manchester rather than Leeds would be preferable. It was likely that there would be a number of events held in London, given the concentration of stakeholders here;
 - the venue would depend very much on locations, as well as clarification of the purpose of the events. The Panel was likely to need to take a pragmatic approach, and take up venue opportunities that were offered (for example, academic institutions and other public bodies). Journalism schools were likely to be helpful in accessing lists of invitees, including local journals. It was **agreed** that adverts needed to be placed in public for each event;
 - it was **agreed** that views would be gathered at each meeting and fed into the consultation – although attendees would be encouraged to submit their own responses to ensure their views were formally reflected;
 - it was **agreed** that the same consultation questions would be used in the consultation document itself and as the basis for the consultation events;
 - in terms of timings on the day, it was **agreed** that maximum flexibility would be helpful to allow for venue and travel constraints;
 - it was **noted** that the exact nature of each event would depend on the number of attendees, as set out in the paper;
 - the Executive Director **agreed** to circulate a paper setting out emerging thoughts, for Board Members' comments ahead of the Board meeting on 26 May;
 - it was **noted** that the interim Governance Manager would start work on

collating Board Members' availability for the consultation events.

41. In summary, the Board:
- **agreed** the proposed approach to the public consultation;
 - **agreed** the timetable, proposed locations and proposal for attendance at consultation events, including contacts from civil society groups, set out at Annex B, subject to the points raised in discussion;
 - **agreed** to consider and provide details of any contacts who might be able to assist to the Communications and Stakeholder Manager; and
 - **agreed** that the consultation should be promoted to members of the public.

Closing discussion

42. The Chair invited the members of the public in attendance to make any observations and to raise any questions. No specific points were raised.

Any other business

43. There was no other business.

Date and time of next meeting

44. The Board **noted** that the next scheduled meeting of the Board would be held on Tuesday 26 May 2015, starting at 10.00am, venue 107-111 Fleet Street, London EC4A 2AB.