



Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland

Minutes of the Investigating Officers Meeting held on 10 October 2018 from 10.15 to 12.30 at Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh

Present:

Bill Thomson, Commissioner (BT)
Ralph Noble, Investigating Officer (RN)
Ian Mackay, Investigating Officer (ITM)
Jon Miller, Investigating Officer (JM)
Karen Chambers, Investigating Officer (KC)
Douglas Winchester, Investigating Officer (DW)
Brenda McKinney, Investigations Manager (BM)
Helen Hayne, Investigations Manager (HH)
Stuart Scott, Casework Co-ordinator (SS)
Fiona Murray, Casework Co-ordinator (FM)
Emma Armstrong, Web and Online Manager, Scottish Parliament (EA)

Apologies:

Claire Gilmore, Senior Investigating Officer (CG)

1. SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENTATION

- 1.1 BT introduced EA who provided an overview on differing social media platforms and their use within the Scottish Parliament. A discussion followed.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 15 August 2018 were approved with no amendments.

3. CMS

- 3.1 HH advised that an issue had been identified regarding how the new CMS system would deal with tracked changes in documents being held within the system. HH also advised that Arcus were to provide an update and that the issue had caused a delay, with the project temporarily on hold pending a resolution. A discussion followed. Note: a way forward was agreed with Arcus on 11 October.

4. WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 BT provided an update confirming that the logo, colour scheme and website wireframes have all been agreed and signed off. BT advised that the next stage was content development and stated that discussions were

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ongoing regarding the potential use of a copywriter. BT also confirmed that web summaries in their new form would be included on the website. BT advised that the target for the launch of the new website was December 2018.

5. IN-YEAR REVIEWS

- 5.1 BT advised that the office would contact Investigating Officers to set up in-year reviews. BT also confirmed that both he and CG would be conducting the reviews.

6. REVIEW OF CURRENT COMPLAINTS/CASES – COUNCILS AND PUBLIC BODIES

- 6.1 Report on cases in progress:
- Current cases were discussed.
- 6.2 Any other current issues:
- None
- 6.3 Target and Statistics Reports for the period ending 30 September 2018:
- BM advised that complaints received were 40% above the same period last year. The number of cases was 92% above the same period last year.
 - Completed complaints were 3% above the same period last year, with 81 complaints completed. In terms of cases being completed, there was an increase compared to the same period last year of 16%.
 - BM also advised that 68% of cases were completed within the office.
 - Targets for completion within 3, 6 and 9 months were all being achieved.
 - Target for initial assessment was currently not being achieved.

7. RECENT/UPCOMING HEARINGS

- 7.1 Investigations with recent Hearings were:
- LA/As/2062 – The Hearing against Councillor Anne Allan resulted in a finding of Breach, and the application of censure.
 - LA/I/2113 – The Hearing against Councillor Luciano Rebecchi resulted in a finding of Breach, and the application of censure.
- 7.2 Investigations with upcoming Hearings are:
- LA/An/2094 – The Hearing regarding the complaint against Councillor Richard Moore will be held on 19 November 2018.

8. REVIEW OF CURRENT COMPLAINTS/CASES – MSPs

- 8.1 Report on cases in progress:
- BT presented a summary of recent cases. A discussion followed.
- 8.2 BT gave an update on discussions held with the SPPA Committee regarding information being leaked at the point where the report on a recent case was submitted to the Parliament. It had been agreed that all

future proposed and final reports on MSP cases would be marked as Confidential.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS


- 9.1 BT advised that he had recently met with the Lobbying Registrar and team. The Registrar advised that there had been 2600 returns to the Register, of which 500 were incomplete and under consideration. BT confirmed that progress had been made in discussions between the Parliament, the Crown Office and his Office on a Memorandum of Agreement. A further meeting was scheduled for 24 October 2018.
- 9.2 BT introduced FM who has joined as a Casework Co-ordinator.
- 9.3 RN raised an issue regarding the quality of complaint information received, particularly as relates to links included within documents. A discussion followed. BT asked RN to provide examples of the issues encountered, to consider whether the process currently followed might benefit from being reviewed.
- 9.4 BT advised that there was no update available at this time on the IO/SIO review.
- 9.5 DW indicated that he was now available to shadow Investigating Officers with interviews.
- 9.6 BT advised that the meeting scheduled for 21 November 2018 would include an item relating to Policies, including IT security.

10. DATES FOR FOLLOWING MEETINGS

21 November 2018
19 December 2018
30 January 2019
27 March 2019
8 May 2019
19 June 2019
31 July 2019
25 September 2019
6 November 2019
18 December 2019



Chair of meeting
Bill Thomson, Commissioner for
Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland



Date of Approval