



**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE
170th MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 11TH MARCH 2010 AT 35 GREAT
SMITH STREET, WESTMINSTER, LONDON SW1P 3BQ**

Present: Sir Christopher Kelly KCB
Lloyd Clarke QPM
Oliver Heald MP
Rt Hon Alun Michael JP MP
Dame Denise Platt DBE
David Prince CBE
Dr Elizabeth Vallance JP
Dr Brian Woods-Scawen DL CBE

Apologies: Sir Derek Morris MA Dphil

Secretariat: Ruth Alaile, Secretary
Peter Hawthorne, Assistant Secretary
Martin Adams, Senior Policy Adviser
Maggie O'Boyle, Press Officer

The Agenda for the Committee meeting was agreed.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2010 were agreed.

Register and declaration of interests

1. The latest register was reviewed and amended by the Committee.

Committee inquiry into local leadership

2. Further to the discussion at the last Committee meeting on this topic, and subsequent discussions about the Committee's work plan, the Committee considered how best to take forward the issues that had emerged during the inquiry.

3. A major concern was the passage of time which had elapsed since it had called for, and received, evidence and the Committee's limited resources. As was previously noted during that period there had been legislative developments in overview and scrutiny, the prime vehicle for promoting openness and accountability in local government, and the remit of local authority overview and scrutiny committees was being extended to partnerships. It was noted that the Audit Commission was about to embark on a piece of work on overview and scrutiny. The Committee agreed to write up where it had got to, identifying the main issues which arose from the evidence and where appropriate suggesting who was best placed to take consideration of them further. It was possible that the Committee would wish to return to some or all of them later, depending on other developments.

4. In relation to London Government, it was noted that the arrangements were unique. The evidence that the Committee had received from the London Assembly and the GLA Standards Committee in particular contained suggestions on how to improve openness and accountability in London Government.

Party funding

5. The Committee considered a paper which proposed a one-off public hearing session on party funding as a way of exploring the Committee's long-standing concerns about the arrangements for

funding political parties in the UK. The proposal was agreed. The session will be held after the election.

CSPL Annual Report and Open Meeting 2010

6. It was agreed that the Committee would produce their Annual Report by the Parliamentary summer recess and hold an open meeting at a date to be arranged in September.

FOI publication scheme

7. The Committee reviewed and approved a revised Freedom of Information Act publication scheme.

Member code of practice

8. The Committee undertook one of its regular reviews of its code of practice and some changes were approved. However it was agreed that the paragraph preventing a member holding a paid or high profile office in a political party should be reviewed to reflect the position of the parliamentary members.
9. It was also agreed that the guidance relating to the register of interests should be circulated once a year.

Work programme

10. The Committee examined the work programme for 2010-11. It was agreed that the programme be updated and re-circulated.

Secretary's report

11. The Secretary's Report was noted. The Committee considered the letter sent by the Clerk of the House of Commons in response to the Committee's report on MPs' expenses and allowances.

12. In addition, the Committee discussed the recent report by the Electoral Commission and considered a report back from a seminar in the House of Lords on press regulation.

Current Issues and concerns

13. The report was noted.

The Secretariat

March 2010