

Minutes of the Editors' Code of Practice Committee meeting at the offices of the News Media Association, 292 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, on December 1, 2016.

Present:

National newspapers

Chairman: Paul Dacre (Daily Mail); Chris Evans (Daily Telegraph); Hugh Whittow (Daily Express); John Witherow (The Times).

Regional newspapers

Neil Benson (Trinity Mirror Regionals); Ian Murray (Southern Daily Echo); Mike Sassi (Nottingham Post); Hannah Walker (South London Press).

Scottish press

Damian Bates (Press & Journal, Aberdeen).

Magazines

Harriet Wilson (Condé Nast Publications).

Lay members (ex officio)

Sir Alan Moses (*Chairman, IPSO*); Matt Tee (*CEO, IPSO*).

Independent lay members

Christine Elliott; David Jessel; Kate Stone.

Attending

Jonathan Grun (*Secretary*)

Chairman's introduction: The chairman announced his intention to stand down once a replacement had been found. His decision was in line with Sir Joseph Pilling's recommendation in his report on IPSO that the length of time that anyone may serve on the committee should be limited.

Tributes were paid to the chairman for his leadership and his consensual approach to chairing the committee.

Minutes of the meeting on July 20, 2016 were noted, having been approved earlier by email.

Matters arising: There were no matters arising.

Pilling Report

The committee considered Sir Joseph Pilling's report on the Independent Press Standards Organisation, which contained recommendations for changes to the Editors' Code Committee constitution.

The issues were:

Independent Lay members of the Committee

The committee noted Sir Joseph's comments regarding an independent lay member who was also a member of the IPSO complaints committee.

It agreed to request the Regulatory Funding Company Board to approve the following change (in red) to the Code Committee's constitution at Paragraph 12(c)iii to read:

3 independent members of the public shall be chosen by the Appointment Panel established under Article 26 of Articles of Association of IPSO in accordance with the Appointment Principles, as defined in the Articles of Association of IPSO. They shall not be persons connected with IPSO, unless they were appointed before this amendment was agreed.

Consultation exercise on Code of Practice

The committee noted Sir Joseph's recommendation that a requirement to complete a consultation exercise on the Code should be included in the committee's constitution.

The secretary told the committee that the Code was constantly under review and could be changed at any time. In addition, major Code Reviews already involved public consultation but this was not formally written into the constitution.

The committee agreed that Code Review consultations should be held on a triennial basis and that submissions should normally be published.

It agreed to request the Regulatory Funding Company Board to approve the following change (in red and struck-through text) to the Code Committee's constitution Paragraph 10 to read:

The Committee shall hold a public consultation on a triennial basis and give due consideration to representations received by it, ~~and shall~~ in particular ensuring it receives the views of IPSO. Submissions received during a consultation will normally be published after they have been considered by the committee, unless those making submissions have asked that they be treated in confidence.

Limiting terms of committee membership

The Committee agreed that membership of the committee should be limited to two terms, with the exception of the chairman and chief executive of IPSO.

The committee discussed the value of members, particularly independent lay members, having sufficient time to gain experience and understanding of the issues involved. It also discussed the transitional arrangements that would be required and decided that all membership terms should be considered to run from when the re-constituted post-Leveson committee first met in May, 2015.

It agreed to request the Regulatory Funding Company Board to approve the following change (in red and struck-through text) to the Code Committee's constitution Paragraph 13 to read:

*Each of the members, other than the Chair and chief executive officer of IPSO (who serve ex officio) shall be elected or appointed for ~~renewable three~~ **a five** year terms, **renewable by vote of the Committee for a maximum of another three years**. **The starting date for the operation of this clause shall be the date of the first meeting of the committee after it was reconstituted to include independent members.***

The committee further said it would at a future meeting consider widening the pool of potential industry members, possibly extending to deputy editors and managing editors, to ensure that the committee could be refreshed in line with the Pilling Report recommendations.

Public consultation on Code Review

The Committee noted that the next Code Review, which would involve a public consultation, would be announced following the meeting.

The closing date for submissions would be Friday, March 3, 2017. The committee noted that it had agreed that sufficient time should also be devoted to the process in 2017 to allow a dialogue with interested parties and due consideration of the issues raised.

Revised Codebook

The secretary reported that the Editors' Codebook, which highlighted best practice and key adjudications, was on course to be published online before the end of the year.

Government consultation on press regulation

The committee agreed to make a submission to the government consultation on possible Implementation of Section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act 2013 and whether Part 2 of the Leveson Inquiry into police and press relations should go ahead.

Next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in the spring of 2017 on a date to be decided.