

# PARLIAMENTARY STANDARDS ACT 2009



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## THE SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE FOR THE INDEPENDENT PARLIAMENTARY STANDARDS AUTHORITY

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### FIRST REPORT 2015

#### Appointment of IPSA Board Members

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## The Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority

The Speaker's Committee for the IPSA is appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009 as amended by the Constitutional Reform & Governance Act 2010.

### Current membership

Rt Hon John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons (Chair)  
Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP, Leader of the House (ex officio)  
Rt Hon Kevin Barron MP, Chair of the Standards and Privileges Committee (ex officio)  
Rt Hon Nicholas Brown MP  
Chris Bryant MP  
Rt Hon Mrs Cheryl Gillan MP  
Mr Charles Walker MP  
Pete Wishart MP  
Dame Janet Gaymer DBE QC (Hon.) (Lay Member)  
Professor Monojit Chatterji (Lay Member)  
Mr Kenneth Batty (Lay Member)

### Contacts

The Secretaries of the Speaker's Committee are Eve Samson and Ben Williams.  
Correspondence should be addressed to:

The Secretary of the SCIPSA  
Journal Office  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

Email: [scipsa@parliament.uk](mailto:scipsa@parliament.uk)  
Telephone inquiries: 020 7219 3351  
Fax: 020 7219 2269  
Website: [www.parliament.uk/scipsa](http://www.parliament.uk/scipsa)

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## Introduction

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1. The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) was established by the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009. The Chair of the Board of IPSA and other Board Members are appointed by Her Majesty the Queen, following an Address from the House of Commons. The Speaker of the House of Commons is required to select individuals to serve on the Board of IPSA “on merit on the basis of fair and open competition”, and the Speaker’s Committee for the IPSA must approve the candidates selected by the Speaker. In practice the Speaker chooses to consult and involve the Speaker’s Committee throughout the appointment process.

2. The Act specifies that there shall be four Board Members and that:

- a) At least one of the members of the IPSA must be a person who has held (but no longer holds) high judicial office (within the meaning of Part 3 of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 (c. 4)).
- b) At least one of the members of the IPSA must be a person who is qualified under Schedule 3 to the National Audit Act 1983 (c. 44) to be an auditor for the National Audit Office.
- c) One of the members of the IPSA (“the Parliamentary member”) must be a person who has been (but is no longer) a member of the House of Commons.

3. On this occasion the vacancies on the Board of IPSA were for a former member of the House of Commons (to succeed Professor Tony Wright) and a former holder of a high judicial office (to succeed Sir Neil Butterfield).

4. This report provides information about the procedure followed by the Speaker’s during the selection of two candidate to join the Board of IPSA. The Committee is grateful to both Professor Wright and Sir Neil Butterfield for the contributions they have made as Board members.

### The Process

5. Although this is not a Ministerial appointment, the Speaker has had regard to the Commissioner for Public Appointments’ Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies. In order to assist with identifying possible candidates for the post the Speaker in June appointed the following independent Panel:

Dame Denise Platt (Independent Chair)

Professor Monojit Chatterji (lay member, Speaker’s Committee for the IPSA)

Sir Ian Kennedy (Chair, IPSA)

Sir David Latham (former Chief Justice of Appeal)

Laura Sandys (former MP for South Thanet)

6. As with previous appointments to the IPSA, funding was provided to support the use of recruitment consultants, who were appointed under the House Service's framework agreement, which was awarded following a competitive tender.

7. The Panel considered and noted the role description and person specification which agreed between the IPSA and Mr Speaker, and agreed to the contents of the recruitment pack.<sup>1</sup>

8. The post was publicly advertised and the panel approved the text of an advertisement. The panel was advised by GatenbySanderson that web-based advertisement, in conjunction with the active search by the consultants, represented the best option to source a strong field. The panel agreed that the advertisement should appear in the following media:

- Sunday Times (print & online)
- Counsel Magazine (print & online)
- The House Magazine (online only)
- Nonexecutivedirectors.com (online only)
- Women on Boards (online only)
- GatenbySanderson Linked In and Twitter account
- GatenbySanderson website

9. The Panel met on 22 September to consider the report from the recruitment consultants and agreed to shortlist eight candidates for interview across the two vacancies (five for the former MP role, three for the former judicial role). The interviews took place on 2 November. All candidates were questioned on the same areas relevant to the role. They were assessed as to how they met the essential criteria for the role.

10. The Speaker and the Committee is entirely satisfied that the selection process was rigorous and that the panel discharged its duties conscientiously and with all due regard to the requirements of thoroughness, fairness and propriety. We are grateful to Dame Denise and her fellow panel members.

### **The Candidate—former Member of the House of Commons**

11. The unanimous view of the panel was that John Thurso, former member of Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross should be appointed to the IPSA Board in respect of the vacancy for a former Member of the House of Commons. John Thurso was elected to the House of Commons in 2001 and served on a number of high-profile Committees including the Treasury Select Committee and the Parliamentary Commission on Banking Standards.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A

He was also the Chair of the Finance and Service Committee, and a member of the House of Commons Commission, where he served as the Commission spokesman. Before entering Parliament, John Thurso had had a successful career in business, and was CEO of the Champneys group immediately before his election.

### **The Candidate—former holder of a high judicial office**

12. The unanimous view of the panel was that Sir Robert Owen should be appointed to the IPSA Board in respect of the vacancy for a former holder of a high judicial office. Sir Robert is a former High Court Judge. From 2005 to 2008 he served as a presiding judge for the Western Circuit, and he has been a member of the Judicial College board since 2011.

13. Both appointments were agreed by the Speaker's Committee for the IPSA at its meeting on 18 November. Appointments to the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority are made by Her Majesty on an Address from the House of Commons. The Committee invites the House to approve the appointment of John Thurso and Sir Robert Owen as Members of the Board of IPSA for the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2020.

# Appendix A: Role and person specification

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## Role and Person Specification

IPSA is looking to appoint two members to the Board under the terms of the Parliamentary Standards Act. The panel is committed to seeking candidates who bring a breadth of experience as well as specific professional backgrounds.

Under the terms of the Parliamentary Standards Act one must be:

- A person who has held (but no longer holds) high judicial office (within the meaning of Part 3 of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 (c. 4)).

And the other:

- Must be must be a person who has been (but is no longer) a member of the House of Commons (the “Parliamentary Member”).

To fulfil these roles, IPSA is looking for candidates who can demonstrate their abilities in the following areas.

### *Essential*

- Evidence of a profile demonstrating substantial experience, integrity, and significant achievement in your respective field.
- Demonstrable ability to operate at non-executive level in a demanding organisation, working successfully with an executive and taking forward the strategic direction of the organisation.
- An understanding of regulation/the role of the regulator, within either the public or the private sector.
- A successful track record of operating in an environment where decisions taken by the organisation are under constant public scrutiny.
- A successful track record of complex stakeholder management.

### *Desirable*

- A track record of reviewing financial and other resource/business plans demonstrating an understanding of cost effectiveness and efficiency.
- An understanding of recent developments within pensions, remuneration and/or business costs and expenses.
- Evidence of working successfully in a regulatory/investigatory/audit role and of chairing an Audit and Risk Committee and/or Remuneration Committee within the private, public or voluntary sector.

- An understanding of the administration and delivery of services and of the need to take account in this of MPs' experience.
- Evidence of working in a field where there is accountability to the public.
- An understanding of the statutory requirements of the Freedom of Information Act and the responsibilities of the Qualified Person in relation to that Act.

### **Skills and Personal Qualities**

- Undisputed demonstrable integrity and a commitment to the seven principles of public life.
- The ability to think clearly and independently and exercise sound judgement, grasping complex issues quickly.
- The ability to scrutinise and challenge, and hold to account from a non-executive perspective.
- Ability to work collaboratively utilising persuasion and influencing skills effectively in a high profile Board environment.
- The ability to contribute effectively at board level, work collaboratively, think strategically and reach collective decisions.
- Highly sophisticated political awareness, subtlety, tact and absolute discretion.