

**Minutes of the Plenary Meeting held on Thursday 11 October 2012,
Ground Floor Boardroom, Headline Building, Victoria Street, Belfast.**

Present: The Right Honourable Sir Declan Morgan, the Lord Chief
Justice of Northern Ireland (Chairman)
Mrs Sinead Burns
The Right Honourable Lord Justice Coghlin
Mrs Breidge Gadd
District Judge (Magistrates' Courts) Amanda Henderson
Mrs Fiona Keenan
Her Honour Judge Loughran
Mr James McNulty QC
Mr Alastair Rankin
Professor Nichola Rooney
Mr Lindsay Todd
The Honourable Mr Justice Weatherup

In Attendance: Mr Edward Gorringe
Mrs Helen Anderson
Ms Adeline Frew
Miss Catherine Woods

Apologies None

Minutes of the Last Meeting

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2012 were agreed by Commissioners following a discussion on the understanding of No.7 Para.3.
2. The Commissioners confirmed there were no conflicts of interest before proceeding with the meeting.

Welcoming of New Lay Commissioners

3. The Chairman welcomed the newly appointed Lay Commissioners, Mrs Gadd, Mrs Keenan and Mr Todd, and emphasised the importance of their involvement on the Commission and that each and every Commissioner had an equal voice and role to play.

Update from Chairs of the Committees

4. Business Committee - Professor Rooney gave an update of the meeting held on 18 September 2012.
 - Chairs of Selection Committees will present a report to Plenary at the cessation of each scheme;
 - the Lease on Headline Building remains unsigned by OFMDFM since January 2012;
 - £70,000 was surrendered in the October Monitoring Round; and
 - Outreach Plans and Business Cases overview for upcoming schemes and current schemes were discussed.

5. Audit & Risk Management Committee - Mrs Burns gave an update of the meeting held on 11 June 2012.
 - Risks – the Staffing Situation and Lease on Headline Building have yet to be resolved by OFMDFM, these will be addressed later in the meeting by Mr Gorringe
 - Mrs Burns met with Noel Lavery, at the OFMDFM Arms Length Body Audit Chairs meeting on 22 August 2012 and gave a brief summary of the key points – the importance of adhering to policies and governance.
6. Policy Committee - Justice Coghlin gave an update of the meeting held on 25 September 2012 under paper C21/12.

Deputy Statutory Officer and Deputy District Judge (Magistrates Court) schemes - assessment methods

7. Paper C21/12 was discussed by the Commission and all recommendations from the Policy Committee were accepted.

Updates from Chairs of Selection Committees

8. NIVT Scheme - Judge Henderson gave an update on the scheme. The increased pressure on staff from running of 4 schemes at once was noted by the selection panel during this scheme.

Action: Head of Appointments will examine timescales as part of a wider project approved by Business Committee.

9. Lands Tribunal Scheme - Justice Coghlin gave an update on the scheme. A delay occurred at the commencement of this scheme due to the agreement of a financial package by the sponsoring department. There were 12 potential applicants who applied for application packs but did not apply; the gender of whom is unknown. .

Action: Head of Diversity and Communications to aim to provide a break down of gender of non applicants of the Lands Tribunal Scheme, and within the evaluations of future schemes.

10. High Court Judge Scheme - The Lord Chief Justice gave an update on the scheme. 49 day target met on this scheme. Due to delays in swearing in the successful applicant the appointment of a temporary HCJ for a period of 3 months was approved by the Commission.
11. Appeals Tribunal Scheme (Medical) – Helen Anderson gave an update on the scheme. This was a rolling scheme; fees being offered for the post remain an ongoing issue in attracting applicants.
12. Coroner Scheme - Professor Rooney gave an update on the scheme. Confidentiality outside the Commission was an issue during this scheme. Commissioners were reminded of the importance of confidentiality during a scheme. A realistic benchmark for the time taken to run a scheme was requested from the Executive Team.

Action: Head of Appointments to examine a realistic benchmark for schemes to be compared against as part of the wider project on timescales.

New Committee Structures

13. The Commission agreed to put the new committee structures and terms of reference in place until the Away Day, when they can be re-addressed.

Action: New Committee Structures and Terms of Reference to be put on the Away Day agenda.

Reform of the Office of the Judicial Appointments Ombudsman

14. The Commission discussed and agreed paper C22/12. A response would be drafted by the Chief Executive and circulated to Commissioners.

Action: The Chief Executive to prepare a draft response and circulate to the Commission.

Updates from the Chief Executive

15. County Court Judicial Compliment – A letter has been sent to the Justice Minister advising him of the NIJAC decision, his response is awaited.
16. Staffing – OFMDFM have re-visited their previously agreed decision. The Commission referred this issue to Business Committee.
17. Joint Liaison Committee – The membership of the Committee has been agreed and the Committee are due to meet before the end of term.
18. Away Day – the Commissioners were reminded to send any agenda suggestions to the Chief Executive.

To Note

Report to the Business Committee

19. The report which had been before the Business Committee on 18 September 2012 was considered and approved by the Commissioners.

Updates, Signed Minutes from Committees and Appointments and Reappointments Schedules

- 20. Duly noted by the Commissioners, the Chairs of the Committees referred to the minutes in their updates.

Signed

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The Right Honourable Sir Declan Morgan, the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission

Dated

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