

**Minutes of the Plenary Meeting held on Thursday 13 October 2011,  
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  
District Judge (Magistrates' Courts) Amanda Henderson  
Mrs Ruth Laird  
Her Honour Judge Loughran  
Mr James McNulty QC  
Professor John Morison  
Mr Alastair Rankin  
Professor Nichola Rooney

**In Attendance:** Mr Edward Gorringe (Chief Executive)  
Mrs Helen Anderson  
Ms Adeline Frew  
Mr Tim Horgan  
Miss Catherine Woods

**Apologies**

The Right Honourable Lord Justice Coghlin  
Mr Donal Flanagan OBE  
Dr Raymond Mullan OBE  
The Honourable Mr Justice Weatherup

Mr Flanagan will be stepping down from Commission business for a period of time due to personal reasons.

## **Outgoing Commissioners**

1. The Chairman thanked Mr Peter Cush, on behalf of the Commission, for his work as a Commissioner for the last 5 years.

Mr Cush left the meeting.

## **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2011 were agreed by the Commissioners.
3. The Commission confirmed there were no conflicts of interest before proceeding with the meeting.

## **Matters Arising**

### **Accommodation**

4. The Chief Executive gave an update on the accommodation of the Commission. The business case for the Commission to stay in Headline Building has been passed by the OFMDFM Economists and is now awaiting OFMDFM's Finance Department approval. When approval has been granted, the NI Civil Service will enter into a 15 year lease for Headline Building and a suitable tenant for the remainder of the building will be sought.

### **Use of Headline Building by the NI Courts & Tribunals Service**

5. The Chief Executive updated the Commissioners on the use of Headline Building by the NI Courts & Tribunals Service. This use has currently ceased due to a decline in numbers.

## **Annual Report and Accounts 2010-11**

6. The Commissioners noted paper C17/11 and were presented with a copy of the Annual Report and Accounts 2010-11.
7. The Chairman asked the Commissioners to raise any points on the Annual Report and Accounts 2010-11 at the next meeting.

## **NIJAC Risk Register**

8. An update on the Risk Register was given by the Chairman of the Audit and Risk Management Committee. The suggested amendments that were considered by the Audit and Risk Management Committee were approved. Commissioners noted the absence of a control in place in respect of the “Working arrangements for staff” risk and asked staff to consider what control/s should be added. Staff were also asked to, when considering the register, to consider the removal as well as the addition of risks.
9. The Commissioners noted the risk of the Sunset Clause in the NI Act 2009, and asked for a review of the new processes of judicial appointment put in place on devolution; consideration to be given also to the impact on the role/form of the Commission if resolution of the Assembly is not gained. This is to be tabled at the Away Day.

## **To Note**

### **Diversity & Communications Team Update**

10. The report at Flag D was noted by the Commissioners.
11. Outreach was discussed by the Commissioners, on how to attract the most meritorious quality of candidates for the role.
12. The recent visit to the Cardiff Justice Centre was discussed.
13. The Commissioners requested to see the feedback on the Judicial Shadowing Scheme, which is presented to the Policy Committee annually. This report is to be presented twice yearly.

### **Report to the Business Committee**

14. The report which had been before the Business Committee on 20 September 2011 was considered and approved by the Commissioners.
15. The Chairman of the Business Committee will be stepping down from Commission business for a period of time due to personal reasons. Consideration to be given to a temporary chairman to cover this period.

### **Updates, Signed Minutes from Committees and Appointments and Reappointments Schedules**

16. Duly noted by the Commissioners.

**Any Other Business**

**County Court Judges**

- 17. The Commissioners considered and approved the request from the Lord Chief Justice’s Office to agree a short term increase in the number of County Court Judges.

**Away Day**

- 18. The Commissioners discussed the Away Day and agreed a date; 3 – 4 items to be agreed for the agenda.
- 19. The December Plenary to be cancelled.

**District Judge Assessment Day**

- 20. The request for an additional sitting was considered by the Commissioners and declined.

**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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