



**24 June 2019**

**214<sup>th</sup> COMMISSION MEETING  
IN THE OFFICE OF THE NORTHERN  
IRELAND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION,  
TEMPLE COURT, 39 NORTH STREET,  
BELFAST, BT1 1NA**

**Present:** Les Allamby, Chief Commissioner  
Helen Ferguson  
Helena Macormac  
John McCallister  
Eddie Rooney  
Graham Shields

**Apologies:** Paul Mageean

**In attendance:** David Russell, Chief Executive (Agenda items 1-9)  
Colin Caughey, Director (Legal, Research and  
Investigations, and Advice to Government)  
(Agenda items 1-12)  
Lorraine Hamill, Director (Finance, Personnel and  
Corporate Affairs)  
Claire Martin, Director (Communications,  
Information and Education, Public and Political  
Affairs)  
Eilis Haughey, Brexit Advisor (Agenda item 9)  
Sara Donnelly Clegg, Legal and Research Officer  
(Agenda items 10 and 13)  
Hannah Russell, Senior Policy and Research Officer

(Agenda items 11-13)  
Rhyannon Blythe, Senior Legal and Research  
Officer (Agenda items 12 and 13)  
Zara Porter, Communications and Public Affairs  
Officer (Agenda item 15)  
Jason McKeown, Communications and Public  
Affairs Officer (Agenda item 15)

## 1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Commissioner Paul Mageean.
- 1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

## 2. Minutes of the 213th Commission meeting and the closed minute of 213th Commission meeting

- 2.1 The minutes of the 213<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting held on 28 May 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

**Action: 213<sup>th</sup> Commission minutes to be uploaded to Commission website.**

- 2.2 The minutes of the closed meeting held on 28 May 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.
- 2.3 The Chief Commissioner confirmed that he would follow up the invitation sent to Sir Nicolas Bratza (item 2.3 of the previous meeting refers).
- 2.4 It was noted that the research paper regarding deaf children of Roma families had been shared with the Director (Legal, Research and Investigations, and Advice to Government) (item 4.2 of the previous meeting refers).

- 2.5 It was noted that arrangements for consultation meetings regarding the Children in Care paper were still to be arranged (item 9.2 of the previous meeting refers).
- 2.6 It was confirmed that the researchers for the Cumulative Impact Assessment would be attending roundtable meetings in Belfast on 2 July 2019 as part of their research (item 11.2 of the previous meeting refers). It was noted that a first draft of the research had been made available for comment. An updated draft would be available for the roundtable meetings on 2 July and it was hoped that a final version would be completed shortly by the end of the summer.
- 2.7 It was noted that the Community Engagement would take place in Mid Ulster council area on 4 July 2019 and that STEP in Dungannon would be facilitating the roundtable event. A meeting with the PSNI had been arranged for the afternoon and the Commission would be attending a meeting of the Mid-Ulster District Council in the evening. Commissioners were asked to confirm their attendance to the Personal Assistant who would issue final details of meetings arranged.

**Action: Commissioners to confirm attendance for the Community Engagement. Personal Assistant to issue final details.**

### **3. Chief Commissioner's Report**

- 3.1 The Chief Commissioner reported on meetings and events he had attended since the last Commission meeting. These included:
- Launch of the Commission's animation on ending physical punishment of children in partnership with NICCY and Global Initiative to end physical punishment of children

- Attendance at DFAT organised lecture by Dunja Mijatovic, Council of Europe Commissioner on Human Rights
- Meeting with David Seymour, Independent Reviewer of the Justice and Security Act (NI)
- Attendance at Roundtable of Business and Human Rights Forum for International Movement – Speaker Paul Newton
- Meeting with Orlaithi Flynn, Sinn Fein re mesh implants surgery and its impact
- Meeting with J R Kim and delegation, Democratic Republic of Korea, Ministry of Truth, Human Rights and Documentation
- Video statement on Phillip Alston report on poverty for Human Rights Council on behalf of UK NHRIs
- Attended celebration of Eid event at City Hall organised by Belfast Islamic Centre
- Meeting with Regulatory Oversight Group
- Attended launch of Boardroom Apprentice
- Meeting with Department for Communities re traveller accommodation, cumulative impact assessment and implementation of CEDAW
- Presentation to visiting delegation of Georgia and Armenia NHRIs
- Meeting with NIO Director General Lindy Cameron
- Meeting with Kris Hopkins SPAD
- Presentation to Pacific Trust study tour for NHRIs
- Meeting with Children (NI) re food poverty research findings

3.2 It was noted that policy submissions had been made to the following:

- NI Affairs and Work and Pensions Committee joint inquiry into Northern Ireland Social Security Policy
- Voluntary National Review of progress of UK government in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals

## **4. Commissioners' Reports**

- 4.1 Commission Macormac reported on events she had attended as part of Refugee Week, including the NICRAS event sponsored by the Commission.
- 4.2 Commissioner Rooney provided an update on the Audit and Risk Management Committee meeting held on 19 June 2019 including:
  - The NAO audit completion report on the 2018-19 Financial Statement Audit
  - Approval of the Annual Report and Accounts 2018-19
  - The risk register
- 4.3 Commissioners endorsed the Audit and Risk Management Committee's approval of the Annual Report and Accounts 2018-19, subject to some minor amendments.
- 4.4 It was noted that the proposed date for laying of the Annual Report and Accounts 2018-19 in Parliament was 16 July 2019.

## **5. Budget Update**

- 5.1 The Chief Executive provided an update on the budget for 2019-20. He confirmed that the business case submitted to the NIO, which included pension liabilities, had been approved. There was still a shortfall and the Commission was still in similar financial position as the previous year.
- 5.2 It was noted that a pay award for 2018/19 had been approved by the Department of Finance and there was a commitment by them that the pay award for 2019/20 would be agreed as soon as possible. It was noted that the 2018/19 agreement had not been agreed with the

Trade Union side.

5.3 A business case submitted to the NIO regarding the move to new premises was still awaiting approval from the NIO.

5.4 The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) had provided the NIO with capital expenditure and workforce management projections for the period 2019/20 – 2021/22.

5.5 It was noted that the Business Plan for 2019/20 could not be published until the Commission had received confirmation of the 2019/20 budget from the NIO. The Chief Executive agreed to continue to pursue this with the NIO with a view to publishing the Business Plan.

**Action: Chief Executive to contact NIO regarding confirmation of 2019/20 budget to allow for publication of Business Plan.**

## **6. Finance Report**

6.1 The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) presented the financial report for May 2019 and the variances between budget and actual spend to date were noted.

6.2 It was noted that some of the opening accruals were to be revised following the audit of the Commission's annual accounts.

6.2 It was noted that the budget would need to be reprofiled following the approval of the Commission's business case (as per 5.1) to the NIO.

## 7. Chief Executive's Report

7.1 The Chief Executive reported on events and meetings he had attended. These included:

- Conference calls regarding the Sports and Human Rights event taking place in Kigali, Rwanda and the ministerial statement to be presented to the Heads of Government meeting
- Meetings with political representatives from Sinn Fein, Alliance, Ulster Unionist and SDLP
- Attendance at the inaugural meeting of the Sports Forum on Human Rights

7.2 It was noted that the Chief Executive would be attending the Fundamental Rights Agency meeting in Vienna later this week.

*The meeting went into a closed session to discuss a confidential staffing matter. The Director (Legal, Research and Investigations, and Advice to Government) and Director (Communications, Information and Education, Public and Political Affairs) left the meeting.*

*The Director (Legal, Research and Investigations, and Advice to Government) and Director (Communications, Information and Education, Public and Political Affairs) re-joined the meeting.*

## 8. Quarterly Report against the Business Plan

8.1 Commissioners noted the quarterly report against the business plan and the achievements to date.

8.2 It was noted that budgets had not yet been allocated to the objectives as the Commission was awaiting confirmation of its budget from the NIO for 2019/20.

**Action: Quarterly report against the Business Plan to be updated with budget allocation on confirmation of budget for 2019/20 from the NIO.**

## 9. Criminal Justice and Security Brexit Research and Update on Evolving Justice Arrangements Post-Brexit Research

- 9.1 Commissioners noted that the research on Evolving Justice Arrangements post-Brexit was to be jointly approved by the Commission and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC).
- 9.2 Commissioners approved the research, subject to considering comments from IHREC.
- 9.3 It was hoped that the research would be launched in August 2019, with a roundtable for key stakeholders to be arranged in early autumn.

**Action: Launch of research to be arranged for August 2019; roundtable for key stakeholders to be arranged for early autumn.**

- 9.4 Commissioners were updated on progress with commissioning research on citizenship, Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and Brexit and a legal analysis/opinion on making UK immigration and nationality law consonant with the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement birth right commitments. It was agreed that a tender be issued for the citizenship research.

**Action: tender to be issued for citizenship research.**

## 10. Legal Update

- 10.1 Commissioners were updated on the challenge against the decision not to allow the applicant to stand as a candidate in local council and European Parliament elections unless the home address of the applicant was revealed.
- 10.2 It was agreed to proceed to leave stage, if leave is

granted.

**Action: Case to proceed to leave stage.**

- 10.3 Commissioners approved the request to seek a legal opinion in relation to unspent convictions falling outside of rehabilitation of offenders legislation.

## **11. Annual Statement**

- 11.1 Commissioners noted that in the absence of an Executive Assembly it had been agreed that the Annual Statement for 2019 would be streamlined with a foreword emphasising the impact of the lack of devolved institutions on human rights issues.
- 11.2 Commissioners discussed the process and proposed chapters for the Annual Statement 2019 and approved the timetable.

## **12. Analysis of UN CAT Committee's 2019 Concluding Observations**

- 12.1 Commissioners considered the Analysis of the UN CAT Committee's 2019 Concluding Observations and approved it subject to minor amendments.

## **13. Updated Positions Reflecting UN CEDAW Committee's 2019 Concluding Observations**

- 13.1 Commissioners considered and approved the updated positions reflecting the UN CEDAW Committee's 2019 Concluding Observations.

## **14. Education Materials – Lesson Plans**

- 14.1 Commissioners were updated on the lesson plans that had been distributed to various partner organisations for critical feedback.
- 14.2 The lesson plans will be utilised during Commission post primary school visits and promoted as a public resource on the Commission’s website, social networks and through the CCEA.
- 14.3 Commissioners welcomed the approach and the involvement with CCEA in the initiative.

## **15. Communications Report**

- 15.1 Commissioners were presented with the Digital Communications update for June 2019, which included details of events held in June 2019, an update on social media hits, the top trending posts and press coverage.
- 15.2 The Director (Communications, Information and Education, Public and Political Affairs) confirmed that the Commission would be participating in Pride and would be taking a stall in the Pride Village. New promotional materials had been specifically ordered for the event.

## **16. Any Other Business**

- 16.1 There was no other business to be discussed.

The meeting finished at 4:05pm.