



28 May 2019

**213th 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
Paul Mageean
John McCallister
Eddie Rooney
Graham Shields

In attendance: David Russell, Chief Executive
Colin Caughey, Director (Legal, Research and
Investigations, and Advice to Government)
Lorraine Hamill, Director (Finance, Personnel and
Corporate Affairs) (Agenda items 1-6)
Rebecca Magee, Personal Assistant (Agenda items
7-13)
Rhyannon Blythe, Senior Legal and Research
Officer (Agenda items 7+8)
Sara Donnelly Clegg, Legal and Research Officer
(Agenda item 7-9)

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

1.1 There were no apologies or declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of the 212th Commission meeting and the closed minute of 212th Commission meeting

2.1 The minutes of the 212th Commission meeting held on 30 April 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

Action: 212th Commission minutes to be uploaded to Commission website.

2.2 It was noted that the draft research on Evolving Justice Arrangement Post Brexit had been presented at the recent Joint Committee meeting. Further amendments are to be made and the launch of the research is due to take place in late June/early July 2019 (item 2.2 of the previous meeting refers).

2.3 The Chief Commissioner had written to Sir Nicolas Bratza but had not received a response, however, he confirmed he would follow this up (item 2.4 of the previous meeting refers).

2.4 The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) confirmed that the 'Responsible for Information' E-learning on the Civil Service website was still the same as the one recently completed by the Commissioners (item 2.7 of the previous meeting refers).

Commissioners would be notified when the E-learning for 2019 was available for completion.

Action: Director to inform Commissioners when e-learning Responsible for Information 2019 available for completion.

2.5 It was noted that the Strategic Plan for 2019-22 had been uploaded to the Commission's website and

circulated to stakeholders and through social media.

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:

- Meeting with Mark Browne, Linsey Farrell and Gareth Johnston, The Executive Office
- Meeting with Lesley Carroll, the Prisoner Ombudsman
- Attendance at Brexit and civic society conference
- Evidence to Seanad Special Select Committee on Withdrawal of the UK from the EU
- Meeting on Welfare Report Mitigations with the Department for Communities
- Chaired Commission's Roundtable on Strategic Litigation
- Meeting with Lord Duncan, Under Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
- Meeting of the Business and Human Rights Forum
- Speech to Free Legal Advice Centres Conference on Access to Justice

3.2 The Chief Commissioner also reported on upcoming meetings and events that he will be attending. These included:

- Launch of animation on ending physical punishment of children
- Meeting with Julie Morgan, Welsh Deputy Minister for Equalities
- Attendance at DFAT event
- Meeting with David Seymour, Independent Reviewer of the Justice and Security Act
- Regulation Oversight Group
- Launch of the Boardroom Apprentice

- Speech to NICRE annual conference

4. Commissioners' Reports

4.1 The Chief Commissioner confirmed he would be speaking at NICRE annual conference at the end of June 2019.

4.2 Commissioner Ferguson reported that research had been published regarding deaf children of ROMA families. She agreed to share with the Director (Legal, Research and Investigations, and Advice to Government).

Action: Commissioner Ferguson to share research with Director

4.3 Commissioner Shields reported on the meeting he and the Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) had with Grant Thornton, Internal Auditors on the GDPR internal audit. A report and recommendations following the internal audit would be issued to management for comment and would then be brought to the Audit and Risk Management Committee for consideration.

5. Budget Update

5.1 The Chief Executive provided an update on the budget for 2019-20. He confirmed that the Commission had not yet received a response following the recent business case submitted to the NIO. The Commissioners discussed and agreed to continue to seek additional monies for the 2019/2020 baseline budget and press the case for an independent external review of the Commission's effectiveness and financial needs.

The Commission went into a closed session to discuss a confidential

staffing matter.

6. Finance Report and Risk Register

- 6.1 The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) presented the financial report for April 2019 and the variances between budget and actual spend to date were noted.
- 6.2 It was noted that the budget had been reprofiled following the April 2019 Commission meeting.
- 6.3 The Chief Executive presented the risk register for April 2019 and highlighted the risks that had increased since the previous meeting.

7. Legal Functions Report

- 7.1 Commissioners were updated on the legal functions report and were provided with updates on the litigation files. This included an update on the challenge against the decision not to allow an applicant to stand as a candidate in local council and European Parliament Elections unless the home address of the applicant is revealed.

8. Application for Assistance

- 8.1 Commissioners were briefed on the application for assistance from a man sentenced to five years in prison for a gang related offence not related to paramilitarism who could never have the conviction considered spent.
- 8.2 Commissioners discussed the application and agreed that more information should be requested from the

applicant and the application be brought back to the June Commission meeting for a decision.

Action: Application for Assistance to be on June Commission agenda.

9. Children in Care paper

9.1 Commissioners discussed the first draft of the document reconciling liberty and best interests of looked after children. This is work committed to from the previous year's business plan. Commissioners welcomed the draft and provided feedback.

9.2 Commissioners agreed to consult with key stakeholders, for example, VOYPIC, care home staff, DOH, PSNI etc, as part of a process towards developing a final draft.

Action: Consultation meetings to be arranged.

10. Communications Report

10.1 Commissioners were presented with the Digital Communications report for April and May, which included an update on social media hits, the top trending posts and press clippings.

11. Cumulative Impact Assessment

11.1 Commissioners were updated on the Cumulative Impact Assessment research.

11.2 The researchers of the Cumulative impact Assessment, Professor Jonathan Portes (Kings College London) and Howard Reed (Landman Economics), will be visiting the Commission at the end of June/start of July to meet with politicians, advice organisation and as part of their

visit.

Action: meeting and round-table events to be organised for the visit.

12. Brexit update

12.1 Commissioners were provided with an update on Brexit and an update of the work of the Joint Committee following the meeting on 22 May 2019. The Commission will now work on developing a proposal to commission research into citizenship, Brexit, and Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement issues and a legal analysis of UK immigration and nationality law and Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement commitments on birth right identity as British or Irish or both.

13. Any other business

13.1 The next Community Engagement will take place on 4 July in the Mid-Ulster Council Area.

The meeting finished at 3pm.