

**30 April 2019**

**212<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  
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 3-4 & 7-10)  
Claire Martin, Director (Communications,  
Information and Education, Public and Political  
Affairs)  
Rebecca Magee, Personal Assistant (Agenda items  
1-8)  
Rhyannon Blythe, Senior Legal and Research  
Officer (Agenda item 8)  
Sara Donnelly Clegg, Legal and Research Officer  
(Agenda item 8)  
Hannah Russell, Senior Policy and Research Officer  
(Agenda item 7)

## 1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

1.1 There were no apologies or declarations of interest.

## 2. Minutes of the 211<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting and matters arising

2.1 The Minutes of the 211th Commission meeting were agreed as an accurate record subject to minor amendments.

**Action: Minutes of the 211th Commission meeting to be uploaded to Commission website.**

2.2 Commissioners were updated on the draft research on Evolving Justice Arrangements Past Brexit. It is hoped that the final draft will be with Commissioners for the next meeting of the Joint Committee in June (item 2.2 of previous meeting refers).

2.3 Commissioners were updated on the planned 'reflection day'. This will now be on 8 May only and will take place in the Commission's office (item 2.5 of previous meeting refers).

2.4 The Chief Commissioner confirmed he was still to write to Sir Nicholas Bratza (item 2.9 of previous meeting refers).

**Action: Chief Commissioner to write to Sir Nicholas Bratza.**

2.5 The draft proposal for the work on Cumulative Impact Assessment from Landman Economics will be discussed at the May meeting (item 2.11 of previous meeting refers).

**Action: Cumulative Impact Assessment to be on the agenda for the May Commission meeting.**

2.6 The Register of Interests and Related Party Declarations for Commissioners have been completed (item 5.2 of previous meeting refers).

2.7 It was noted that the 'Responsible of Information' E-learning has been delayed due to issues with the external website (item 5.3 of previous meeting refers).

**Action: Director to issue details of 'Responsible for Information' E-learning once they become available.**

- 2.8 The Business Plan cannot be finalised until the Commission's budget is confirmed (item 8.1 of the previous meeting refers).
- 2.9 The Strategic Plan for 2019-22 is to be formatted to match brand guidelines and will then be placed on the Commission's website (item 8.3 of previous meeting refers).

**Action: Strategic Plan to be formatted and uploaded.**

- 2.10 The Commission went into a closed session to discuss a staffing matter.

### **3. Finance Report**

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

### **4. Budget 2019-2020**

- 4.1 The Chief Executive briefed Commissioners on the current situation with the projected Budget for 2019-2020 and the Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) presented a breakdown of the salaries and programme costs.
- 4.2 Commissioners noted that formal notification of the budget was still to be provided by the NIO. On the basis of the projected budget and the projected further reduction in the Commission's finances, an unforeseen increase in pension liabilities announced in March, and a pending pay settlement, it was decided that the projected budget would need to be re-profiled.
- 4.2 Commissioners decided in line with the revised circumstances it was necessary to reduce the finance available to support the legal function, advertising, publications and publicity. They also noted that legal applications going forward may require additional business cases to be submitted to the NIO. The NIO to

be informed of the ramifications of the re-profiling.  
**Action: Budget to be re-profiled and NIO informed of ramifications of current situation.**

## **5. Chief Commissioner Report**

5.1 Commissioners noted the Chief Commissioner report.

## **6. Chief Executive Report**

6.1 Commissioners noted the Chief Executive Report.

## **7. CEDAW Concluding Observations**

7.1 Commissioners were given a paper CEDAW providing an analysis of our recommendations against the CEDAW concluding observations with suggestions for updating of the Commission's position in some instances.

7.2 Commissioners discussed the paper and consideration was given to the Commission's current policies in light of the concluding observations. A number of amendments to Commission's policies were made in line with the CEDAW concluding observations and these were to be reflected in future Annual Statements where appropriate.

## **8. Legal Update**

8.1 Commissioners discussed an Application for Assistance and legal opinion which is a 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 is revealed. This applies despite the applicant's safety being potentially jeopardised by so.

8.2 Commissioners agreed on the merit of approving this legal application following the legal opinion and given revised budgeting issues to submit a business case to

the NIO to support the application. In the interim, it was agreed to authorise the necessary work to seek leave to appeal by way of judicial review.

## **9. Brexit update**

- 9.1 Commissioners were provided with an update on Brexit and possible work that the Joint Committee of NIHRC and IHREC could discuss at the next Joint Committee meeting in Belfast on 22 May. The Commissioners gave a positive initial response to work around citizenship issues, Good Friday Agreement and EU Withdrawal Agreement and that staff could develop ideas for discussion at the joint committee meeting.

## **10. Any other business**

- 10.1 Commissioner John McCallister reported on the recent meeting of 'Independent Mechanism' in Northern Ireland (IMNI) to promote, protect and monitor the implementation the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which the Commission co-chairs with ECNI.

The meeting closed at 5:20pm