



NORTHERN
IRELAND
HUMAN
RIGHTS
COMMISSION

132nd COMMISSION MEETING (POLICY)

**HELD ON MONDAY 17 OCTOBER 2011 AT 10.00 AM
AT THE OFFICES OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND HUMAN
RIGHTS COMMISSION, TEMPLE COURT, 39 NORTH STREET,
BELFAST, BT1 1NA**

Present: Michael O'Flaherty, Chief Commissioner
Christine Collins
John Corey
Milton Kerr
Grainia Long (until 2.20 pm)
Alan McBride
Marion Reynolds
Paul Yam

In attendance: Virginia McVea, Director
David Russell, Deputy Director (agenda items 6-13)
Lorraine Hamill, Finance Supervisor (except agenda item 11)
Rebecca Magee, Executive Assistant (except agenda item 11)
Roisin Devlin, Investigations Worker (agenda item 6)
Nazia Latif, Investigations Worker (agenda item 10)
Angela Stevens, Caseworker (agenda item 13.1 and 13.2)

Apologies: None

1. Minutes of previous meeting

- 1.1 The minutes of the 131st Commission (Governance) meeting held on 17 October 2011 were agreed as an accurate record.

2. Matters arising

The Chief Commissioner confirmed letters of thanks had been sent to previous Commissioners.

- 2.1 Absence Policy - nothing further to report (paragraph 2.3 of the minutes of 131st Commission meeting refers).
- 2.2 Freedom of Information Act has been reported on in the Directors report (paragraph 2.4 of the minutes of 131st Commission meeting refers).
- 2.3 Legal Counsel's opinion was noted as received and reviewed (paragraph 3.2 of the minutes of 131st Commission meeting refers).
- 2.4 Investigation report into the rights of older people in nursing homes was noted as on target (paragraph 3.3.1 of the minutes of 131st Commission meeting refers).
- 2.5 Human Rights Standards and Conflict Transformation was noted as in the papers (paragraph 3.4.2 of the minutes of 131st Commission meeting refers).
- 2.6 Suggestion around a fixed term task group to discuss media strategy was noted, and further discussions are to follow (paragraph 3.4.3 of the minutes of 131st Commission meeting refers).
- 2.7 Letter of thanks to the Secretary of State was noted as executed (paragraph 8.2 of the minutes of 131st Commission meeting refers).
- 2.8 An invitation to the former Commissioners was noted and will be executed in December (paragraph 8.3 of the minutes of 131st Commission meeting refers).

3. Report from Chief Commissioner

- 3.1 The Chief Commissioner reported on meetings he had held since the last meeting of the Commission.
- 3.2 The Chief Commissioner reported on a series of meetings held in Dungannon, Derry/Londonderry, Belfast Interface areas and Antrim. The Chief Commissioner was accompanied by Commissioners and staff.
- 3.3 Commissioners noted that the above events were well received and that the Commission would continue this type of engagement regularly.

Action: Commission

- 3.4 It was agreed that the Chief Commissioner would pass on invitations to events he was unable to attend to Commissioners for their expressions of interest.

Action: Chief Commissioner

4. Report from the Director

- 4.1 Commissioners noted the Director's Report.
- 4.2 The Commission approved the nominations of Commissioners Christine Collins and Paul Yam as members of the Joint Monitoring Mechanism under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability.

5. Investigation into the rights of older people in nursing homes: a progress report

- 5.1 The Investigations Worker presented a progress report on the investigation into the rights of older people in nursing homes.
- 5.2 It was noted that a full draft of the Report will be presented to the Commission meeting scheduled for 21 November 2011.

6. Human Rights, Community Relations and Conflict Transformation Paper

- 6.1 Commissioners noted the report on Human Rights, Community Relations and Conflict Transformation completed by the Institute for Conflict Resolution.

7. Response to DHSSPS Consultation on a Draft Policy for Developing Advocacy Services

- 7.1 The response to the DHSSPS Consultation on a Draft Policy for Developing Advocacy Services was agreed subject to amendments.

Action: Deputy Director

- 7.2 The Chief Commissioner proposed to meet with staff responsible for making policy submissions to discuss formatting and structure of future responses.

Action: Chief Commissioner

8. Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Mechanism Briefing Paper

- 8.1 Commissioners noted the Commissioner Briefing Paper on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Mechanism.

9. Commission on a Bill of Rights background paper (HRC132.7)

- 9.1 Commissioners noted the discussion paper on a Bill of Rights.
- 9.2 Commissioners commented on the response to the discussion paper and made recommendations for minor changes. A final draft of the response will be issued to Commissioners by 31 October 2011 for final approval.

Action: Deputy Director / Investigations Worker

10. Efficiency plan to the NIO

- 10.1 This agenda item is dealt with in a closed minute.

11. Parliamentary Report

11.1 Commissioners noted the Parliamentary Report.

12. Any other business

12.1 Commissioners considered a request for legal assistance.

12.2 It was agreed that before the Commission could approve the application for assistance that further information was required.

Action: Caseworker

12.3 It was agreed to respond to a request to comment on the merger of the Irish Human Rights Commission and the Equality Authority.

Action: Chief Commissioner

12.4 It was noted that Commissioners are required to complete the Register of Interests and Related Party Transactions forms.

Action: Commissioners

Approved: _____

Date: _____