

**158th COMMISSION MEETING ON MONDAY 24 MARCH 2014 at 10:00 IN THE OFFICE OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, TEMPLE COURT, 39 NORTH STREET, BELFAST, BT11NA**

**In attendance:** John Corey (Interim Chair)

Alan McBride

Marion Reynolds

Paul Yam

Grainia Long

Christine Collins

**Present:** Virginia McVea, Director

David Russell, Deputy Director

Rebecca Magee, Executive Assistant

Angela Stevens, Caseworker (items 8+9+AOB)

**Apologies:** Milton Kerr

**1. Minutes of the 157th Commission meeting**

1.1 The minutes of the 156th Commission meeting were agreed following the amendments:

* Times of attendance added to in attendance list
* Under 6.8 – insert Commissioners discussed the Community visit to Larne
* Under 7.2 – amended with punctuation
* Under 7.3 – insert of the words Staff analysis
* Under 10.2 – Commissioner Reynolds expressed an interest on sitting on the Human Rights Inquiry panel in addition to Commissioners Yam and Collins.

**2. Matters arising**

2.1 The recruitment for the Chief Commissioner post has been extended for two weeks by the NIO. (2.1 of previous minutes refer). In addition, Commissioners discussed whether or not they were to be reappointed, this is currently being discussed with the NIO. Interim Chair Mr Corey is seeking a meeting with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

**3. Interim Chair Report**

3.1 Interim Chair John Corey reported on his meetings since the last meeting. These included:

* A Roundtable discussion on the NIHRC Public Procurement and Human Rights report.
* Meeting with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Mr. Juan Mendez.
* Children’s Law Centre Annual Lecture

**Action: Letter of thanks to go to Paddy Kelly, Children’s Law Centre for facilitating the meeting with Mr Mendez.**

**4. Commissioner Report**

4.1 Commissioners Reynolds and McBride attended a meeting with the Westminster Joint Committee on Human Rights in Stormont on 6 March along with the Director, Deputy Director and Policy Worker Colin Caughey.

4.2 Commissioner Reynolds, with Caseworker Angela Stevens, visited Woodland Juvenile Centre –report to follow.

**5. Director’s Report**

5.1 Commissioners noted the Director’s report.

5.2 Commissioners were updated on the recent restructure of the Administration team. The Director reported that 3 of the 4 affected members had chosen not to apply for the newly created posts but sought Voluntary Redundancy and that the remaining member of staff had been successful in the redeployment to Personal Assistant.

5.3 Commissioners were updated on the current Service Level Agreement with the Northern Ireland Ombudsman.

5.4 Commissioners received a report on the International Co-ordinating Committee (ICC), the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the Commonwealth Forum (CF) meetings that the Director, Deputy Director and Policy Worker Colin Caughey attended which took place in Geneva from 11-14 March. Commissioners noted the NIHRC side-event on UN CRPD that was organised by Mr Caughey.

5.5 Commissioners noted the update on the Commonwealth Forum Chair after discussions in Geneva.

5.6 Commissioners commended the work of the Director, Deputy Director, and Mr Caughey at the ICC, HRC, and CF.

5.7 Commissioners discussed the monthly finance report with the Director.

**6. End of Year Report against the Business Plan**

6.1 Commissioners noted the End of Year Report against the Business Plan.

6.2 Commissioners discussed the End of Year Report with the Director.

**7. Draft Business Plan 2014-15**

7.1 Commissioners discussed the draft Business Plan 2014-15.

7.2 Commissioners formally agreed to the Business Plan 2014-15 following the below amendments:

* Acronyms to be completed in full.
* Updated Learning and Development table to be forwarded to Commissioners for information.
* Final Budget to be inserted

**Action: Learning and Development table to be forwarded to Commissioners for information.**

**8. Human Rights Inquiry update**

8.1 Commissioners received an update on the Human Rights Inquiry from Ms Stevens.

8.2 Commissioners agreed to hold a Special Commission Meeting on 7 April at 2pm to discuss the Human Rights Inquiry and to make a decision on the Scoping Study.

**Action: Confirmation of the Special Commission meeting to be forwarded to Commissioners along with the Scoping Study.**

**9. Further consideration of De Silva report into the death of Patrick Finucane**

9.1 Commissioners received an update on the De Silva report and the Commissions engagement in the case to date.

9.2 Commissioners decided to await the Convention against Torture (CAT) State Report in order to consider the matter further. In the interim an outline of recent engagement and public statements was to be provided for the April Commission meeting.

**Action: De Silva is to appear on the April Commission meeting agenda.**

**10. NI Miscellaneous Bill update**

10.1 Commissioners noted the update from the Director on the NI Miscellaneous Bill including correspondence from Lord Alderdice.

**11. Bill of Rights - Action Plan update**

11.1 Commissioners discussed the Bill of Rights – Action Plan and agreed that Bill of Rights should appear on every Commission agenda.

11.2 Commissioners agreed that meetings should be sought with the Political Parties regarding a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

**Action: Meetings to be sought with Political Parties.**

**12. Commonwealth Forum Chair update**

12.1 This item was discussed under the Director’s report.

**13. Ombudsman Manual**

13.1 Commissioners noted the Ombudsman Manual.

**Action: Presentation on the Ombudsman Manual to take place at either April or May Commission meeting.**

**14. Information paper**

**14.1 Briefing on Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) Travellers work**

14.1.1 Commissioners discussed the engagement of the Commission in the NIHE reference group on travellers.

14.1.2 It was agreed that a letter of concern be sent to the Chief Executive of NIHE and a meeting be sought to discuss those concerns.

**Action: A letter and meeting request to be sent to the Chief Executive of NIHE.**

**14.2 NIHRC ICC Side event Flyers**

14.2.1 This item was discussed under the Director’s report.