



**200<sup>th</sup> COMMISSION MEETING  
MONDAY 26 MARCH 2018 AT 10:00 am  
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)  
Claire Martin, Director (Communications,  
Information and Education, Public and Political  
Affairs)  
Rebecca Magee (Personal Assistant)  
Sara Donnelly, Legal and Research Officer  
(agenda items 9 and 10)  
Sabrina Green, Director (Turks and Caicos Human  
Rights Commission) as observer

**A brief item was dealt with in closed session before the  
commencement of the meeting.**

## **1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

1.1 There were no apologies or declarations of interest.

## **2. Minutes and Matters arising (HRC200.1)**

2.1 The minutes of the Commission meeting held on 29 January 2018 were agreed as an accurate record.

**Action: Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2018 to be placed on the Commission's website.**

2.2 The Chief Commissioner confirmed details for the Community Engagement on Wednesday 28 March 2018 in Coleraine. Commissioners discussed the format for future Community Engagements which a view to include engagement with local councils. (paragraph 2.2 of the previous minutes refers).

2.3 It was noted that progress with the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) on the business case for the Joint Secretariat had occurred and that approval had been given to recruit a Deputy Principle Officer on a temporary two year contract. (paragraph 2.4 of the previous minutes refers).

**Action: Commissioners to be updated on how recruitment for this post will be handled and time frame for recruitment.**

2.4 It was noted that the Traveller Accommodation report and implementation plans have been disseminated and that roundtable meetings are currently taking place. (paragraph 6.2 of the previous minutes refers).

2.5 Commissioners agreed to wait on the response from a letter to Department of Health in relation to The Hyponatraemia Inquiry before writing to the HSCB.

**Action: Letter to be sent to HSCB once a response is received from DoH.**

## **3. Chief Commissioner's Report (HRC200.2)**

3.1 The Chief Commissioner reported on meetings and events he had attended since the last meeting. These included:

- Karen Bradley MP, Secretary of State

- Marie Anderson and Paul McFadden NI Public Services Ombudsman
- speech to joint North/South Rare Disease Partnership conference
- Sandra Peake, WAVE
- speech to NUI Galway Human Rights Centre on the law and abortion
- Children's Law Centre
- Sabrina Green, Turks and Caicos Islands Human Rights Commission
- Focus Identity Panel meeting

3.2 The Chief Commissioner reported on meetings he and Commission staff had attended in Westminster. These included:

- Lord Murphy (Joint Committee on Human Rights)
- Jim Shannon MP
- Lord Jay (Acting Chair of the Lords' EU Committee)
- Hilary Benn MP (Chair of Exiting the EU Select Committee)
- Stella Creasy MP
- Baroness Suttie
- Lord Duncan
- Dominic Grieve QC MP
- Joint Committee on Human Rights

#### **4. Commissioners' Reports**

4.1 Nothing to report.

#### **5. Chief Executive Report (HRC200.3)**

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

- Grand Lodge of the Orange Order
- Equality and Human Rights Commission regarding a handover following their recent appointment as Chair of the Commonwealth Forum of NHRIs
- Bill of Rights roundtable with Professor Monica McWilliams and Professor Colin Harvey
- Alliance Party
- Sinn Féin
- Federation of Small Businesses on business and human rights
- Dr Michael Maguire, Police Ombudsman for NI
- Richard Pengelly, DoH Permanent Secretary

- Northern Ireland Office and DexEU in London
- Karen Bradley MP, Secretary of State
- IFA on sport and human rights
- Dr Paddy Woods, Deputy Chief Medical Officer
- CAJ and Equality Coalition
- Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) in Geneva

5.2 The Chief Executive reported on the Commission's Risk Register and Commissioners noted the changes in the risk trend report.

## **6. Finance Report (HRC200.4)**

6.1 The Chief Executive presented the financial report and provided details of committed expenditure and explanations for the variances against budget.

## **7. Business Plan 2018/19 (HRC200.5)**

7.1 Commissioners discussed the Business Plan 2018/19 following amendments that had been made following the March Commission meeting (paragraph 9.2 of the previous minutes refers).

7.2 Following further minor amendments, Commissioners approved the Business Plan 2018/19.

**Action: Final version of the Business Plan 2018/19 to be sent to Commissioners for information.**

## **8. Strategic Planning process (HRC200.6)**

8.1 Commissioners were updated on the previous Strategic Planning process and agreed that further discussion on this item was required.

**Action: Strategic Planning to be on the April Commission agenda for discussion.**

*Sara Donnelly, Legal and Research Officer joined the meeting*

## **9. Legal functions report (HRC200.7)**

9.1 Commissioners were provided an detailed update on the legal functions report.

**Action: updates to be requested in relation to a number of Watching Briefs.**

9.2 Commissioners were updated on the JT case and discussed the details of where the case currently lies and the next steps expected in the case.

9.3 Commissioners agreed to sign off on the Legal Policy for granting legal assistance.

**10. Termination of Pregnancy (HRC200.8)**

10.1 Commissioners discussed the Commission's Termination Policy Position and agreed to amend the position in light of the recent CEDAW investigation report.

10.2 Commissioners approved the Termination of Pregnancy position.

*Sara Donnelly, Legal and Research Officer left the meeting*

**11. Investigation/Inquiry process (HRC200.9)**

11.1 Commissioners were given an outline of the process used for the Inquiry into Emergency Healthcare and the resources required to hold this inquiry.

11.2 Commissioners agreed that a separate meeting was required to discuss the option of either holding an Inquiry or Investigation and the topic which would form the Inquiry/Investigation.

**Action: Half-day meeting to be arranged to discuss Investigation/Inquiry and topics.**

**Action: Commissioners are to forward topic ideas to the Chief Commissioner before the meeting.**

**12. Communications Report (HRC200.10)**

12.1 Commissioners were briefed on the Communications report and were updated on the recent events for the launch of the investigation into Travellers' Accommodation.

- 12.2 Commissioners were briefed on the upcoming Annual Lecture on 2 May 2018. This year's guest speaker will be Joshua Rozenberg QC (hon), renowned legal commentator and journalist.
- 12.3 Commissioners were informed of the 'Let's Talk About Rights and Religion' discussion panel and animation launch in partnership with Evangelical Alliance on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2018. The animation explores issues around the Right to Freedom of Thought, Conscience, and Religion.
- 12.4 Commissioners were updated on the recent press coverage the Chief Commissioner participated in, in relation to the Joint NIHRC and Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission statement on Brexit.

### **13. Any Other Business**

- 13.1 Commissioners were updated on the EU Withdrawal Bill. Commissioners noted that the Joint NIHRC and Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission statement on Brexit was mentioned in the debate.

**Action: EU Withdrawal Bill paper to be shared with Commissioners.**

*The meeting closed at 14:40*