



**29 May 2018**

## **202<sup>ND</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:** Colin Caughey, Director (Legal, Research and Investigations, and Advice to Government)  
Rebecca Magee, Personal Assistant  
Lorraine Hamill, Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs)  
Claire Martin, Director (Communications, Information and Education, Public and Political Affairs) (Agenda items 1-3)  
Rhyannon Blythe, Senior Legal and Research Officer (Agenda item 8)  
Sara Donnelly, Legal and Research Officer (Agenda item 8)  
Jason McKeown, Communications and Public Affairs Assistant (Agenda item 3)

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

1.1 David Russell, Chief Executive, sent his apologies for the meeting.

1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

## **2. Minutes of the 201<sup>st</sup> Commission meeting and the Special Commission meeting and matters arising**

2.1 The minutes of the 201<sup>st</sup> Commission meeting of 1 May 2018 were agreed as an accurate record.

2.2 The minutes of the Special Commission meeting of 21 May 2018 were agreed as an accurate record.

**Action: Approved minutes to be uploaded to the Commission website.**

2.3 Commissioners were updated on the recruitment process for the Senior Policy and Research Officer ( temporary ) fixed term (for 2 years – subject to review) which has a closing date of Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2018 (item 2.3 of the previous meeting refers).

2.4 Commissioners were updated on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that took effect on 25 May 2018. It was confirmed that Commissioner Graham Shields will fulfil the role of Data Protection Officer (DPO), while Lorraine Hamill, Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) will fulfil the role of Data Protection Practitioner (DPP) and both will attend training in June 2018 (item 5.4 of the previous meeting refers).

2.5 A letter to the Health and Social Care Board on the NICE guidelines in relation to same sex couple access to IVF was sent (item 7.3 of the previous meeting refers).

## **3. Communications Report**

*Jason McKeown joined the meeting.*

3.1 Commissioners were briefed on the Communications report which included an update on press and on the recent successful joint event with Equality Commission NI and Lord Dubs.

3.2 Commissioners received a presentation on the new Style Guide. The Style Guide will ensure that branding for the Commission is

consistent both internally and externally and new templates have been created for minutes, agendas, letters, PowerPoint presentations, press statements and publications. The guide will be rolled out over the next few months. Commissioners welcomed this initiative.

- 3.3 Commissioners were updated on details for the upcoming Community Engagement that is taking place on 29<sup>th</sup> June in the Ards and North Down Borough Council Area.

*Jason McKeown and Claire Martin left the meeting.*

## **4. Chief Commissioner's Report**

- 4.1 The Chief Commissioner reported on meetings and events he had attended since the last meeting. These included:
- Meetings re: travellers accommodation report including with: Permanent Secretary Dept of Infrastructure Assistant Secretary Dept for Communities, NIHE Chief Executive
  - chaired roundtable on traveller accommodation – the way forward
  - Annual Human Rights lecture – Joshua Rosenberg
  - presentation to Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition
  - presentation to Drumragh Integrated College, Omagh
  - meeting DWP Minister for the Disabled, Sarah Newton MP with Scottish HRC, EHRC and ECNI
  - visit/meeting Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre, including Dept of Education and Education Authority
  - Litigants in Person advisory group
  - Committee of Experts of European Charter for Regional or Minority Language
  - meeting Rosemary Crawford, Director Constitution, Legacy and Business Delivery NIO
  - welcome and presentation on traveller accommodation report to Operational Platform for Roma Equality (a joint CoE, Equinet, ENNHRI, FRA initiative)
  - speech to rights based approach to guarantee the right to housing in Europe – OPRE Platform

- Business and Human Rights Forum
  - speech to University of Bristol conference on Global Challenges in Securing Reproductive Rights for Women and Girls
  - Lord Mayor of Belfast, Nuala McAllister
- 4.2 The Chief Commissioner also reported on meetings he had attended as the Joint Committee of the two Commissions on the Island of Ireland with Emily Logan, Chief Commissioner of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission in Brussels. These included:
- Tim Berrow, UK Ambassador to the European Union
  - Declan Kelleher, Irish Ambassador to the European Union
  - Nina Obermaier, A.50 Taskforce

## 5. Commissioners' Report

- 5.1 Commissioners Graham Shields and John McCallister reported on the visit/meeting Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre, which included the Department of Education and Education Authority. The question of whether the new arrangements had been the subject of an Education Training Inspectorate report was raised.

**Action: Staff to check whether there has been an ETI report for Woodlands.**

- 5.2 Commissioner Paul Mageean reported on the independent review into how the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland deals with serious sexual offence cases advisory group he is sitting on, being led by Lord Justice Gillen.

## 6. Chief Executive Report

- 6.1 In the absence of the Chief Executive, the Director (Legal, Research and Investigations, and Advice to Government) reported on the Chief Executive meetings since his last report.
- 6.2 The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) presented the financial report and budget. Commissioners noted the Freedom of Information requests.

## 7. Strategic Planning

- 7.1 Commissioners discussed the proposal for Strategic Planning and agreed that a Commissioner would act as facilitator and that separate and joint meetings would take place with staff and Commissioners and that the Commission should seek an opinion survey as part of the strategic planning process. The paper was approved.

**Action: Work to commence on commissioning an opinion survey and preparing for consultation on the Strategic Plan.**

## 8. Legal Functions Report

*Rhyannon Blythe and Sara Donnelly joined the meeting.*

- 8.1 Commissioners were updated on the Termination of Pregnancy case and made aware that the date for hearing may be in June.
- 8.2 Commissioners were updated on the JT case namely a decision to destroy DNA in this case and to bring forward a policy on arrangements for retention of DNA without conceding on any further substantial points contained in the initial Order 53 application for judicial review, and that the settlement details had been offered as instructed at the Special Meeting on 21 May 2018.
- 8.3 Commissioners noted the Legal Functions Report and the updates provided on the watching briefs.

Action: Commissioners to be kept apprised of progress on the terms of settlement in the retention of DNA case.

*Rhyannon Blythe and Sara Donnelly left the meeting.*

## 9. Policy Functions report/Joint Committee update

- 9.1 Commissioners were updated on the Joint Committee work and the work on the Common Travel Area where a tender is being drawn up for external research. The Commissioners also received a report on a recent meeting with the Department for Exiting the EU and NIO.
- 9.2 Commissioners noted the Policy Functions Report and received an update on a number of consultations. It was agreed that the

response on the Northern Ireland consultation on 'Addressing the Legacy of Northern Ireland's Past' would be agreed as early as practicable and if necessary could be agreed in principle initially outside of the monthly meeting.

## 10. Annual Statement Chapters

10.1 Commissioners reviewed the Annual Statement chapters on Freedom of religion and belief, association and right to participate in public and political life, and on Right to an adequate standard of living and to social security. The chapters were approved subject to minor amendments which would be tracked changed.

## 11. Litigants in Person report

11.1 Commissioners were presented with the final version on the recommendations of the report. It was agreed that comments on the report should be sent by noon on 30 May 2018.

**Action: Comments on the Litigants in Person recommendations to be sent to Chief Commissioner by noon on 30 May 2018.**

## 12. Any other Business

12.1 Dates for Commissioner Appraisals are to be arranged. The forms have already been sent and the meeting to review should last no more than 1.5 hours.

**Action: Dates to be arranged.**

12.2 A date for the half day Commissioner reflection day is to be arranged.

**Action: Date to be arranged.**

*The meeting finished at 1:25.*

Commissioners held a session in the afternoon to discuss options for an Investigation/Inquiry.