



23 February 2026

285th COMMISSION MEETING

**Held in the Commission's Offices,
Alfred House, 19-21 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8ED**

Present: Alyson Kilpatrick
Mairead Holder
David Lavery
Helen Henderson (Online)
Jonanthan Kearney (Online)
Justin Kouame (Online)
Stephen White (Online)

In attendance: David Russell, Chief Executive
Colin Caughey, Director of Policy (Advice to Government, Research, Investigations, and International Treaties)
Lorraine Hamill, Director (Finance, Personnel, and Corporate Affairs)
Claire Martin, Director (Engagement and Communications)
Darren Veighey (Administrative Officer)
Rhyannon Blythe, Director of Legal Services (Online)
Eilis Haughey (Director, Human Rights after EU withdrawal) (Online)
Jhoanna Sto Domingo (Personal secretary to the Chief Commissioner) (Online)
Jason McKeown, Senior Engagement & Communications Officer (Agenda Item 7)

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 There were no apologies and no declarations of interest.

2. Draft minutes of the 284th Commission meeting and matters arising

- 2.1 The minutes of the 284th Commission meeting were agreed.
Action: Minutes of the 284th Commission meeting to be uploaded to the website.

3. Chief Commissioner's Report

- 3.1 The Chief Commissioner's Report was noted for the record.
- 3.2 The Chief Commissioner reported on her meeting with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, The Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP.

4. Commissioner's Reports

- 4.1 Commissioner Lavery informed the meeting that he attended the admission ceremony for the Law Society of NI which had been held on 20 February 2026. The Commissioner also congratulated Fernanda Hermosilla who was admitted to the NI roll of solicitors.

5. Chief Executive's Report

- 5.1 The Chief Executive updated Commissioners on staffing and work priorities. It was noted that the Commission was still awaiting a response from HM Treasury in relation to the Business Case for the Comprehensive Spending Review.

6. Finance Report January 2026

- 6.1 The Finance Report as at 31 January 2026 (for both Core and Dedicated Mechanism) was noted. This paper reflected actual spend for period April 2025-January 2026 and the budget going forward to the end of the financial year (March 2026).

- 6.2 It was noted that the finance report did not take account of the additional £112,000 which was yet to be approved as part of the Business Case for the Comprehensive Spending Review.
- 6.3 The Director informed the Commissioners that Melody Kozah and Thomas Lord would be joining the Commission in March as Policy and Research Officers.
- 6.4 It was noted that Commissioners had been provided with a Cyber Security Readiness Report and confirmation from Cyber Security NI (the Commission's IT provider) that the Commission was appropriately covered in terms of cyber security.
- 6.5 The Director updated Commissioners in relation to staff training. It was noted that staff would be taking part in a team building day on Thursday 19 March 2026 and Dignity at Work training was being organised for the last week in March. A staff survey was also being carried.
- 6.6 Commissioners were also reminded that the Commission had a Staff Wellbeing Committee which was made up of staff from each of the teams.

7. KPI Report-Engagement and Communications Update

- 7.1 The Senior Engagement and Communications Officer gave a presentation on the key performance indicators for the website, media and events for the period April 2025 to February 2026. Actions within the Business Plan for 2026-27 were noted to include:
- Strengthening promotion of statutory functions;
 - Enhancing public information and communications.

8. Draft Business Plan 2026-27

- 8.1 The Chief Executive presented the first draft of the Business Plan 2026-27. The structure of the report has been kept the same as previous years with ten priorities highlighted and details of how delivery of priorities will be evidenced. A page is also dedicated to the Commission's core principles.

A detailed budget (Core and Dedicated Mechanism) for 2026-27 will be included in the final draft which will be brought to the March Commission meeting for final approval and sign off.

Action: Budget to be included and final draft Business Plan 2026-27 to be brought to the March Commission meeting for approval.

9. NI Troubles Bill 2024

- 9.1 Commissioners were content with the organisation's response to the NI Troubles Bill 2024.

10. Proposed New Pay Policy

- 10.1 This agenda item was discussed in a closed session.

11. Any other Business and Date of next meeting.

- 11.1 There being no other business the meeting closed at 11.45am.
- 11.2 The date of the next meeting was arranged for Monday 23 March 2026 at 10am.

End of meeting 11.45am.