



**24 February 2025**

**274th COMMISSION MEETING**

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

**Present:** Alyson Kilpatrick  
Helen Henderson  
Jonathan Kearney  
Mairead Holder  
David Lavery  
Stephen White  
Justin Kouame

**In attendance:** David Russell, Chief Executive  
Colin Caughey, Director (Advice to Government,  
Research, and Investigations)  
Lorraine Hamill, Director (Finance, Personnel and  
Corporate Services)  
Éilis Haughey, Director (Human Rights after EU  
Withdrawal) (via Teams)  
Claire Martin, Director (Engagement and  
Communications)  
Darren Veighey (Administrative Officer)  
Tara Grace Connolly (Engagement & Communications  
Officer) (Agenda Item 7)  
Lucy Keown (Engagement & Communications Officer)  
(Agenda Item 7)  
Julia Buchanan (Senior Policy and Research Officer)  
(Agenda Item 8)  
Emily Mills (Policy and Research Officer) (Agenda Item  
8)

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

- 1.1 There were no apologies to note.
- 1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

## **2. Draft minutes of the 273<sup>rd</sup> Commission meeting and matters arising**

- 2.1 The minutes of the 273<sup>rd</sup> Commission meeting were agreed.

**Action: Minutes of the 273<sup>rd</sup> Commission meeting to be uploaded to the website.**

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

- 3.1 The Chief Commissioner's Report was noted.

## **4. Commissioners' Reports**

- 4.1 There was nothing to report.

## **5. Report from Chief Executive**

- 5.1 The Chief Executive gave an oral report.
- 5.2 The Chief Executive communicated that he and the Chief Commissioner had recently attended the annual four jurisdictions meeting of the NHRIs and equality bodies.
- 5.3 Discussions at this forum covered the following topics:
  - Artificial Intelligence
  - Disinformation
  - Climate Change
- 5.4 The Chief Executive updated Commissioners on the recent meeting with the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) regarding the economic review. The NIO are in the process of arranging a meeting with the Permanent Secretary.
- 5.5 The Chief Executive also stated that the Northern Ireland Civil Service were currently negotiating the pay settlements for

2024-25 and 2025-26. It was also noted that employer national insurance contributions would increase from 1 April 2025 and that the NIO had negotiated additional funding which would provide some help in meeting the increase.

5.6 It was noted that the Commission were currently recruiting for the following vacant posts:

- Paralegal
- Personal Secretary to the Chief Commissioner

An internal trawl had also been actioned to recruit to Deputy Principal Policy and Research Officers on a temporary fixed-term contract for one year.

## **6. Finance Report**

6.1 The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) presented an overview of the finance and budget reports for Core and the Dedicated Mechanism as at 31 January 2025.

## **7. Communications Report**

7.1 The Engagement and Communications Officers presented the Communications Report for February 2025.

7.2 Engagement with the media produced positive outcomes and substantial coverage.

7.3 Fact Sheet documents were produced for media in relation to legal cases, Housing, IMA, and rehabilitation of offenders.

7.4 The podcast 'Shared Goals' continued in 2024-25. The team are planning to develop a second season.

7.5 The third series of the 'Rights at the Finish Line' podcast was launched.

7.6 The Communications team are in the process of launching a winter 2025 social media advertising campaign, with the aim of raising awareness of the Dedicated Mechanism (focus on Google ads and Meta platforms).

7.7 There had been an increase in attendance at the Annual Statement launch in 2024 from the previous year. The post

event survey was positive with 100% saying the event was very good/good.

- 7.8 Digital communications challenges include misinformation, falling organic reach, messaging in a crowded space, volatility on social media platforms, and resources to maximise reach through the different tools on each platform.
- 7.9 The Digital Accessibility Centre conducted an annual audit of our website accessibility. Green 17 (website providers) have addressed any issues raised which enabled the Commission to achieve certification for A and AA status.
- 7.10 The team have created a Commission Bluesky account.

## **8. RSE Progress Report**

- 8.1 The Director (Advice to Government, Research, and Investigations), Senior Policy and Research Officer, and Policy and Research Officer presented the Progress Report on RSE.
- 8.2 The Commission approved the report.

**Action: Some terminology in the RSE Progress Report to be amended.**

## **9. Draft Strategic Plan 2025-28**

- 9.1 The draft Strategic Plan was presented to Commissioners by the Chief Executive.
- 9.2 Commissioners discussed the report, and the final draft is to be presented for approval at the next meeting.

**Action: Final draft of the Strategic Plan to be brought to the March Commission meeting for final approval**

## **10. Draft Business Plan 2025-26**

- 10.1 The draft Business Plan was presented to Commissioners by the Chief Executive.
- 10.2 The document included performance indicators for each of the proposed strategic priorities. The budget and foreword are to

be added to the final draft and presented for approval at the next meeting.

**Action: Final draft of the Business Plan 2025-26 to be brought to the March Commission meeting for final approval.**

#### **11. Any Other Business**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 12.15pm.