



24th June 2024

268th COMMISSION MEETING
Held in the Commission's Offices,
Alfred House, 19-21 Alfred Street, Belfast,
BT2 8ED and via Teams

Present: Alyson Kilpatrick
Helen Henderson
Jonathan Kearney
David Lavery
Stephen White

In attendance: David Russell, Chief Executive
Rebecca Magee, Executive Assistant
Colin Caughey, Director (Advice to Government,
Research, and Investigations)
Éilis Haughey, Director (Human Rights after EU
Withdrawal)
Claire Martin, Director (Engagement and
Communications)
Lorraine Hamill, Director (Finance, Personnel &
Corporate Affairs)
Vivienne Fitzroy, Boardroom Apprentice
Laura Banks, Solicitor (Legal and Research Officer)
(Agenda item 8)
Emma Osborne, Policy & Research Officer (Agenda item
9)
Julia Buchanan, Senior Policy & Research Officer
(Agenda item 9)

Apologies: Justin Kouame

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Commissioner Justin Kouame.
- 1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

2. Draft minutes of the 267th Commission meeting and Closed minute and matters arising

- 2.1 The minutes of the 267th Commission meeting were agreed.
Action: Minutes of the 267th Commission meeting to be uploaded to the website.
- 2.2 The closed minutes of the 267th Commission meeting were agreed.

3. Chief Commissioner's report

- 3.1 Commissioners noted the Chief Commissioner's report.
- 3.2 The Chief Commissioner reported that both she and Commissioner Lavery had been contacted regarding the Independent Review of the surveillance of journalists.

4. Commissioners' reports

- 4.1 Commissioner White reported on the Audit and Risk Management Committee meeting that took place on 19th June 2024.
Action: Chair of Audit and Risk Management Committee to be invited to the August Commission meeting.

5. Chief Executive report

- 5.1 The Chief Executive provided an update on the budget for 2024-2025. A letter of delegation is awaited and will be shared with Commissioners as soon as possible.
- 5.2 As with point 5.1 above, the Business Plan will be published once the budget is confirmed.

- 5.3 The Chief Executive provided an update on the business case Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (CFNHRI) which has been submitted but is not being supported by the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office. This has an impact internally on the post of Senior Engagement and Communications Officer who has been seconded to the position of Project Lead.

6. Finance Report

- 6.1 The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) provided an update on expenditure for Core and the Dedicated Mechanism.

7. Draft Annual Report and Accounts

- 7.1 The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) presented the Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24.
- 7.2 Commissioners discussed the Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24 and approved the report.

8. Legal Applications for Assistance

- 8.1. The Solicitor presented Application for Assistance QC which is a review of advice previously given by staff.
- 8.2 Commissioners considered the Application for Assistance based against the criteria and agreed with the staff decision that QC does not have any discernible human rights complaints within Northern Ireland and therefore Commissioners do not support the Application for Assistance QC.
- 8.3 The Solicitor presented Application for Assistance MD (lack of suitable offers of temporary accommodation which is offered to them by the NIHE).
- 8.4 Commissioners considered the Application for Assistance based against the criteria and authorise supporting this client with an application for review and a County Court challenge thereafter if necessary.

- 8.5 Commissioners agreed that if any facts come to light which affect the merits of the case then it will be returned to the Commissioners.
- 8.6 The Solicitor updated Commissioners on a request that had come in to support a client from Traveller background who is being evicted from their site. The Commission has been asked to intervene as a 3rd Party. Commissioners discussed the request and agreed to write to the Court to ask for an adjournment in order to properly review documents. Commissioners agreed that they would deal with this case by email if updates happen before the August meeting date.

Action: Letter to be sent to the Court requesting an adjournment.

9. Research Proposal: Women's Health and Human Rights

- 9.1 The Senior Policy & Research Officer and Policy & Research Officer provided an overview of a proposed research project into Women's Health and Human Rights that is to be commenced in this business year.
- 9.2 Commissioners discussed the background and rationale for the research and an overview of the proposal and approved the proposal.

10. KPI Report – Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs

- 10.1 The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) provided an update on the key performance indicators of Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs and provided updates in:
- Strategic Plan
 - Annual Reports & Accounts 2023-24
 - Risk Register
 - Audit reports
 - Data breaches – of which there has been none

11. KPI Team updates

- 11.1 The Director (Human Rights after EU Withdrawal) provided an brief update on:
- Dillon legal challenge

- Westminster trip
- 11.2 The Director (Engagement and Communications) provided a brief update on:
- Shortlisting for the Engagement & Communications Officer
 - Website access tender
 - Refugee week
 - PRIDE event
 - Business and human rights access

12. Any other business

12.1 Commissioners wish our Boardroom Apprentice, Vivienne Fitzroy, best as she completes her term with us. Commissioners wish Vivienne the best for the future and thank her for her involvement with the board.

12.2 The Boardroom Apprentice expressed her thanks to the board and staff for the support over her term with the Commission.

12.3 Commissioners noted the information papers.

The main meeting closed at 12:35pm.