



NORTHERN
IRELAND
HUMAN
RIGHTS
COMMISSION

**171st COMMISSION MEETING ON MONDAY 18 MAY 2015 AT
10:00 IN THE OFFICE OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND HUMAN
RIGHTS COMMISSION, TEMPLE COURT, 39 NORTH STREET,
BELFAST, BT1 1NA**

In attendance: John Corey (as Chair)
Marion Reynolds
Christine Collins
Alan McBride
Milton Kerr

Present: Virginia McVea, Director
David Russell, Deputy Director
Rebecca Magee, Personal Assistant

Apologies: Les Allamby
Paul Yam
Grainia Long

**NOTE: In the absence of the Chief Commissioner,
Commissioners agreed to Commissioner John
Corey chairing the meeting.**

1. Minutes of the 171st Commission meeting

- 1.1 The minutes of the 169th Commission meeting were agreed following amendments to 8.3.
- 1.2 The minutes of the 170th Commission meeting were agreed following the insertion of 'and public authorities' into 6.2.

2. Matters arising

- 2.1 Commissioner Yam's update on his attendance at the CoE-FRA-ENNHRI-Equinet Platform on Hate Crime will be discussed at the June meeting (item 4.1 of previous minutes refers).

Action: Commissioner Yam to provide a written report on the event for the June Commission meeting.

- 2.2 Commissioners noted that an extra meeting of the Commission may not be required as the Audit and Risk Management Committee may be able to sign off the 2014 Accounts (item 7.4 of previous minutes refers).
- 2.3 Commissioners noted that reference would be made to a long standing legal case in the Commission's forthcoming submission to ICCPR as part of its analysis of the 'On the Runs' (item 7.5 of previous minutes refers).
- 2.4 Commissioners were updated that no decision has been made on the funding application to allow the Commission to chair the of the Commonwealth national human rights forum (item 12.3 of the previous minutes refers).

3. Chief Commissioner Report

- 3.1 In the absence of the Chief Commissioner, Commissioners noted the report.

4. Commissioner's Report

- 4.1 Commissioner McBride reported that he is yet to make contact with the Human Rights Consortium regarding the Human Rights festival (item 4.2 of the previous minutes refers).

5. Environment Scanning

- 5.1 Commissioners discussed the environment scanning document and agreed that the approach called PESTEL was the preferred option for their bi-monthly discussions.
- 5.2 Commissioners received a report on contacts with other UK NHRIs to agree a joint statement in response to any emerging Government proposals to replace the Human Rights Act.
- 5.3 Commissioners also agreed to engage with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission regarding any potential implications for the Good Friday Agreement and the All-Ireland Charter.
- 5.4 Commissioners agreed to engage with local political parties and the NI Executive regarding the Human Rights Act.

Action: Deputy Director to write a briefing paper on the Government's approach to the Human Rights Act.

- 5.5 Commissioners agreed that previous contacts with local political parties around a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland should be renewed and could include an offer of briefing on the Human Rights Act developments.

Action: Commissioner Corey in liaison with Commission staff.

6. Director's Report

- 6.1 Commissioners discussed the Director's report.
- 6.2 The Director reported on the joint work with the NI Ombudsman on a human rights based approach to the work of Ombudsmen including an update on the prospect of an international conference that will be held in Belfast.

- 6.3 The Director gave an update in relation to the application for funding for the Litigants in Person project with Ulster University.
- 6.4 The Director reported that the new permanent researcher Fiona O'Connell had taken up post.
- 6.5 Commissioners discussed the Finance report in detail.

7. Proposal for new community engagement

- 7.1 Commissioners discussed the community engagements that have taken place to date.
- 7.2 Commissioners discussed the community engagements going forward and agreed to link the visits to the themes of the strategic plan but also to maintain the practice of meeting with District Council leaders and PSNI.
- 7.3 Commissioners agreed that there should be between 4-6 community engagements per annum.
- 7.4 Commissioners noted that the next community engagement would be to West Belfast on 1 July.
- 7.5 Commissioners agreed that the dates for future community visits would be set in advance.

**Action: Community
Engagement dates to
be set for the year.**

8. Human Rights Inquiry update

- 8.1 Commissioners were updated on the Human Rights Inquiry report. Commissioners noted that amendments had been made to the report and that it had now gone to print.
- 8.2 Commissioners discussed the report and the possibility of having an executive summary document printed.
- 8.3 Commissioners were updated on the launch of the Inquiry report which will take place on 27 May in Stormont Hotel.

9. Information papers

- 9.1 Commissioners noted the final version of the Framework Document with the NIO.
- 9.2 Commissioners noted the application to the Nuffield Foundation with regards to the Litigants in Person project with Ulster University.

10. Any other Business

- 10.1 Commissioners noted that a joint meeting with the Equality Commission (ECNI) was to be arranged. A date will be scheduled for September.

**Action: Date to be arranged
with Commissioners
and ECNI.**