



NORTHERN  
IRELAND  
HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
COMMISSION

## **MINUTES OF A SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETING**

**HELD ON MONDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2007 AT 2:00PM  
AT THE NORTHERN IRELAND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION,  
TEMPLE COURT, 39 NORTH ST, BELFAST, BT1 1NA**

**Present:** Monica McWilliams, Chief Commissioner  
Jonathan Bell  
Tom Duncan  
Christine Eames  
Colin Harvey  
Alan Henry  
Ann Hope  
Kevin McLaughlin  
Eamonn O'Neill

**Apologies:** Geraldine Rice

**In attendance:** Paddy Sloan, Chief Executive  
Rebecca Eaton, Administrative Officer (Commissioners)  
Don Leeson, Head of Corporate Services  
Peter O'Neill, Head of Information, Education and  
Development

A special Commission meeting was convened to approve a revised pay policy for Commission staff.

### **Revised pay policy for Commission staff**

1. The Head of Corporate Services presented a paper setting out a proposed revised pay policy for Commission staff for approval by the Commission. The policy builds on the work of the Pay Working Group, whose recommendation that the NIO pay system be adopted as the framework for Commission staff, was accepted by the Commission in May 2006.

2. Since then, the Commission consulted with NIPSA about the details of its pay arrangements in respect of pay progression, performance-related pay, starting pay and changing the pay year. NIPSA's response to these issues was noted by Commissioners. Following consultation with NIPSA, the Audit and Risk Management Committee signed-off the revised pay policy for Commission staff when it met on 6 February 2007.
3. It was recommended that, given the constraints faced by the Commission, and having explored a number of options, the Commission adopts the NIO pay arrangements in their entirety, including a non-consolidated bonus scheme for a proportion of staff, set annually, deemed to perform exceptionally.
4. During discussions, a number of Commissioners raised concerns about the imposition of performance-related pay on staff, which is required by the Commission's Financial Memorandum with the NIO, and the Treasury. However, on the basis that this is a requirement, the revised pay policy was approved reluctantly by Commissioners for submission to the NIO for approval, which will enable the Commission to process the pay award for 2006-07, which is expected to be agreed imminently between the NIO and NIPSA.
5. Ann Hope asked that it also be recorded that she is totally opposed to the introduction of non-consolidated performance bonuses for what the NIO office categorised as 'exceptional performance'. Additionally, her reading of NIO guidelines on this issue is that there is no requirement to award bonuses, which meant that the Commission has a choice on whether or not to implement this part of the NIO's pay policy.
6. It was noted that the pay policy will be screened for any adverse equality impacts as part of the Commission's statutory duty under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act.
7. It was agreed that the membership of Moderating Panels to oversee the award of non-consolidated performance bonus payments should be drawn from the Commission and the Audit and Risk Management Committee, and will be balanced in respect of gender and community background.

**The meeting closed at 3pm.**

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 12 March 2007