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**153RD COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2013 AT 10:30AM IN THE OFFICES OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, TEMPLE COURT, 39 NORTH STREET, BELFAST, BT11NA**

**In attendance:** Professor Michael O’Flaherty

John Corey

Marion Reynolds

Milton Kerr

Alan McBride

Paul Yam

Grainia Long

**Present:** Virginia McVea, Director

David Russell, Deputy Director

Rebecca Magee, Executive Assistant

Angela Stevens, Caseworker (items 6+7)

Rhyannon Blythe, Assistant Caseworker (item6)

Genevieve Sauberli, Researcher (item 8)

Kellie Turtle, Education Worker (item 9)

Colin Caughey, Policy Worker (item 12)

**Apologies:** Christine Collins

**1. Minutes of 152nd Commission Meeting**

1.1 The minutes of the Special Commission meeting of 16 October were adopted following a minor amendment.

1.2 The minutes of the 152nd Commission meeting were adopted.

**2. Matters arising**

2.1 There were no matters arising.

**3. Chief Commissioner Report**

3.1 Commissioners noted the Chief Commissioner’s report on his meetings since the last Commission meeting. These included:

* Sue McAllister, Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service
* Matt Baggott, Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland
* Rt Hon Theresa Villiers, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
* European NHRIs, Equality Bodies and Ombudsman Institutions event hosted by the FRA (externally funded)
* Human Rights and Policy making workshop for the Permanent Secretaries Group of the Department of Education
* Keynote address at the Annual Human Rights Conference hosted by the Law Society of Ireland and the Irish human Rights Commission (Externally funded)
* Presentation on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland to the Ex-Prisoners Working Group of OFMDFM

**4. Commissioner’s Reports**

4.1 Commissioner John Corey reported on a British Institute of Human Rights event he attended in Unison.

4.2 Commissioner Marion Reynolds reported on a stakeholder event she attended by the Northern Ireland Prison Service on a range of consultations including prisoner health.

**5. Corporate update**

5.1 The Director updated Commissioners on a number of corporate governance issues.

5.2 Commissioners discussed the potential of future grant-in-aid and potential budget cuts. It was agreed to keep developments on this matter under close review.

5.3 Commissioners discussed the position reached in adopting to the Northern Ireland Civil Service Policies and terms and conditions of service for NIHRC staff. The Director discussed further communication with NIPSA and operationally moving forward. Commissioners endorsed the Director’s proposals and agreed that any issues would be shared through the Audit and Risk Committee.

5.4 Commissioners discussed the recruitment process for the Chief Commissioner, noting the commitment given by the Secretary of State to progress this matter.

5.5 The Director updated Commissioners on two upcoming visits to the Commission by the Kosovo Ombudsman, Staff and Council of Europe and a delegation of Commissioners and Staff of the Bahrain National Institution for Human Rights.

**6. Functions Report**

6.1 The Director presented the Functions Report.

6.2 The Director provided an update on the NIHRC financial position since the last meeting.

6.3 The Deputy Director provided an update on the Hate Crime Investigation.

6.4 The Deputy Director provided an update on research projects.

6.5 Commissioners discussed a number of points including the NICS training and delivery.

*Angela Stevens, Caseworker and Rhyannon Blythe, Assistant Caseworker joined the meeting.*

6.6 Commissioners noted the Legal update.

6.7 Commissioners discussed the Legal Advice Clinics. Commissioners noted that the Pilot for a clinic every Wednesday in Belfast had been completed and that the clinic will continue to run. Commissioners noted that there will be a Pilot for Legal Advice Clinics in Derry~Londonderry.

*Rhyannon Blythe, Assistant Caseworker left the meeting.*

**7. Monitoring and Capacity Building Programme: Places of Detention**

7.1 Commissioners discussed the Monitoring and Capacity Building paper setting out the proposed engagement of the commission in places of detention to the end of the business year.

7.2 Commissioners agreed that the paper should be amended to the reflect significance of mental health issues.

**Action: Paper to be amended and brought to Nov/Dec Commission meeting.**

*Angela Stevens, Caseworker left the meeting.*

**8. Budget Analysis and Housing Report**

*Genevieve Sauberli, Researcher joined the meeting.*

8.1 Commissioners considered the draft paper “The Programme for Government and the Right to Adequate Housing”.

8.2 Commissioners identified a number of points for further consideration and possible adjustments to the draft paper.

**Action: Revised paper to be brought back for Commissioner consideration.**

**9. Community Engagement Methodology**

*Kellie Turtle, Education Worker joined the meeting.*

9.1 Commissioners discussed the Community Engagement methodology paper.

9.2 Commissioners agreed that where possible the Community Engagements days would start by meeting the Council/Mayor and end with a meeting with the area PSNI.

9.3 Commissioners agreed that the programme of Community Engagement was very important and agreed that a template for each event should be followed were possible.

**Action: Community Engagement is to appear on the Agenda for the meeting following the event.**

**10. Update on Audit and Risk Committee**

10.1 Commissioner Marion Reynolds reported on the Audit and Risk Committee.

10.2 Commissioners noted the update.

10.3 Commissioners noted the next Audit and Risk Committee will take place on 13 December.

**11. Right to Culture in Post Conflict Societies Paper**

11.1 Commissioners noted the content of the reduced paper prepared to meet the requirements for submission to the Human Rights Council.

**12. Parades Paper**

*Colin Caughey, Policy Worker joined the meeting.*

12.1 The Chief Commissioner reminded the Commission that the Parades Paper had been adopted at a previous meeting except for the introduction.

12.2 Commissioners agreed that the Chief Commissioner would finalise the introduction taking into account the comments of Commissioners.

12.3 Commissioners discussed dissemination of the paper and also discussed availability for Press/Media following the launch of the papers.

**Action: Paper to be disseminated end of the week.**

*Colin Caughey, Policy Worker left the meeting.*

**13. De Silva update**

This item has been postponed to the November Commission meeting.

**14. Bill of Rights**

14.1 Commissioners discussed the recent presentation to the OFMDFM Ex-Prisoners working group on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

**Action: Action Plan to be recirculated.**

**15. Alan McBride to introduce agenda item**

This item has been postponed to the November Commission meeting.

**16. Any other Business**

*Angela Stevens, Caseworker and Rhyannon Blythe, Assistant Caseworker joined the meeting.*

**16.1 Termination of Pregnancy in Northern Ireland**

16.1.1 The Director provided an update on the background to the draft internal document identifying all relevant human rights law and standards relevant to termination of pregnancy in Northern Ireland.

16.1.2 Commissioners discussed the document and identified a number of points for consideration.

16.1.3 Commissioners agreed that document provided the basis for a technical legal advice paper to the NI Executive Ministers.

Meeting closed 5:30pm.