



NORTHERN
IRELAND
HUMAN
RIGHTS
COMMISSION

131ST COMMISSION MEETING (GOVERNANCE)

**HELD ON TUESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2011 AT 2.00 PM
AT HILLSBOROUGH CASTLE, CO DOWN**

Present: Michael O'Flaherty, Chief Commissioner
Christine Collins
John Corey
Milton Kerr
Grainia Long (until 2.35 pm)
Alan McBride
Marion Reynolds
Paul Yam

In attendance: Virginia McVea, Director
David Russell, Deputy Director
Lorraine Hamill, Finance Supervisor (agenda items
1-4)
Mairead Hegarty, Caseworker (agenda item 3.2)

Apologies: None

The Chief Commissioner welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new Commission Board.

It was agreed that the Chief Commissioner would send a letter of appreciation for the work of the outgoing Commission to Monica McWilliams.

Action: Chief Commissioner

1. Minutes of previous meeting

- 1.1 The minutes of the 130th Commission (Policy) meeting held on 22 August 2011 had been agreed by the outgoing Commission, and were taken as read.

2. Report from the Director

- 2.1 Commissioners noted the Director's Report.
- 2.2 The Director informed the meeting that a part-time Policy Worker who had been on a career break has tendered her resignation.
- 2.3 The Director confirmed that the Audit and Risk Management Committee would be reviewing the draft Absence Policy as well as the Commission's Grievance Policy.

Action: Audit and Risk Management Committee

- 2.4 It was agreed that details of future requests made under the Freedom of Information Act and Parliamentary Questions would be made available to Commissioners.

Action: Director

- 2.5 The Commission approved the nominations of Commissioners John Corey and Marion Reynolds as members of the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

3. Statutory functions reports

- 3.1 Commissioners noted the Statutory Functions Report.

3.2 Legal

- 3.2.1 It was agreed that before the Commission could approve an application for assistance that Counsel's opinion on the matter should be sought.

Action: Caseworker

3.2.2 Commissioners noted the update on cases being supported by the Commission.

3.3 Investigations

3.3.1 Commissioners noted that a full draft of the investigation report into the rights of older people in nursing homes will be presented at the November Commission meeting.

Action: Deputy Director

3.4 Promoting human rights

3.4.1 Commissioners noted that a decision on the recent bid for funding from Atlantic Philanthropies is due by the end of December 2011. The project will run for three years.

3.4.2 Commissioners noted that a report on Human Rights Standards and Conflict Transformation will be presented to the October Commission meeting.

Action: Deputy Director

3.4.3 It was agreed that consideration should be given to whether or not the Commission should establish a fixed term task group to discuss media strategy.

Action: Commission

4. 2nd Quarterly Report on the Business Plan

4.1 Commissioners noted progress on activities against the Commission's Business Plan.

4.2 Commissioners expressed their appreciation for providing a comprehensive record of activities over the last quarter.

5. Public expenditure reduction – Discussion paper

5.1 This agenda item is dealt with in a closed minute.

6. Induction – proposal of protocol and articles training and schedule of events

6.1 Commissioners discussed and agreed the induction timetable.

7. Concluding observations on ICERD

7.1 This response was agreed.

8. Any other business

8.1 Commissioners discussed media opportunities and the website development.

8.2 It was agreed to send letters of thanks to the Secretary of State.

Action: Chief Commissioner

8.3 Commissioners agreed to invite former Commissioners to the Commission following the November Commission meeting.

Action: Director

9. Dates of next meetings

9.1 The next Commission meeting will be held on Monday 17 October 2011 at Temple Court, Belfast.

9.2 The next Commission meeting will be held on Monday 21 November 2011 at Temple Court, Belfast.

The meeting closed at 4.15 pm

Approved: _____

Date: _____