



NORTHERN
IRELAND
HUMAN
RIGHTS
COMMISSION

**174th COMMISSION MEETING ON MONDAY 28 SEPTEMBER
2015 AT 10:00 IN THE OFFICE OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, TEMPLE COURT, 39 NORTH
STREET, BELFAST, BT1 1NA**

In attendance: Les Allamby, Chief Commissioner
Marion Reynolds
Grainia Long
Paul Yam
Alan McBride
John Corey

Present: Virginia McVea, Director
David Russell, Deputy Director

**Present for part
of meeting:** Rebecca Magee, Personal Assistant
Lorraine Hamill, Finance and Administration
Manager
Rhyannon Blythe, Assistant Caseworker
Milton Kerr, Commissioner

Apologies: Christine Collins

1. Minutes of the 173rd Commission meeting

- 1.1 The minutes of the 173rd Commission meeting were agreed following amendments including:
- Amendment to 1.1- There was detailed further discussion on the Stormont House Agreement analysis document. A considerable number of amendments were agreed most, but, not all

unanimously. It was agreed to provide both a tracked changed and clean version to Commissioners to ensure that the agreed changes have been comprehensively captured.

- Insertion- 5.2 In his absence Commissioner John Corey had forwarded a note of his contacts with political parties on the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

1.2 The minutes of the 172nd Commission meeting were agreed following minor amendments.

2. Matters arising

2.1 Commissioners were updated on the Annual Statement launch of 10 December.

2.2 Commissioner Corey updated Commissioners on his engagement with political parties on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland (item 5.2 of the previous minutes refers).

2.3 Commissioners were updated on the Business and Human Rights Forum event that took place in September. The Chief Commissioner attended with staff members (item 8 of the previous minutes refers).

3. Chief Commissioner Report

3.1 The Chief Commissioner reported on his recent meetings/events. These included:

- Northern Health and Social Care Trust
- Commissioner, NICCY
- Sir Jonathan Stephens, NIO
- Dr Paddy Woods Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Charlotte McArdle Chief Nursing Officer and Helena Brown Secondary Care Directorate, DHSSPS
- Kirsten Sandberg, Rapporteur of UNCRC Committee and Salman Aldoserij, Vice Chair
- British/Irish Association conference
- Chief Commissioner, ECNI
- Launch of the Queens University draft model implementation Bill (CAJ, Amnesty, TJI, UU, Institute of Conflict Transformation and social justice)

- Evidence session to the NI Assembly Health Committee on access to Health Care Data Bill
 - Reception with US Consulate General
 - Civil Service Commissioners
 - Belfast Comedy Festival debate on the fine line between comedy and offence
- 3.2 The Chief Commissioner also reported on his acceptance of an invitation to be a member of the Civil and Family Justice Review reference group chaired by Lord Justice Gillen.
- 3.3 The Chief Commissioner also accepted an invitation to meet with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in London alongside Baroness O'Neill (EHRC) and Professor Alan Miller (SHRC).

4. Commissioner Report

- 4.1 Commissioner McBride discussed an event he attended entitled 'Uncomfortable Conversations' in Derry/Londonderry. He attended the event in a personal capacity.

5. Strategic Plan – report on stakeholder events and Working group on income development

- 5.1 Commissioner Long provided initial feedback from the two strategic planning events which took place in September.
- 5.2 Commissioners discussed further engagement on the strategic planning. They agreed that another event will be arranged for outside of Belfast, that an internal event with staff should be arranged and further ways looked at to engage with stakeholders.

Action: Strategic planning event outside of Belfast to be arranged.

Action: Strategic planning session with staff to be arranged.

Action: Further ways to engage stakeholders to be explored.

5.3 Commissioners discussed possible funding streams and projects as part of working group on income development that staff have been attending. There was a recognition that specific initiatives and project would need to identify possible funding streams.

6. Statutory Functions Report and Finance Report

6.1 Commissioners noted the Statutory Functions Report.

6.2 Commissioners were updated on the legal functions including an update on the Termination of Pregnancy case.

6.3 Commissioners were undated on the Communications function, this included an update on social media and update on upcoming media initiatives.

6.4 Commissioners were updated on the Policy function.

6.5 Commissioners discussed in detail the Finance Report including current spend against the budget. A monthly profile of spend is now required by the NIO.

6.6 Commissioners were updated on current building works in the reception area. A security screen is being installed across the front desk and the front door will be switched to an intercom system.

7. Stormont House Agreement analysis

7.1 The final draft of the Dealing with the Past within the Stormont House Agreement report was tabled at today's meeting. It was agreed by the majority of Commissioners. The issue of how dissent should be addressed within the published report was discussed. It was agreed to note the dissent in the minutes of today's meeting providing succinct reasons for it and that the Chief Commissioner's Foreword to the report would also refer to dissent from it without providing reasons for same.

- 7.2 Commissioners Collins and Reynolds dissented from the document because they considered that some of the international standards cited as authoritative are not appropriate or relevant to Northern Ireland.
- 7.3 It was agreed that the approved document would be placed on the website and shared with relevant government departments and the political parties involved in the talks.

Action: Foreword to be written and SHA analysis to be disseminated and placed on the website.

8. International Conference on the Human Rights Based Approach to the work of the Ombudsman

- 8.1 The Director shared the background information on the International Conference on the Human Rights Based Approach to the work of the Ombudsman due to be organised in May 2016 in partnership with the Northern Ireland Ombudsman.
- 8.2 The Director discussed the three day event and shared a draft agenda.
- 8.3 Commissioners welcomed this initiative as one of the positive outcomes of the work with the NI Ombudsman.

9. Report on the Commonwealth Chair

- 9.1 Commissioners were updated on the Commonwealth Chair application for funding bid, namely, that the funding bid has been successful.
- 9.2 Commissioners commended the Director for her work on the application.

10. Quarterly Report against the Business Plan

- 10.1 Commissioners noted the Quarterly report against the Business Plan.

10.2 Commissioners were updated on the progress of current projects within the Business Plan.

11. Any other business

11.1 Commissioners were updated on recent meetings with in the Health and Social Care Trusts as follow up to the Human Rights Inquiry into Emergency Healthcare.