



NORTHERN
IRELAND
HUMAN
RIGHTS
COMMISSION

111th COMMISSION MEETING (POLICY)

**HELD ON MONDAY 12 OCTOBER 2009 AT 10:00AM
AT THE NORTHERN IRELAND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION,
TEMPLE COURT, 39 NORTH ST, BELFAST, BT1 1NA**

Present: Monica McWilliams, Chief Commissioner
Jonathan Bell
Tom Duncan
Colin Harvey (agenda items 1 and 2)
Alan Henry (agenda items 3–7)
Ann Hope
Colm Larkin

In attendance: Peter O'Neill, Chief Executive
Ciarán Ó Maoláin, Head of Legal Services, Policy and
Research
David Russell, Head of Communications and Education

Apologies: Eamonn O'Neill
Geraldine Rice
Daphne Trimble

1. Minutes of the 110th Commission (Governance) meeting (HRC 111.1)

- 1.1 The minutes of the 110th Commission (Governance) meeting held on 21 September 2009 were agreed as an accurate record, subject to a number of agreed amendments.

2. Matters arising

- 2.1 Commissioners noted that the Commission's request to meet with the First Minister and deputy First Minister to discuss devolution of policing and criminal justice and a range of other issues, including the Bill of Rights, was still under consideration (paragraph 2.1 of the minutes of the last meeting refers).
- 2.2 Commissioners noted that the record of the Commission's meeting with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, which took place on 18 June 2009 at Hillsborough Castle, remains pending (paragraph 2.2 of the last meeting refers).
- 2.3 Commissioners agreed to consider their response to the NIO's position in respect of pension provision for Commissioners (paragraph 2.8 of the minutes of the last meeting refers).
- 2.4 The Chief Executive reported on advice received in respect of corporate governance issues arising from the Commission's work on a Bill of Rights (paragraph 2.14 of the minutes refers). It was agreed to defer further discussion on this matter to a future Commission meeting.
- 2.5 An update on the visit to Northern Ireland by the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts was provided by the Head of Legal Services, Policy and Research (paragraph 5.7 of the minutes of the last meeting refers).
- 2.6 A report on the Bill of Rights roundtable events held on 24 September and 9 October 2009 was provided by the Head of Communications and Education (paragraph 7.2.2 of the minutes of the last meeting refers). The staff involved in organising these events were commended for their work. The Commission will write to participants to thank them for their attendance.
- 2.7 It was agreed that issues concerning the Standing Orders should, where appropriate, be referred for informal resolution to the Chief Commissioner and / or the Chief Executive.

3. Development of the Commission's strategy for engagement with Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist communities (HRC 111.2)

- 3.1 Commissioners considered a scoping paper on the development of the Commission's strategy for engagement with Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist communities.
- 3.2 It was agreed to establish a reference group of Commissioners to advise on the further development and implementation of this strategy.

4. Draft Strategic Plan for 2009–11 and equality impact assessment: consultation responses (HRC 111.3)

- 4.1 A report on the outcome of the Commission's consultation on its draft Strategic Plan for 2009–11, and associated equality impact assessment, was considered by Commissioners.
- 4.2 A number of amendments were agreed to the draft Strategic Plan in light of the consultation responses.
- 4.3 The Strategic Plan will be finalised and sent to the NIO for approval. The Commission will also provide feedback to consultees on the outcome of the consultation process.

5. Current consultation documents (HRC 111.4)

- 5.1 Commissioners noted the consultation documents, which the Commission has received and is currently working on.
- 5.2 It was agreed that a response should be prepared to the Public Prosecution Service's consultation document on interim guidance on the Offence of Assisted Suicide and tabled for discussion at a future Commission meeting.

6. Any other business

- 6.1 Commissioner noted that the inaugural meeting of the joint committee with the Equality Commission to monitor implementation in Northern Ireland of the UN Convention on Disability Rights is scheduled for 16 October 2009. This will be followed by a meeting of all the bodies involved in the UK monitoring mechanism for the Convention.

7. Dates of next Commission meetings:

- 7.1 The next Commission (Governance) meeting will be held on 16 November 2009

- 7.2 The next Commission (Policy) meeting will be held on 14 December 2009 in Temple Court, Belfast.

The meeting closed at 12.35pm.

Approved: _____

Date: 16 November 2009