

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION MEETING

11 FEBRUARY 2010

MINUTES OF MEETING

PRESENT

Commissioners

Usha Prashar (Chairman)

Jill Black

Lorna Boreland-Kelly

Geoffrey Inkin

Edward Nally

Sara Nathan

Charles Newman

David Pearl

Francis Plowden

Jonathan Sumption

Roger Toulson

Staff

Chief Executive

Director, Courts Appointments

Director, Tribunals Appointments and Corporate Accounting and Planning

Director, Strategy and Outreach

Director, Operational Services

Board Secretariat

Private Secretary to Chairman

Apologies and matters arising from the December meeting

1. Apologies had been received from Heather Hallett, Frances Kirkham, Hazel Genn and Harriet Spicer.
2. The minutes of the December meeting were approved.

Six monthly closedown report analysis (JAC/10/02)

3. The Commission noted a paper which summarised closedown reports that had been considered by the Quality Assurance Working Group for the first six months of the reporting year.
4. The key findings requiring consideration by the Commission would be taken forward as part of the Process Review planned for the March meeting.

Efficiency update (JAC/10/13)

5. An update was provided on work that was continuing on ideas for increasing efficiency and securing better value for money, as well as to update work on benchmarking. The Commission noted the work being carried out to achieve savings and agreed that this was a continuing priority in the current financial climate.

Proposals on JAC Annual Report 2009/10 (JAC/10/04)

6. The Commission was asked to agree proposals for the Annual Report to be similar in format and style to that of last year and to follow a similar timetable for production. On current plans, it would also be cheaper. The Commission accepted these proposals and discussed how the work required to produce the report would be taken forward within the Commission. It was agreed that the theme of the report would be considered further, with work being taken forward through the Outreach Working Group.

Final sign-off of JAC Business Plan (JAC/10/05)

7. The Commission was asked to agree the Business Plan, having seen and commented on the draft during development stage. Commissioners approved the Business Plan, subject to several minor drafting amendments being made and agreeing further comments by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) which would be shared with Commissioners out of committee.

Paper on publication scheme (JAC/10/06)

8. The Commission noted the intention to promulgate the Publication Scheme on the JAC website and approved the publication of the registers of gifts, hospitality and outside interests.

Update on IT Projects (JAC/10/07)

9. The Commission noted recent developments on the IT Projects and approved the revised timescale set out in the paper, which had been agreed by the Access to Justice IT Director in MoJ. It was confirmed that the £200K of capital funding had been returned to MoJ in the current financial year and further progress would be reported at the March meeting.

Report from JAC Working Groups

Audit and Risk Committee (including Q3 Performance Report (JAC/10/08))

10. The Commission was updated on the work of the Audit and Risk Committee, which last met on 2 February, and reviewed Quarter 3 performance and discussed the annual accounts, internal and external audit reports and JAC's efficiencies programme.

Quality Assurance Working Group

11. The Commission received an update on the Quality Assurance Working Group, which met earlier in the day and discussed recent closedown reports.

Diversity Forum

12. The Forum last met on the 14 January and received a presentation from InterLaw, the gay lawyers' network. There was also an update from members on progress on the action plan.
13. The next meeting was planned for 25 February and would feature a discussion of successful initiatives, especially on disability. Diversity group representatives would also attend, as agreed at the seminar last July.

Advisory Group

14. The Group last met on 19 January and considered the qualifying tests and marking schemes for forthcoming selection exercises.

Directors' Reports (JAC/10/09)

15. The Director of Strategy and Outreach informed the Commission that the first set of official statistics of completed selection exercises between April and September 2009 had been published on 9

February. An online example of a role-play exercise of the type candidates might face during selection exercises had been included on the JAC website from 4 February and had received a high number of hits.

16. The Director of Operational Services informed the Commission that in addition to the 1 year selection programme, a three year rolling programme agreed by MoJ, Her Majesty's Courts Service and the Tribunals Service would shortly be included on the JAC website.
17. The Director of Tribunals Appointments and Corporate Accounting stated that details of Commissioners' and Directors' expenses would shortly be published on the JAC website. An update was also provided on latest developments on Tribunals selection exercises.
18. The Director of Courts Appointments provided an update on the latest developments for Courts selection exercises. A paper recommending the closure of the section 94 list on High Court 2006/07 (JAC/10/10) was considered and a way forward agreed by the Commission.

Chief Executive's report (JAC/10/11)

19. The Commission noted the favourable results and response rate from the Staff Survey and was updated on recent events held for Arms Length Bodies, attended by the Chief Executive.

Chairman's report

20. The Commission was informed of the Chairman's meeting with the President of the Queen's Bench Division on 22 January and plans to host a trilateral event in April with the judicial appointments bodies of Northern Ireland and Scotland. Future engagements also included attending the Law Society Firms Diversity Forum on 17 February, a meeting with the Chair of the Queen's Counsel Appointments Selection Panel on 18 February and a bilateral meeting with the Lord Chief Justice on 3 March.

Any Other Business

21. None.

Date of next meeting

22. The next meeting would take place on 25 March 2010.