

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION (JAC) MEETING

10 JUNE 2010

MINUTES OF MEETING

PRESENT

Commissioners

Usha Prashar (Chairman)

Heather Hallett

Lorna Boreland-Kelly

Frances Kirkham

Edward Nally

Sara Nathan

Charles Newman

David Pearl

Roger Toulson

Staff

Chief Executive

Director, Courts Appointments

Director, Tribunals Appointments, Corporate Accounting & Planning

Director, Operational Services

Director, Strategy & Outreach

Assistant Director, Policy & Research Strategy

Board Secretariat

Private Secretary to Chairman

Apologies and matters arising

1. Apologies were received from Jill Black, Hazel Genn, Geoffrey Inkin, Francis Plowden, Harriet Spicer and Jonathan Sumption.
2. The Commission congratulated Heather Hallett on her appointment as Chairman of the Judicial Studies Board, which would result in her stepping down as a member and Vice Chairman of the JAC with effect from 1 July 2010.
3. The Chairman confirmed that Roger Toulson would take over the role of Vice Chairman on the same date.
4. The minutes of the May meeting were approved, subject to two minor amendments to paragraphs 5 and 6.

Discussion on implications of advice on non-statutory eligibility issues

5. The Commission held a useful discussion on the implications of various non statutory eligibility issues for selection exercises.

Budget 2010/11 – issues and implications (JAC/10/29)

6. The Commission noted the budget position for 2010/11 and discussed the information annexed to the paper which outlined options to be considered for reducing expenditure in light of the Treasury statement on 24 May in relation to further budget cuts.

Quality Assurance of the Selection Process (JAC/10/30)

7. The Commission noted progress on the selection process quality assurance project. The key aims of the project were to ensure that systems were adhered to and standards maintained.

Reports from JAC Working Groups

Outreach Working Group

8. The Group had met earlier in the day and discussed issues concerning the JAC website and the JAC's advertising strategy.
9. The Group had also considered a statistical digest of judicial appointments of women and Black and Minority Ethnic candidates over a ten year period, which had been developed jointly by the JAC and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). It provided evidence of the progress that had been made since the JAC was established. The Commission agreed that this was an excellent piece of work.

Audit and Risk Committee

10. The Committee met on 27 May and discussed the business case for IT capital funding. Revisions were being incorporated and a further update on progress would be provided at the July Commission meeting.

Diversity Forum

11. The Forum last met on 27 May and continued the discussions commenced at its previous meeting on entry into the legal profession and retention and progression. A useful presentation on research into women in the medical profession had informed discussion.

Advisory Group

12. The Group last met on 20 May and considered the feedback report for the Deputy District Judge qualifying test and the progress made in developing a qualifying test for the Circuit Judge selection exercise.

Six monthly complaints analysis (JAC/10/31)

13. The Commission considered the findings of an analysis of complaints received by the JAC over the past six months, particularly the fall in both the percentage of complaints received and those complaining about the use of qualifying tests. It also noted the widening of the Ombudsman's remit in considering complaints.

Directors' Reports (JAC/10/32)

14. The Commission accepted the recommendations made in a paper presented by the Director of Courts Appointments seeking their agreement to the closure of the s94 list for the District Judge (Magistrates) 2007/08 selection exercise, in advance of the launch of a new exercise.

15. The Director of Tribunals Appointments, Corporate Accounting & Planning informed the Commission of plans for handling the sign off of the JAC's Annual Accounts, once considered by the Audit and Risk Committee at its June meeting. That meeting would also feature a discussion with the Business Owners of the MoJ's Shared Services.
16. The Director of Operational Services provided an update to the Commission on IT and HR issues, particularly the testing of the IT database and the impact of the recruitment freeze. It was noted that the JAC had received a Green audit assessment for the handling of information assurance data.
17. The Director of Strategy and Outreach informed the Commission that the next JAC official statistics bulletin was due to be published on 1 July. The Commission briefly discussed the proposed review by the MoJ of the judicial appointments process and how this might impact on the JAC. The Commission agreed that such a review should be independently led.

Chief Executive's report (JAC/10/34)

18. The Chief Executive informed the Commission of an issue that had arisen in MoJ's planning for the selection exercise programme, which had resulted in changes that would have to be managed carefully over the summer months.

Chairman's report

19. The Chairman informed Commissioners of a recent meeting with the Lord Chief Justice and forthcoming meetings with the Lord Chancellor, the Senior President of Tribunals and the President of the Institute of Legal Executives. She would also be visiting Exeter on 1 July and meeting key interested parties from the Western Circuit.

Any Other Business

None.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting would take place on 8 July 2010.