

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION (JAC) MEETING

10 September 2020

Minutes of Board Meeting

Present	
Commissioners	Staff
Ajay Kakkar (Chairman) Sue Carr (Vice Chairman) Mathangi Asokan Anuja Dhir Sarah Falk Emir Feisal Jane Furniss Sue Hoyle Andrew Kennon Sarah Lee Barry Morgan Greg Sinfield Brie Stevens-Hoare Simon Wessely	Chief Executive Deputy Chief Executive Head of Operations and Digital Head of Operational Delivery Head of Senior Appointments Head of Selection Policy Head of Secretariat/Board Secretary Head of Diversity and Engagement Selection Exercise Team Manager
Apologies: Christa Christensen	Guests: Lord Chancellor

1. Apologies and matters arising

1.1 The Chairman welcomed to the Board Lady Justice Sue Carr, the new Vice Chairman.

1.2 The minutes of the 9 July 2020 meeting were agreed.

2. Chief Executive's Report and Management Information Pack

2.1 The Chief Executive:

- reported on the agreed two-year programme with HMCTS and the work conducted to date;
- provided an update on JAC's business continuity and recovery plans in response to the COVID 19 outbreak;
- provided an update on the JAC's financial position.

3. Report back from Committees and Working Groups

3.1 The Chairman asked Commissioners to report back on recent meetings of committees and working groups.

Welsh Matters Committee

- 3.2 Barry Morgan (BM) reported back from the Welsh Matters Committee (WMC).
- 3.3 The WMC was asked to note the Law Commission review of devolved Welsh Tribunals.
- 3.4 The Committee was asked to note the launch of the Welsh Language Commissioner's assurance report on 15 September for 2019-2020 covering compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.
- 3.5 The Committee was asked to note a statement from the First Minister of Wales on the impact of coronavirus on the legislative programme.

Digital Board

- 3.6 Andrew Kennon (AK) reported back from the September Digital Board that the Board looked at the next key developments in the Roadmap and discussed the progress on the website project and the timeline for delivery.
- 3.7 The Board was updated on the plans to implement the recommendations from the recent audit.
- 3.8 The Board also reviewed recent use of Google docs by panel members during selection days and the feedback received so far.
- 3.9 AK noted the departure of Claire Troughton and expressed the thanks of the Digital Board for her work over the last number of years.

Audit and Risk Committee

- 3.10 Jane Furniss (JF) reported back from the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). ARC reviewed and discussed two deep dive papers on the Diversity and Information Security Risks. The Committee was content with the actions taken by the JAC to manage both risk areas.
- 3.11 ARC received an update from the Government Internal Audit Agency on its work during Q1 and the impact of COVID 19.
- 3.12 ARC reviewed the National Audit Office's Management letter following the 2019-2020 audit and noted its recommendations.
- 3.13 The JAC is currently advertising for a replacement Independent Member to the ARC which will become vacant in early 2021.

Advisory Group

- 3.14 JF provided an update to the Board on the Advisory Group meetings which took place on 21 July and 8 September.
- 3.15 At its meeting on 21 July, the Advisory Group considered situational questions for upcoming exercises.
- 3.16 Over the summer, the Group considered, out of committee, the role-play for Judges of the First-tier Tribunal and Employment Tribunal, situational judgement questions and critical analysis test for Recorder and situational questions for Employment Tribunal Judge.
- 3.17 At its meeting on 8 September, the Group considered a paper on the analysis of situational judgement tests and situational questions for Chair of the Residential Property Tribunal for Wales and scenario test questions for Recorder.

4. Chairman's Report

- 4.1 The Chairman reported he had held a successful meeting with the outgoing MoJ Permanent Secretary Sir Richard Heaton and expressed the thanks of the Commission for the support he had provided to the JAC in this role.
- 4.2 The Chairman reported that he had held a successful first meeting with the incoming President of the Law Society David Greene on 10 September.

5. District Judge Selection Process

- 5.1 The Selection Exercise Team Manager presented the high-level process for the next District Judge exercise due to launch in September 2020.
- 5.2 Following discussion, the Commission approved the proposed high-level process.

6. District Judge (Magistrates' Court) Selection Process

- 6.1 The Selection Exercise Team Manager presented the high-level process for the next District Judge (Magistrates' Court) exercise due to launch in October 2020.
- 6.2 Following discussion, the Commission approved the proposed high-level process.

7. High Court 2020-21 Selection Process

- 7.1 The Head of Senior Appointments presented the revised high-level process for this year's High Court 2020-21 exercise due to launch in autumn 2020.

7.2 Following discussion, the Commission noted the proposed changes to the selection process and endorsed the revised high-level process for this exercise.

8 Business Continuity and Recovery Plan up to March 2021

8.1 The Chief Executive presented the JAC Business Continuity and Recovery Plan to March 2021.

8.2 This plan provided an update on the actions to be taken to recover those exercises that were “paused” in March 2020.

8.3 Following discussion, the Board endorsed the proposed JAC Business Continuity and Recovery Plan to March 2021.

9 JAC Diversity Initiatives Update

9.1 The Chief Executive provided an update on the JAC diversity measures and the forthcoming publication of the first combined annual statistical report of diversity data.

9.2 The Commission noted the progress made on the three new JAC diversity measures alongside the JDF’s work.

10 Guest: Lord Chancellor

10.1 The Lord Chancellor spoke about the recovery of the courts and tribunals from COVID 19 and the impact on judicial recruitment and the work of the JAC.

10.2 He also highlighted ongoing and upcoming initiatives to support a more diverse judiciary.

10.3 The Lord Chancellor expressed his thanks for the work undertaken by the JAC particularly in response to COVID 19.

10.4 The Chairman thanked the Lord Chancellor for his support.

11. Forward Look and AOB

11.1 The Board noted the Forward Look and the Chairman confirmed the next Board meeting would be held on 8 October 2020.

11.2 This concluded the business of the Board.