

# JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION (JAC) MEETING

14 February 2019

## Minutes of Board Meeting

<b>Present</b>	
<b>Commissioners</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Ajay Kakkar (Chairman) Anne Rafferty (Vice Chairman) Mathangi Asokan Anuja Dhir Emir Feisal Andrew Kennon Sarah Lee Fiona Monk Brie Stevens-Hoare Valerie Strachan Simon Wessely Philippa Whipple	Chief Executive Deputy Chief Executive Head of Operations and Digital Deputy Head of Operations Head of Selection Policy Head of Secretariat/Board Secretary Senior Policy Advisor Senior Engagement and Insight Manager
<b>Apologies</b>	<b>Observers</b>
Jane Furniss Noel Lloyd Phillip Sycamore	Head of Diversity and Engagement Senior Communications Manager

### 1. Apologies and matters arising

- 1.1. Apologies were received from Jane Furniss, Noel Lloyd and Phillip Sycamore.
- 1.2. The minutes of the 13 December 2018 meeting were agreed.
- 1.3. No interests were declared by any Commissioner in respect of any matter under discussion on the agenda.

### 2. Chief Executive's Report and Management Information Pack

- 2.1. The Chief Executive reported on the following key issues to the Board with reference to the Management Information Pack:
  - the two-year programme, and governance and change process, agreed with JAC partners;
  - the progress made on responding to the results from the People Survey;
  - new arrangement of the teams reflecting the demands of the forward programme; and,
  - the progress of current exercises and recommendations made to Appropriate Authorities.

2.2. The Board also approved the proposal by the Chief Executive to remove the Action Register as a duplication of the information set out within the Management Information Pack.

### **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.

3.2. Fiona Monk reported on the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) held on 24 January 2019. FM advised the Board that ARC had considered the Management Information Pack, the Corporate Risk Register and noted progress of the internal and external audits for the year.

3.3. Specifically, FM reported that all internal audits concluded for the year had received the highest possible assurance rating of 'substantial' compliance including the audits on 'Governance of the finance function' and 'Staff Engagement'. FM informed the Board that ARC had also reviewed the security incident reports for the year.

3.4. FM also passed on ARC's thanks to Noel Lloyd on chairing the committee, before handing the chairmanship over to Jane Furniss from April.

3.5. The Chairman thanked FM for her report and also thanked Noel for his invaluable contribution to ARC during his tenure on the committee.

### **4. Chairman's Report**

4.1. The Chairman reported on his activities since his last report at the December meeting. The Chairman reported that he had met individually with the Lord Chief Justice, Senior Presiding Judge and Senior President of Tribunals; and that he had attended a roundtable event for solicitors with Sarah Lee, organised by the Lord Chancellor and hosted by the Law Society.

4.2. The Chairman reported that he had participated in the sift of the President of the Queen's Bench and Court of Appeal competitions in early February and that, as Assigned Commissioner, he had also overseen the sift for the High Court exercise.

## **5. Approach to Non-Legal Tribunal Exercises**

5.1. The Chairman invited the Senior Policy Advisor to present a paper outlining a streamlined approach to be taken on the upcoming Non-Legal Tribunal Exercises.

5.2. The Senior Policy Advisor asked the Board to agree to the following standardised elements for exercises to select for non-legal tribunal roles:

- A streamlined application form covering eligibility and additional selection criteria, with no requirement for a 'self-assessment' against competencies;
- A generic qualifying test (QT) that tests skills required for all tribunal members, which will only be included in an exercise if the volume of applications makes it necessary;
- A streamlined selection day consisting of Situational Questions and a competency based interview, that cover the breadth of the competency framework between them.

5.3. The Board noted that this approach had been developed in preparation for the large number of Non-Legal Tribunal exercises in the forward programme, with 14 exercises being scheduled for 2019-20. Variation would be considered where necessary, but otherwise this approach would be followed.

5.4. Following a detailed discussion, the Board agreed the recommendations outlined in the paper.

## **6. Name-blind sifting**

6.1. The Senior Engagement and Insight Manager presented a paper outlining a proposal that the Commission (i) endorse the principle of name-blind sifting where a sift of applications was used as a method of shortlisting and (ii) partially roll out name blind sifting to smaller sift-based exercises until the redaction of candidate names can be automated by the new digital platform. The Board noted that all online tests are already marked name-blind.

6.2. The Board considered the further research presented in support of the initiative, and the list of other organisations using name blind recruitment, alongside the information that had been provided on the subject at the previous Board meeting. Following discussion, the Board agreed to (i) adopt name-blind sifting in principle and (ii) partially roll out name-blind sift in exercises where the anticipated number of candidates is fewer than 20, ahead of full roll-out upon automation.

6.3. As a point of information, the Board requested monitoring of the extent to which panellists are able to identify candidates after the name blind sift has been undertaken. It was noted that this would be more likely in the small exercises involved in the partial rollout.

## **7. AOB and Forward Look**

7.1. The Chairman invited Brie Stevens-Hoare (BSH) to report back to the Board on her involvement with the JAC social committee, recently named Friends of JAC (“social committee”).

7.2. BSH reported that the social committee had met twice since December and that its remit had been expanded to cover both social and wellbeing initiatives including cultural and diversity-based events as well as ‘Lunch and Learn’ sessions with Commissioners.

7.3. BSH explained that plans were in place for the creation of an inclusive calendar of activities across the year with the aim of supporting staff morale, sharing knowledge, skills and experience and raising money for charity.

7.4. The Board congratulated the Head of Strategy and Policy on the formalisation of her role as Deputy Chief Executive.

7.5. The Chairman asked the Board to note the Forward Look and reminded Board members that the Spring Strategy Board Dinner would be held on Wednesday 13 March 2019 and that the usual Board meeting would be held the following day on Thursday 14 March 2019.