

**JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION (JAC) MEETING
6 DECEMBER 2012
MINUTES OF MEETING**

PRESENT Commissioners	Staff
Christopher Stephens (Chairman) Jill Black (Vice-Chairman) David Bean Malcolm Birchall Martin Forde Noel Lloyd Alexandra Marks Alison McKenna Stella Pantelides Andrew Ridgway Ranjit Sondhi Valerie Strachan Deborah Taylor John Thornhill Alan Wilkie	Chief Executive Selection Exercise Director Operational Director Assistant Director, Operational Policy and Complaints Assistant Director, Change Programme Assistant Director, Judicial Appointments Project Team Private Secretary to the Chairman Board Secretary

1. Apologies and Matters arising

1.1 No apologies were received.

1.2 All Commissioners confirmed that they had no personal interest in any matters to be discussed on the agenda.

1.3 Minutes of the 8 November meeting were agreed subject to including in para 1.1 that apologies had also been received from Malcolm Birchall.

2. Chairman's Report

2.1 The Chairman provided an update on his activities since his last report at the November Board meeting. He had met with the Permanent Secretary, Ursula Brennan, together with Helen Edwards of the Ministry of Justice; and with Jack Straw MP in relation to his Hamlyn Lecture on Judicial Appointments, which the Chairman also attended. He had met with the President of the Law Society, Lucy Scott-Moncrieff, together with Alexandra Marks.

2.2 In addition he had been participating in interviews for both the Chancellor of the High Court and President of the Family Division with Valerie Strachan; attended the Law Reform Lecture by Jonathan Sumption on "Home Truths about Judicial Diversity" and also the "Judge for Yourself" event at the Law Society.

2.3 For the remainder of December he would be meeting Helen Grant MP, Minister for Women and Equalities, with Ranjit Sondhi prior to meeting with the Minister again at the Diversity Forum. He would be meeting Helen Edwards (MoJ) for a Year End Review discussion, the Lord Chief Justice for a bilateral meeting, and participating in interviews for the Supreme Court.

3. Chief Executive's Report

3.1 The Chief Executive provided his report to the Commission on the current financial position and the budget for 2013/14 which was still expected to be £5m. He informed the Board that the Commissioner planning event was now likely to be held on site in May 2013. The Secretariat would confirm further details shortly.

3.2 The Chief Executive also reported on the progress of work on the end-to-end process and that the Steering Group had agreed a 5-month period from launch of exercises to success letter. (There was a further detailed paper being provided at item 6 below). He also provided an update on the Crime and Courts Bill and key dates for Third reading in the House of Lords.

3.3 The Chief Executive also reported to the Commission on a proposal which had been raised at the previous Board meeting with regards to the tribunal judge Commissioner also being a member of the Tribunal Judge Executive Board. It had been agreed that there could be scope for potential conflicts of interest and the proposal would not proceed. The Senior President of Tribunals had been informed.

4. Timing of Eligibility and Character Decisions

4.1 The Assistant Director, Operational Policy and Complaints presented a paper addressing the timing of eligibility and character decisions. The paper sought agreement from the Commission that statutory eligibility and additional selection criteria (ASC) decisions are made after the short-listing stage. The Commission agreed.

4.2 Agreement was also sought that, unless a serious character issue emerged in the application form or at any stage of the selection process, the point at which character decisions are considered and made, would remain after the selection day stage. The Commission endorsed that current process.

4.3 The Commission directed that guidance to panellists and on panel report forms must provide clear instruction on the timing of eligibility and character decisions as set out above.

The Assistant Director, Operational Policy would ensure that the wording of the guidance and forms would be made explicit in this regard.

5. Six Month Complaints and Candidate Feedback Analysis

5.1 The Assistant Director, Operational Policy and Complaints presented a paper to the Commission which provided an analysis of the complaints received between April and September 2012. It also provided analysis of feedback routinely collected from the candidates.

5.2 In discussion, the Commission noted that complaints remained at a low level, but that a slightly higher proportion had been upheld by JAC independent investigation in this period. There was no particular trend or discernible reason for this. The Commission also noted the summary of candidate feedback which had revealed no areas of concern.

6. Six Month Timeline – Progress Update

6.1 The Assistant Director, Judicial Appointments Project Team provided a paper to the Commission updating the progress which had been made under the Judicial Appointments Steering Group in moving towards a 6 month 'end-to-end' process.

6.2 The work would set the broad "time" parameters to maintain the quality of selections and to make the selection process more candidate-focussed.

6.3 The Commission particularly noted the high level 20-week/5-month timeline for operating the JAC's part of the 'end-to-end' selection process.

7. Selection Process Review

7.1 The Assistant Director for the Process Review presented a paper, which provided the blueprint and timescales for delivery of the concepts which had been endorsed at the September Board discussion.

7.2 The paper had been prepared with contributions from Commissioners David Bean, Deborah Taylor, Stella Pantelides and Alison McKenna. The Board welcomed the paper and endorsed the broad principles as set out. The selection process review would be taken forward as one of the five strands of work being controlled and managed under a programme management structure.

7.3 The Chairman also informed the Commission that progress on this strand would be discussed at the Selection Process Review workshop, being planned for 14 March 2013, when there would be an opportunity to consider points of detail further.

8. Provisional Selection Exercise Programme 2013/14

8.1 The Selection Exercise Director presented a paper on the provisional selection programme for 2013/14.

8.2 The Commission was asked to note that it was the intention to publish the provisional programme on the JAC website in early January 2013. The programme would, as was usual, be subject to change depending upon the actual business requirement.

8.3 Commissioners noted the programme but did express concerns over the forecasting of the numbers of appointments for certain exercises. The Selection Exercise Director assured the Commission that she was engaging with the business area on this issue and that they would be confirming their requirements by early February. She considered, on balance, that publishing the provisional programme ahead of this would be beneficial in order to enable candidates to plan and better prepare their applications for judicial appointment.

8.4 The Commission agreed that the programme should be published on this basis.

9. Report back from Working Groups

9.1 Noel Lloyd provided an update to the Commission on the work of the IT working group which had last met on 20 November and was due to be meeting again on 18 December. He also informed the Commission that the group would in future be incorporated as part of the IT Project Board.

9.2 Valerie Strachan provided a brief update on the discussions of the Next Steps group.

10. Directors' Reports

10.1 The Selection Exercise Director provided an update to the Commission on key issues within her Directorate. In addition she sought the Commission's formal agreement to the closure of the s.94 list for the Residential Property Tribunal Service, which had been discussed at the Selection and Character Committee meeting held on 22 November 2012. The Commission agreed that this list should close.

10.2 The Selection Exercise Director also provided an update on the current review of Panel Members and asked Commissioners to provide any feedback comments on panel members directly to her out of committee. She would also welcome any comment on the performance of Selection Exercise Managers, as she was embarking on a programme of 360 degree feedback.

10.4 The Director, Operational Services referred to his report adding that the December Official Statistics had been published earlier in the day.

10.5 He also informed the Commission that the next meeting of the Diversity Workshop would be held on 14 February, where the tipping point would be discussed and further details would be issued.

11. Any other Business

11.1 The Chairman informed Commissioners that a Board Evaluation Form would be sent to them for completion. It was intended that responses would be collated before the end of the financial year. These would be sent out by the Secretariat, along with an individual 360 degree assessment.

Date of next meeting

The Chairman confirmed that the next Board meeting would be held on **Thursday 14 February 2013**.