

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION (JAC) MEETING

8 JULY 2010

MINUTES OF MEETING

PRESENT

Commissioners

Usha Prashar (Chairman)
Heather Hallett
Lorna Boreland-Kelly
Hazel Genn
Geoffrey Inkin
Edward Nally
Sara Nathan
Charles Newman
David Pearl
Francis Plowden
Harriet Spicer
Jonathan Sumption
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
Assistant Director, Equality and Fair Treatment
Assistant Director, Business Development
Assistant Director, Human Resources
Deputy Director, Operational Services
Board Secretariat
Private Secretary to Chairman

Apologies and matters arising

1. Apologies were received from Jill Black and Frances Kirkham.
2. All Commissioners confirmed they did not have a personal interest in any matters discussed.
3. The minutes of the June meeting were approved.

Handling of First-tier appointments (JAC/10/37)

4. The Commission held a discussion on the implications of various non statutory eligibility issues and agreed a way forward for current exercises.

Update on HR issues (JAC/10/38)

5. The Commission noted the key HR activities and achievements in 2009/10 and the initiatives planned for 2010/11.
6. The Commission agreed to the revised recruitment procedure, in light of the 'freeze' on external recruitment, and the removal of the fixed retirement age that applies to all JAC staff.

Appraisal for Panel Chairs and way forward for independent members (JAC/10/39)

7. The Commission noted the performance of the 29 serving Panel Chairs and agreed that there should be no wide scale recruitment exercise for Panel Chairs.

8. A further update would be provided at the October Commission meeting on the appraisal of remaining Panel Chairs, actions required and evaluation of the new appraisal system.

Results of qualifying tests dry runs developed by academics and commercial test specialists (JAC/10/40)

9. The Commission considered the initial findings from the pilot of two qualifying tests developed by test developers and academics. It was noted that initial signs were encouraging and that further analysis would be available at the September meeting.

New Leadership and Management Quality and Ability (JAC/10/41)

10. The Commission, having received comments from Key Interested Parties agreed to the new Leadership and Management Quality and Ability being used for relevant selection exercises, subject to the amendment of some of the wording.

11. Key Interested Parties would now be informed and the web site updated.

Character (including relevant cases log) (JAC/10/42)

12. The Commission held a discussion with regard to the carrying out of criminal and financial checks in light of information received from HMRC and the police. It was agreed that a fuller set of proposals would be brought back to the Commission in September.

Dealing with additional criteria applied by the Lord Chancellor (JAC/10/43)

13. The Commission considered a paper on additional criteria applied by the Lord Chancellor but agreed that no further action would be required at this time.

Directors' reports (JAC/10/44)

14. The Commission considered a paper presented by the Director of Tribunals Appointments, Corporate Accounting & Planning, which outlined the budget position for 2010/11. It was noted that the MOJ had decided the JAC's contribution to the savings it would make this financial year as part of its contribution to overall government savings would be the postponement of the capital allocation of £800k, which had been earmarked for the planned IT project needed to enable online testing of candidates.
15. The Director of Strategy and Outreach updated the Commission on the publication of the second set of official statistics on 1 July and the Ten Year Trends analysis, published jointly with the Ministry of Justice.

16. The Director of Courts provided Commissioners with an update on key selection exercises currently running.
17. The Director of Operational Services provided an update on areas within his remit, including IT.

Reports from JAC Working Groups

Audit and Risk Committee

18. The Committee met on 24 June and approved the Annual Accounts and discussed the Internal Audit Annual Report and National Audit office report.

Quality Assurance Advisory Group

19. The Group had met earlier in the day and discussed close down reports from March to May 2010.

Chief Executive's report (JAC/10/45)

20. The Chief Executive updated the Commission on current key issues and meetings attended.

Chairman's report

21. The Chairman informed Commissioners of recent meetings with the Lord Chancellor, Sharon White, Director-General, Ministry of Justice, Senior President of Tribunals and the President of ILEX and forthcoming meetings with the Bar Council and Law Society. She also visited Exeter on 1 July and met with key interested parties from the Western Circuit.

Any Other Business

22. The Chairman announced that she will be leaving the Judicial Appointments Commission when her term of office expires in September. The Vice Chairman paid tribute to the achievements of the Chairman during her period of office and stated that we owe her a huge debt of gratitude.
23. Commissioners agreed that they were content for Hazel Genn to act as the Commission's nominee for a forthcoming Supreme Court selection commission.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting would take place on 16 September 2010.