

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION (JAC) MEETING
14 JULY 2011
MINUTES OF MEETING

PRESENT

Commissioners

Christopher Stephens (Chairman)
Roger Toulson (Vice-Chairman)
David Bean
Lorna Boreland-Kelly
Geoffrey Inkin
Sara Nathan
Charles Newman
Francis Plowden
Harriet Spicer
Jonathan Sumption

Staff

Interim Chief Executive
Selection Exercise Director
Change Programme Director
Operational Services Director
Assistant Director (Strategy and Policy)
Secretary to the Board

1. Apologies and matters arising

1.1 Apologies were received from Jill Black, Hazel Genn and David Pearl.

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

1.3 The Minutes of the June Board meeting were approved and the Board Action Register noted.

1.4 The Chairman informed the Commission that his Private Secretary had recently been successful in an external recruitment campaign on promotion. The Commission congratulated her on this appointment.

2. Chairman's Update

2.1 The Chairman provided an update on his activities since the last meeting. These included meetings with the Lord Chief Justice, the Chief Executive of the Supreme Court, Ministry of Justice Officials and Chairman of the Bar Council. He had sat with the Presiding Judge for Wales at Swansea Crown Court and had witnessed a qualifying test for District Judge (Civil). He had also given an interview to the Times, delivered a speech at the Interlaw event, been a panel member Civil Service Live event and given a talk at the Law Commission.

2.2 He indicated that he expected to attend a meeting with the Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice, meet the new President of the Law Society, John Wotton, and would be visiting Sir Muir

Russell, Chairman of the Judicial Appointments Board for Scotland later in July.

2.3 The Chairman sought the Commission's approval to be their representative on an ad hoc selection commission for the appointment of a Justice of the Supreme Court to which Commissioners agreed.

2.4 He provided an update on arrangements for the appointment of new Commissioners and confirmed that a campaign led by the Ministry of Justice would be launched in the week commencing 18th July.

3. Commissioners' Open Session

3.1 The Commission held a general discussion to identify and agree the priorities for the JAC in the next 6 months.

4. Competency Framework

4.1 The Commission were asked to note the progress on a draft joint single Competency Framework document and to agree that the JAC should continue to engage with the Judicial Office, Ministry of Justice and Judicial College offices on this matter.

4.2 The Commission approved this engagement, but stressed the need for clarity of purpose and simplicity of approach to be reflected in the final product. It also asked that a reference to "personal qualities" be included and for the document to be concise.

4.3 It was agreed that these guidelines would be accepted and progress would be reported to the Commission at a future meeting.

5. Character Checks

5.1 A paper was presented outlining the current character check arrangements which the JAC undertakes. The Commission was asked to agree to the recommendations as they applied to financial checks and inadequate profession service checks and to how the process of character checks should apply to existing judicial office holders and magistrates.

5.2 The Commission agreed to all the recommendations in the paper.

6. Panel Chairs and Independents

6.1 The Commission was presented with a paper and asked to note progress of the proposal to recruit a new cadre of Panel Chairs and Independent members. It was advised that, subject to

funding being available, it would be possible to launch the campaign in September 2011.

6.2 The Commission discussed and approved the outline plan, but considered that the timeline should take account of advertising outlets and timings over the summer period. The Commission also considered that outreach and Commissioner involvement was of particular importance, as was the need to build on lessons learnt from a previous recruitment campaign. It was agreed that planning should proceed and that the Commission should be kept advised of progress.

7. Legislative Change Options

7.1 The Commission was presented with a paper which set out a proposed list of options for legislative change should there be an appropriate Bill in the second session of parliament.

7.2 The options were discussed at length and the Chairman invited Commissioners to give further consideration and provide any comments outside of the meeting.

7.3 Guidance was also sought from Commissioners on their preferred approach to the JAC's role in the selection of Deputy High Court Judges. The Commission debated the issues at length but considered that further work and research was required before being able to reach a broad consensus. It was agreed, therefore, that a further paper addressing the issues discussed would come before a Commission meeting in the Autumn.

8. Report back from Working Groups

8.1 The Quality Assurance Working Group met on 30 June to discuss Closedown Reports for Queen's Coroner and Attorney, Master of the Crown Office and Registrar of Criminal Appeals and Fee Paid Member of the First-tier Tribunal, Social Entitlement Chamber. It also discussed qualifying test updates, Panel Chairs and Pilots.

8.2 The Outreach Working Group met on 14 July and discussed the forthcoming candidate seminars and the outreach programme for the Autumn.

9. Directors' Reports

9.1 The Director of Operational Services provided an update on IT stating that there are had been an improved level of support in recent months. He confirmed, also that good progress had been made with partners on the programme and that the JAC Annual Report was due to be published on Monday 18 July.

9.2 An update was provided on the pilot projects, currently underway.

9.3 The Director of Selection Exercises provided an update on selection exercises that were currently running.

9.4 She informed the Commission that the President of the Queen's Bench Division had written to the Chairman with regards to seeking the concurrence of the Commission to the authorisation of a s.9(1) appointment. The Commission concurred. The details of this would be recorded in the minutes of the next Selection and Character Committee.

10. Interim Chief Executive's Report

10.1 The Interim Chief Executive reported on the current budget forecasts. He indicated that the JAC's appearance at the Constitution Committee was likely to be in December or January. He also mentioned work was being undertaken with regard to candidate location preferences and a paper would come before the Board in the Autumn.

11. Any other business

11.1 It was confirmed that the next date of the Selection and Character Committee meeting would be held at 11.30 on 28 July.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting would take place on **8 September 2011**.