

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION MEETING**12 NOVEMBER 2009****DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING****PRESENT****Commissioners**

Usha Prashar (Chairman)
Heather Hallett
Jill Black
Lorna Boreland-Kelly
Hazel Genn
Geoffrey Inkin
Frances Kirkham
Edward Nally
Sara Nathan
Charles Newman
David Pearl
Francis Plowden
Harriet Spicer
Jonathan Sumption

Staff

Chief Executive
Director, Courts Appointments
Director, Tribunals Appointments and Corporate Accounting and Planning
Director, Strategy and Outreach
Director, Operational Services
Board Secretariat
Private Secretary to Chairman

Discussion with the JAC Advisory Group

1. The Chairman welcomed members of the JAC Advisory Group to the meeting and providing the opportunity for the Commission to discuss relevant issues with them. Issues discussed included:
 - Aspects of the selection process including qualifying tests.
 - Ways of communicating messages:
 - to those unsuccessful at shortlisting stage not to be deterred from reapplying;
 - to get across that each application would be considered on its own merits and that there was no pass or fail for the qualifying test;
 - to candidates sitting the qualifying test that they needed to prepare properly;
 - to address some of the myths that continued to circulate within the legal profession through the creative use the JAC website and 'Judging Your Future' newsletter.
 - The barriers to application such as those identified in the British Market Research Bureau (BMRB) research.
 - The need for role models from within under-represented candidate groups, who sat as part-timers, to promote judicial office to their peers.
2. After this discussion members of the Advisory Group left the meeting.

Apologies and matters arising from the October meeting

3. Apologies had been received from Roger Toulson.
4. The minutes of the October meeting were approved.

Proposed Efficiency Programme (JAC/09/51)

5. The Commission noted the indicative plans for efficiencies to help enable the JAC to continue to deliver core business with a reducing budget. A more detailed discussion on prioritisation would follow at the December meeting.

JAC's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2010/11 (JAC/09/52)

6. Commissioners discussed the proposed set of KPIs for 2010/11, which had been prepared following the strategy discussion at the September meeting. It was suggested that the number of KPIs proposed should be reduced from 17 to between 10 and 12 and be more focused, incorporating Commissioners' comments. Feedback would be sought out of committee in advance of further consideration at the December meeting.

IT projects (JAC/09/53)

7. The Commission received an update on progress in securing capital funding from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) for IT improvements in the JAC and the options being considered. A further update would be provided at the December meeting, at which point it was hoped agreement could be reached for the way ahead.
8. It was suggested that if funding is secured it would be helpful to establish a small committee of Commissioners to handle the project.

Future location of the Commission (JAC/09/54)

9. Commissioners noted the confirmation, made by MoJ Estates in October, that there were currently no plans for JAC to relocate. However, with the potential for future change, it was agreed that the situation would be monitored and an update reported back to the Commission in one year's time.

Report from the JAC Working Groups**Audit and Risk Committee**

10. The Audit and Risk Committee last met on 4 November and agreed the Quarter 2 performance report and Directors' mid-year assurance statements. The Committee also discussed the work being done on developing unit costs, IT issues, information assurance and elements of the corporate risk register.
11. The Commission agreed the 2nd Quarter Performance report (JAC/09/55), subject to any minor amendments.

Outreach Working Group (OWG)

12. The OWG met on 22 October and agreed the internal action plan following the BMRB research into barriers to application and discussed the use of print advertisements and reviewed statistical trends relating to recent selection exercises.

Quality Assurance Working Group (QAWG)

13. The QAWG had met earlier in the day and discussed closedown reports for several selection exercises, qualifying tests and the use of judicial panel members.
14. The Group agreed to look again at ways of handling Selection and Character Committee meetings with a large number of selection decisions.

Diversity Forum

15. The Diversity Forum last met on 29 October and a previously successful candidate attended to talk about her experiences of the appointment process.

Advisory Group

16. The Advisory Group had last met on 14 October and considered qualifying tests and role plays for forthcoming selection exercises.

Directors' Reports

17. The Director of Courts Appointments updated the Commission on the Deputy District Judge (Civil) and Recorder (Civil) selection exercises. She thanked Heather Hallett, Hazel Genn, Sara Nathan and Jonathan Sumption for their work on the qualifying tests for these exercises.
18. The Director of Tribunals Appointments, Corporate Accounting and Planning updated the Commission on proposed multi-jurisdictional exercises and efficiency savings.
19. The Director of Operational Services provided the Commission with an update on the selection programme and Freedom of Information requests.
20. The Director of Strategy and Outreach provided Commissioners with an update on developments for qualifying tests and current legislation.

Chief Executive's report

21. The Chief Executive informed Commissioners of a staff efficiency workshop on 1 December.

Chairman's report

22. The Chairman provided Commissioners with an update on recent engagements. These included attending the Legal Wales Conference and regular bilateral meetings with the Senior President of Tribunals, ILEX, the Law Society and the Bar Council. She also informed Commissioners about an update she had received on the progress of the work of the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Panel on Judicial Diversity.

Any Other Business

None.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting would take place on 10 December 2009.