

**JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION (JAC) MEETING**  
**11 May 2017**  
**Minutes of Meeting**

<b>Present</b>	
<b>Commissioners</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Ajay Kakkar (Chairman) Philippa Whipple (Vice Chairman) Usha Karu Noel Lloyd Alexandra Marks Katharine Rainsford Lucy Scott-Moncrieff Valerie Strachan Phillip Sycamore Debra van Gene	Chief Executive Head of Strategy and Policy Head of Operations Head of Selection Policy Head of Finance and Digital Services Head of Equality and Diversity Senior Exercise Team Manager Senior Communications Manager Head of Secretariat Solutions Architect (Ministry of Justice (MoJ)) Media and Communications Adviser

**1. Apologies and matters arising**

1.1 Apologies were received from Martin Forde and Andrew Ridgway.

1.2 Alexandra Marks declared a personal interest in Item 6 (JUSTICE Report on Judicial Diversity), due to her position on the JUSTICE Board, and advance sight of the report prior to its official publication. No other interests were declared.

1.3 The minutes of the 6 April meeting were agreed.

1.4 Commissioners noted the Board action register, which included two new items (a review of moderation processes, to be considered by the Board at a later date; and a new template for the Management Information Pack, the first draft of which was included in this set of Board papers for comment).

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

2.1 The Chief Executive:

- provided an update on Government guidance on the pre-election period ahead of the June general election, and the limited impact on JAC activities;
- provided an update on the current Recorder competition;
- reported on staffing levels at the JAC;
- and provided an update on the JAC's current financial position.

2.2 The Commission considered the new draft template Management Information Pack (covering 2017-18).

### **3. Report Back from Working Groups**

3.1 Valerie Strachan reported back from the recent Audit and Risk Committee meeting. She reported that:

- The Committee approved the draft Governance Statement for 2016-17. Both internal and external auditors were content with the way in which the JAC has handled and disclosed the JARS issue in its annual governance statement.
- The substantial underspend for the 2016-17 was noted as £478k. This is mainly due to the Recorder exercise moving into the 2017/18 programme. As a result, the JAC's initial budget allocation for 2017/18 had been increased to £4.5m
- The Committee was informed that the NAO are in a good position for the final audit which will commence in June 2017.

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

4.1 The Chairman reported on his activities since his last report at the April meeting. He had addressed the Court of Appeal plenary meeting, and sat on separate panels to interview candidates for President, and Justices, of the UK Supreme Court. He also provided an update on the current MoJ competition to recruit six new Commissioners, and on the expressions of interest exercise launched by the Judges Council for a new Vice Chairman of the Commission.

### **5. JARS Review: Medium Term Strategy**

5.1 The Head of Finance and Digital Services outlined the medium term strategy to manage the continuing stabilisation of JARS, following the platform's failure to perform during the first stage of the Recorder exercise earlier this year. Commissioners endorsed the shift in supplier management to a DevSecOps model, which would improve general maintenance and testing throughout the platform's use.

5.2 Commissioners noted that Noel Lloyd will be the lead Commissioner for oversight of the current stabilisation and remedial work and would advise on future Board oversight arrangements once this was completed.

## **6. JUSTICE Report on Judicial Diversity**

6.1 The Head of Equality and Diversity presented a paper outlining key recommendations from the JUSTICE Report on Judicial Diversity, several of which relate to JAC selection processes and policy. Commissioners discussed a number of areas where JAC action has already been taken or is under way. They also noted that several recommendations would require legislative change, including the suggestion of identifying 'appointable pools'. In respect of the remaining recommendations, Commissioners agreed that these were timely and should be considered as part of wider work to scope the JAC's forward strategy.

## **7. High Court Exercise 2017**

7.1 The Head of Selection Policy presented a paper which outlined an interim evaluation of the selection process for the current High Court Exercise (which commenced in 2016). Proposals relating to the key elements of the process were presented for Commissioners to review and endorse as part of the planning for the next High Court Exercise due to launch later this year.

7.2 The Board reached an agreed position on a number of key aspects of the selection process – including the application process and statutory consultation – but requested a full evaluation of these elements when the outcomes of the current process were known.

## **8. Interim Communications Plan**

8.1 The Senior Communications Manager and Media and Communications Adviser presented an outline plan of communications and media engagement from the present date to the end of July. The Commission noted that a number of communications opportunities had been postponed, following consultation with the MoJ on communications activity during the pre-election period.

8.2 Commissioners noted that a paper on a longer term communications strategy would be presented at the July Board.

## **9. AOB and Date of Next Meeting**

9.1 The Chairman and Board thanked the outgoing Head of Operations for her service and commitment to the JAC.

9.2 The Chairman asked Commissioners to note the 2018 Board and SCC dates, as included in papers for reference.

9.3 The Chairman confirmed that the next Board meeting would be held on **Thursday 8 June 2017**.