

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION (JAC) MEETING
6 April 2017
Minutes of Meeting

Present	
Commissioners	Staff
Ajay Kakkar (Chairman) Philippa Whipple (Vice Chairman) Martin Forde Usha Karu Noel Lloyd Alexandra Marks Katharine Rainsford Lucy Scott-Moncrieff Valerie Strachan Phillip Sycamore	Chief Executive Head of Policy and Change Head of Operations Head of Selection Policy Head of Finance and Digital Services Media and Communications Adviser Senior Communications Manager Private Secretary to the Chairman

1. Apologies and matters arising

1.1 Apologies were received from Debra Van Gene and Andrew Ridgway.

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

1.3 The minutes of the 9 March 2017 meeting and note of the key points arising from the Strategy day on 10 March were agreed.

1.4 Commissioners noted the Board action register. Valerie Strachan also suggested that, following discussions at the Selection and Character Committee, moderation processes should be reviewed to ensure that a reasonable number of 'near-miss' candidates were moderated in every exercise. The Board agreed that this should be reflected in the action register.

1.5 The Chairman expressed his deep thanks and appreciation to the former Chairman, Ian Burnett. By virtue of judicial seniority, Philippa Whipple now assumed the position of Vice Chairman.

2. Chief Executive's Report and Management Information Pack

2.1 The Chief Executive:

- provided an update on the current Commissioner Recruitment process;
- provided an update on the JAC's financial position;

- reported on staffing levels at the JAC;
- alerted Commissioners to the forthcoming JUSTICE report on judicial diversity, due for publication on 25 April;
- updated the Commission on recent and forthcoming JAC outreach and stakeholder engagement activities;
- provided an update on the current Recorder competition.

2.2 The Commission considered the monthly Management Information Pack. The pack provided an overview of JAC activity up to the end of the financial year 2016/17. The Board will be shown a draft version of a new MIP template at the next meeting in May. Commissioners suggested that the summary of risks provided in the MIP should be expanded, to indicate whether risks had increased or reduced to reflect current operational concerns in full. It was noted that the Audit and Risk Committee was due to consider the full corporate risk register when it met in a fortnight, and the next MIP would reflect that discussion.

3. Report Back from Working Groups

3.1 Katharine Rainsford reported on the recent Advisory Group meeting. She reported that the group reviewed the Recorder telephone assessment. They also considered the situational questions to be used in both the High Court and Costs Judge (Taxing Master) interviews and provided comments which were fed back to the drafting judges. There was also some discussion around the rationale behind having a tribunal-wide exercise.

4. Chairman's Report

4.1 The Chairman provided an update on his activities since his last report at the March meeting. He reported that he had attended the Court of Appeal sift meeting, and met with Sir Malcolm Grant to discuss the forthcoming competition to recruit new Commissioners. He also wrote to the First Minister of Wales to inform him of the inaugural meeting of the Welsh Matters Committee.

4.2 The Chairman then invited Commissioners to comment on relevant activities of particular interest with which they had been involved. Philippa Whipple met with JUSTICE on 21 March, alongside then Vice Chairman Ian Burnett. Alexandra Marks was due to speak at a Junior Lawyers Conference on 8 April.

5. External JARS Review: root causes and next steps

5.1 The Head of Finance and Digital Services presented a paper which set out the findings of the external review of JARS which had been commissioned following the February IT failure. The paper also outlined several options for the next stage of JARS provision, which would include steps to remedy the failures identified. After consideration of the options presented, the Board agreed that the existing contract with Wunder should be terminated and that they would enter into a new short-term contract with Convivio, on the proviso that doing so would not cause any contractual issues for the latter party.

5.2 Commissioners emphasised the importance of taking all necessary steps to ensure the JAC is reimbursed for costs incurred as a result of the IT failure.

6. Revised Arrangements for Large Selection Exercises

6.1 The Head of Selection Policy presented a paper which outlined revised arrangements for two forthcoming large exercises (Salaried Judge of the First Tier Tribunal; and District Judge), following the Commission's decision to suspend the use of online testing while the external review of the February IT failure was ongoing. Following discussion and consideration, Commissioners noted and approved the revised arrangements for these exercises.

7. Developing a Communications Strategy

7.1 The Chairman introduced the Media and Communications Adviser to the Commission. She explained that she would be providing support to the communications team and the Board in developing a short and longer-term media and communications strategy, with focus on the JAC's reputation with stakeholders and candidates.

Date of next meeting

The Chairman confirmed that the next Board meeting would be held on **Thursday 11 May 2017**.

