

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION (JAC) MEETING

13 May 2021

Minutes of Board Meeting

Present	
Commissioners	Staff
Ajay Kakkar (Chairman) Sue Carr (Vice Chairman) Mathangi Asokan Christa Christensen Anuja Dhir Sarah Falk Jane Furniss Sue Hoyle Sarah Lee Barry Morgan Greg Sinfield Simon Wessely Brie Stevens-Hoare	Chief Executive Deputy Chief Executive Head of Operational Delivery Head of Selection Policy Head of Diversity and Engagement Head of Corporate Services Policy and Secretariat Manager Senior Selection Exercise Manager
Apologies: Emir Feisal Andrew Kennon	

1. Apologies and matters arising

- 1.1 The minutes of the 15 April 2021 meeting were agreed.
- 1.2 No interests were declared by any Commissioner in respect of any matter under discussion on the agenda.

2. Chairman's Report

- 2.1 The Chairman briefed the Board on his involvement in recent senior appointment exercises and his recent meeting, together with Sarah Lee, with the President of The Law Society.
- 2.2 Anuja Dhir reported that she took part in a webinar on applying for appointment as a Circuit Judge hosted by Judicial Office.
- 2.3 Christa Christensen reported that she attended a Western Circuit webinar on careers in the judiciary.

3. 2021 Commission Board Evaluation

- 3.1 The Deputy Chief Executive presented a paper prepared by the Head of Secretariat setting out the results of the recent 2021 Commission Board Evaluation.

3.2 The Board noted the results of the evaluation and the action being taken to address the main issues raised.

3.3 The Board agreed that, while they had worked effectively through remote meetings, they would like to meet face-to-face for at least some meetings once restrictions were lifted.

4. Report Back from Working Groups

Advisory Group

4.1 Jane Furniss (JF) updated the Board on the work of the Advisory Group which took place on 20 April.

4.2 At its meeting on 20 April, which Sarah Lee observed, the Advisory Group reviewed the proposed role-play for Deputy District Judge (Magistrates' Court) and the proposed situational questions for Chair of the Valuation Tribunal for England and for Fee Paid Member of the First-tier Tribunal assigned to the General Regulatory Chamber (Environment jurisdiction).

4.3 At its next meeting, on 8 June, the Advisory Group would be joined by a new representative from the Bar Council and would be discussing the bank of non-legal situational judgement questions.

Digital Board

4.4 Sue Hoyle (SH) provided the Board with an update on the work of the Digital Board (DB) following their meeting on 29 April.

4.5 SH reported that the DB signed off the new 2021-2023 Digital Strategy in March.

4.6 The DB reviewed the Digital Business Continuity Plan for 2021 and the Online Qualifying Tests.

4.7 The DB also received updates on the progress of the Digital Road Map, the new contractor's model, the Risks Assumptions Issues and Dependencies log and the website tools project.

Audit and Risk Committee

4.8 As Chair, JF reported to the Board on the work of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) during the year 2020/21.

4.9 The report covered JAC's risk management, internal and external audit, quarterly accounts, internal control and governance arrangements.

4.10 ARC also carried out its regular review of the corporate risk register.

4.11 JF also reported that interviews for the new ARC independent member have taken place.

4.12 The Chairman thanked JF for her hard work chairing the ARC and the Chief Executive for his diligent execution of the role of Accounting Officer.

5. Chief Executive's Report

5.1 The Chief Executive:

- reported on the agreed two-year programme with HMCTS and the work conducted to date; and
- provided an update on the JAC's financial position.

5.2 The Board was pleased to note that all selection exercises paused as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic had now been completed.

5.3 The Board noted that the MoJ was currently unable to provide the full statistical resource normally provided to JAC. While work was under way to ensure key priorities were delivered, this would mean other statistical work would be deferred.

6. Deputy District Judge - selection process

6.1 The Senior Selection Exercise Manager presented the high-level process for the next Deputy District Judge exercise due to launch in July 2021.

6.2 Following discussion, the Commission approved the proposed high-level process.

7. 2022 Key Dates

7.1 The Policy and Secretariat Manager presented the proposed Selection and Character Committee (SCC) and Board meeting dates for 2022.

7.2 The Board endorsed the proposed 2022 key dates.

8. 2020-21 Complaints and Feedback Report

8.1 The Head of Corporate Services presented a paper on the number and nature of formal complaints received by the JAC during 2020-21.

8.2 The number and ratio of complaints have increased slightly in comparison with the previous year, but they were still considered to be low. JAC teams continue to take the substance of complaints into account as part of the evaluation of each selection exercise as appropriate, ensuring any lessons are learned.

8.3 The Commission noted the contents of the paper.

9. Forward Look and AOB

9.1 The Board noted the 2021 Forward Look and the Chairman confirmed the next Board meeting would be held on 10 June 2021.

9.2 This concluded the business of the Board.