

# JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION (JAC) MEETING

10 March 2022

## Minutes of Board Meeting

<b>Present</b>	
<b>Commissioners</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Ajay Kakkar (Chairman) Sue Carr (Vice Chairman) Christa Christensen Anuja Dhir Sarah Falk Jane Furniss Brie Stevens-Hoare Sue Hoyle Andrew Kennon Sarah Lee Greg Sinfield	Chief Executive Deputy Chief Executive Head of Operations and Digital Head of Operational Delivery Head of Diversity and Engagement Head of Analysis and Insight Head of Secretariat/Board Secretary Senior Policy Advisor Diversity & Engagement Manager Selection Exercise Manager
<b>Apologies</b>	<b>Guests</b>
Mathangi Asokan Emir Feisal Barry Morgan Simon Wessely	

### 1. Apologies and matters arising

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Mathangi Asokan, Emir Feisal, Barry Morgan and Simon Wessely
- 1.2 The minutes of the 3 February 2022 and 10 February 2022 meeting were agreed.

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

#### 2.1 The Chief Executive:

- provided an update on digital security in the context of the current global situation –the JAC system was tested and assurance received that JAC system is secure;
- provided an update on a recent issue with the digital platform which was limited in impact and promptly resolved;
- provided an update on the current business plan and the upcoming 2022 -23 programme; and

- provided an update on the JAC's financial position and allocation for 2022-23.

### **3. Report back from Committees and Working Groups**

- 3.1 The Chairman asked Commissioners to report back on recent meetings of committees and working groups.

#### **Digital Board**

- 3.2 Andrew Kennon (AK) provided an update to the Board on the Digital Board (DB) held on 17 February.
- 3.3 The DB considered and endorsed the revised draft Digital Strategy.
- 3.4 The DB was updated on progress made on the Digital Road Map.
- 3.5 The DB received an update on ongoing difficulties in recruiting permanent staff members to key roles on the Digital Team; it was acknowledged that this is a public sector wide issue.
- 3.6 The DB noted its gratitude to the Head of Operations and Digital, Sharon Foster-King, on all her work on DB ahead of her retirement.

#### **Advisory Group**

- 3.7 Jane Furniss (JF) provided an update to the Board on the Advisory Group (AG) held on 8 March 2022.
- 3.8 Commissioner Christa Christensen attended the AG in her capacity as Assigned Commissioner for the Employment Judge exercise.
- 3.9 The AG reviewed situational questions for Chairmen of the Valuation Tribunal for England; and
- 3.10 The role-plays for each of Employment Judge and Deputy High Court Judge exercises.

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

- 4.1 The Chairman briefed the Board on his evidence session with the Senior Salaries Review Body on 17 February.
- 4.2 The Chairman provided an update on the High Court 2022 campaign.
- 4.3 The Chairman and Vice Chair attended the annual meeting with the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC) and Judicial Appointments Board for

Scotland (JABS) in Belfast on 4 March. The Chairman reported that it was a collegiate event which facilitated the sharing of best practices.

4.4 Commissioners reported back on the outreach activity they undertook in February and early March.

4.5 The Vice-Chairman, Sue Carr, took part in an interview with Radio 4 Law in Action on judicial diversity and the barriers faced by solicitors and other groups on 8 March which will be aired later in March.

## **5. Evaluation of the operation of the Equal Merit Provision (EMP) at shortlisting**

5.1 The Diversity & Engagement Manager presented the evaluation of the operation of the Equal Merit Provision (EMP) at shortlisting.

5.2 The Commission noted the findings for information.

## **6. Final WPG Report and proposed JAC response**

6.1 The Deputy Chief Executive presented Work Psychology Group's (WPG's) final report, following their independent review of the operation of statutory consultation and a draft of the Commission's proposed response.

6.2 Following discussion, the Commission endorsed the proposed next steps in terms of publication and sharing with stakeholders.

## **7. Review of Digital Strategy 2022-25**

7.1 The Head of Operations and Digital presented a revision of the existing Digital strategy and a proposal to extend it to cover the period 2022-2025.

7.2 Following discussion, the Commission agreed to the recommendation.

## **8. Proposed process for s9(1) Authorisation to Act as a High Court Judge**

8.1 The Selection Exercise Manager presented the proposed process for the next s9(1) Authorisation to Act as a High Court Judge selection exercise.

8.2 Following discussion, the Commission endorsed the recommendations made in respect of the forthcoming exercise subject to a minor amendment.

## **9. Forward Look and AOB**

9.1 The Chairman noted the departure of the Head of Operations and Digital and thanked her for her extraordinary contribution to the JAC over the last five years noting how the JAC's operational delivery has been transformed during her tenure and how fortunate

the organisation was to have had the benefit of her experience in the latter part of her career.

9.2 The Head of Operations and Digital expressed her thanks to the Board and particularly highlighted the support she received from Commissioner Andrew Kennon and the late Commissioner Noel Lloyd both of whom she worked closely with on the Digital Board.

9.3 The Board noted the 2022 Forward Look and the Chairman confirmed the next Board meeting would be held on 7 April 2022.

9.4 This concluded the business of the Board.