

COMMISSIONERS' BUSINESS MEETING: SUMMARY MINUTES

16-Sept-2008		
Agenda		
1. Introduction		The Chair welcomed those present and noted apologies
2. Minutes of meeting held on 27 May 2008 and matters arising		Commissioners agreed the minutes of the previous business meeting.
	GB Commissioners' meeting 13 October	It was agreed that the NIO Permanent Secretary and Head of the Civil Service would be invited to meet with the GB Commissioners, and to provide an overview of devolution in NI and the NICS reform programme.
	Benchmarking Project	Commissioners discussed the proposed benchmarking project. It was agreed that a brainstorming session should be arranged, to focus on the five strategic functions detailed in the 2008/09 Business Plan and that a number of specific targets within the Plan may need to be revised in light of this change in direction.
	PSG	Commissioners discussed concerns of Permanent Secretaries re identifying the right people with the skills now needed within the NICS. It was agreed that a number of Commissioners should meet with CPG to express the need to ensure that this piece of work was taken forward in a manner that was informed by the wishes and needs of Permanent Secretaries.
	Up-date on Senior Competitions	Commissioners shared their experiences of chairing recent SCS competitions. Concerns were expressed about diversity considerations in the absence of appropriate data; and concerns about the level and quality of support provide to panels by HRConnect staff.
3. Update on senior competitions	Recent Senior Competitions	Commissioners shared their experiences of chairing recent SCS competitions and considered and agreed a number of revisions to the Chairperson's checklist.
5. Audit	Attracting Candidates Audit	It was agreed that a meeting to discuss the Attracting Candidates Audit would be held on 24 June.
	2008/09 Audit Programme	It was noted that Secretariat, NICS and auditors met to discuss the 2008/09 audit programme and to agree an approach to the Communication Processes Audit.
	Protocol for consulting Commissioners during audits	The Protocol for consulting Commissioners during audits was agreed.
	Selection Processes Audit	Commissioners noted that a final version of the audit report should issue, and agreed that a meeting to discuss it should be arranged with NICS.
	Commissioners' audit of SCS Approvals	The four-stage process of approval was discussed and Commissioners were reminded of the issues to bear in mind.
	Presentation by John Kremer	Dr Kremer joined Commissioners to provide an update on equality legislation and the possible implications of recent case law and industrial tribunals which might impact on recruitment and selection decisions.

	Monitoring trends / timescales	Commissioners discussed the paper which had been produced in line with a business plan target. It was suggested that it might be helpful to share the revised version of the table with CPG at a future meeting and to encourage them to take any possible action aimed at shortening the time taken to complete competitions.
	Issues to explore with CPG	Commissioners discussed a number of ongoing issues still to be resolved with CPG. It was agreed that Commissioners should raise both these issues at the 14 October meeting with CPG.
	Communication Processes Audit	Commissioners noted that the Secretariat had considered the first draft of this audit report and asked the auditors to make a number of improvements. It was agreed that the next version would be presented to Commissioners at a plenary session in October.
6. Case work and submissions		Commissioners had previously agreed to an internal competition which had been allocated to one of the Commissioners to chair. During discussion, concerns were expressed about the implications for the Merit Principle on this competition. Commissioners agreed to raise this concern at the 14 October meeting with CPG.
	Draft protocol for dealing with surplus staff in UK Departments	Commissioners were content to endorse the broad approach outlined in the draft protocol, developed by DFP, subject to some amendments. Commissioners agreed on the final content of the document. It was agreed that CPG should be asked to clarify some issues and it was noted that the NICS may need to consider the need to undertake an EQIA of the proposal.
		Commissioners discussed and agreed action in a number of issues: Code of Ethics case; DHSSPS – request to extend a secondment; ECNI Annual Progress Report; Commissioners' 2007/08 Annual Report; Update on Data Handling; Commissioners' Tax Liabilities
	Any other business Links meetings	Commissioners considered the key issues that arose from recent Links meetings and agreed to feed back during discussion with NICS.
	Future meetings / events	Commissioners noted dates of the forthcoming meetings.