

COMMISSIONERS' BUSINESS MEETING: SUMMARY MINUTES

| 6-Dec-2007 | | |
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| Agenda | | |
| 1. Introduction | | The Chair advised that the Secretariat was working towards producing a draft business plan, which would be available for the January meeting, and that a workshop to explore short-listing / eligibility mechanisms and assessment methods with CPG and Capita was scheduled for the New Year. |
| 2. Minutes of meeting held on 10 September 2007 | | Agreed by correspondence. |
| 3. Update on senior competitions | | Commissioners reported satisfaction in dealings with Capita, particularly relating to short-listing and dates for interviews etc. |
| | Effective short-listing / assessment techniques: | It was agreed that Commissioners should discuss the issue of shortlisting and assessment techniques at the January meeting in detail prior to the workshop with Central Personnel Group. |
| | Recent Senior Competitions | The Chairperson's Checklist was discussed and it was agreed that CPG should be asked to ensure that Departments include the Checklist in the information packs given to all panel members. It was agreed that the SCS recruitment process be considered as a potential future audit. |
| | Up-date on senior competitions | Commissioners noted the current status in relation to ongoing competitions and SCS appointments that had been made as exceptions to the Merit Principle. It was agreed that more time would be allocated at future business meetings to share experiences of senior competitions. |
| 4. Audit | Attracting Candidates Audit | Commissioners noted the revised draft report and the additional comments. It was noted that planned further work with CPG to develop the NICS Equality and Diversity Plan could help to resolve weaknesses identified in this audit report. |
| | Quality Assurance Audit | Commissioners welcomed CPG's decision to accept the auditors' recommendation in relation to gathering information on competitions which will assist the NICS to monitor and review processes and policies. |
| | Selection Processes Audit | While accepting the audit report, Commissioners agreed that the members of the Equality & Diversity Sub-group (who were consulted during the audit) should meet again with the auditors to explore areas of specific concern. |
| 5. Code of ethics | | The guidance aimed at better defining the circumstances that constitute a breach of the Code of Ethics was discussed. It was agreed that Commissioners should continue to seek a role in any planned re-launch of the revised Code by the NICS in 2008. A key concern was to ensure that the message reached as wide an audience as possible. |
| 6. Equality duties | Good Relations Strategy | Commissioners noted that the revised Good Relations Strategy had been published to the website and noted the Equality Commission's revised guidelines identifying 5 key principles to underpin a public authority's implementation of the good relations duties. |
| | Disability Action Plan | Commissioners noted progress in implementing Disability Action Plan |

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| | Potential Devolution of NI Commissioners | Commissioners were joined by NIO officials to discuss the implications of potential devolution to the local administration. Commissioners were updated on the current devolved administration and ongoing work to prepare for the devolution of justice and policing. It was noted that the Commissioners' primary concern was to ensure their independence would be firmly protected under any new arrangements. The Chair thanked the NIO representatives for the open and helpful way in which they had shared information with Commissioners. |
| | Future meetings / events | Commissioners noted the forthcoming meetings, the details of which had been circulated. |