

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

SUMMARY RECORD OF BUSINESS MEETING 19 SEPTEMBER 2018 CONFERENCE ROOM, STORMONT HOUSE

ATTENDEES:

Commissioners

Deirdre Toner, Chairperson
Jim Scholes

Secretariat

Joanne Dowling
Sarah Teer
Janet Carnduff
Lynne O'Neill
Christine Donnelly

Invitees

Sue Gray, Permanent Secretary
Department of Finance, NICS

Apologies

Sinéad Burns

WELCOME

1. The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from Sinéad Burns. The Chairperson noted that this was the Secretary's last Business Meeting before her secondment ends on 20 September 2018. Commissioners formally thanked Joanne Dowling for her contribution during her time as Secretary and wished her the best for the future. The Chairperson welcomed Sarah Teer as the new Secretary and Commissioners noted that the new Secretary's anticipated starting date would be 22 October 2018.
2. In opening the meeting, the Chairperson provided a brief overview of her recent introductory meetings.

SUMMARY RECORD AND ACTION MATRIX OF JUNE BUSINESS MEETING

3. Commissioners agreed the Summary Record and Action Matrix of 26 June 2018.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND MATTERS ARISING

4. Commissioners confirmed that they had no conflict of interest in relation to the September Business meeting agenda and papers.

SECRETARY'S REPORT [PAPER 21/18]

5. The Secretary thanked the Chairperson and presented the Secretary's report outlining a summary of progress against the business planning documents and key outputs and activities since the last business meeting. Commissioners noted the updates which included that:

- 2017/18 Annual Report was published on the OCSC website on 26 July 2018;
- 2017/18 Annual Section 75 Progress Report was submitted to the Equality Commission 29 June 2018; and
- NICS HR Resourcing team requested to meet with the Secretariat in July 2018 regarding the proposed policy in relation to secondments and NICS HR staff changes. Commissioners noted that NICS HR would provide an update to them on the secondment policy and implementation of the action plan at the next Engagement meeting in October 2018.

6. In relation to the SO vacancy, Commissioners were invited to note that the recent recruitment process to fill the SO vacancy as an Interchange opportunity had resulted in no applications being submitted and the timing of the vacancy notice during the summer may have been a contributing factor. Commissioners noted that the SO vacancy notice would be re-advertised as a secondment to the NICS.

BUDGET REPORT [PAPER 22/18]

7. Commissioners noted the Budget update position. The Secretariat highlighted that a potential underspend is anticipated, mainly in terms of salary costs as a result of the timing of the appointment of the new Secretary and new SO. Commissioners noted that NIO would expect any anticipated surplus to be declared at the November monitoring round.

AUDIT AND REVIEW UPDATES [PAPER 23/18]

8. Commissioners noted the content of the audit update papers setting out the current position in relation to the progression of work under the 2018/19 Audit and Review Plan. As part of the discussion it was noted that:
- Secretariat has arranged an operational audit meeting with NICS HR on 26 September 2018;
 - NICS HR's draft Report of its Review of Recruitment and Selection Training had been received by the Secretariat in July 2018, however, a submission from NICS HR to accompany the Report was expected and the Secretariat would circulate to Commissioners upon receipt;
 - the 2017/18 Review of Assurances (4-Stage Authorisation Process Documentation) was ongoing and the Secretariat would circulate the proposed revised documentation for Commissioners' consideration and agreement at the dedicated audit meeting in October;
 - NICS was reviewing its data sharing arrangements in view of the GDPR requirements, and the outcome of its review may impact on the outcome of Commissioner's Review of Assurances and revised documentation;

- the Secretariat's annual Internal Audit of the 4-Stage Authorisation Process had concluded and would be circulated to Commissioners' for comments;
- Commissioners agreed to the Secretariat proceeding with a stocktake exercise to review the Appendix C data requirements and to engage with NISRA/ NICS HR regarding Commissioners' information needs;
- work was underway to produce the 2017/18 Audit and Review Summary Report;
- Commissioners agreed to re-visit the 2018/19 Audit Plan and timescales at the Business Planning meeting in November 2018; and
- Commissioners agreed the agenda for their next Audit Engagement meeting with NICS HR on 23 October 2018.

ACTIONS: Secretariat to circulate the NICS HR Review of Recruitment and Selection Training upon receipt to Commissioners for their consideration.

Secretariat to circulate the Internal Audit of the 4-Stage Authorisation Process to Commissioners for their consideration.

DP Auditor to proceed with reviewing Commissioners' Appendix C data requirements and engage with NISRA/ NICS HR regarding Commissioners' information needs.

Secretariat to include Audit planning as part of the Business Planning meeting on 20 November 2018.

INTRODUCTORY MEETING WITH SUE GRAY [PAPER 24/18]

9. The Chairperson introduced Sue Gray, Permanent Secretary of Department of Finance in the NICS. Sue Gray gave an overview of her career path and experiences in the Cabinet Office including her role as Director General in relation to Propriety and Ethics.
10. During discussion Commissioners noted Sue Gray's intention to introduce an Apprenticeship Programme to the NICS.
11. There was discussion on the Commissioners' Recruitment Principles, meeting the needs of the NICS and comparison to the UK Civil Service Commission regarding exemptions to the Merit Principle. Commissioners highlighted that they would be prepared to consider revisions to their Recruitment Code and invited Sue Gray and the NICS to submit proposals to them for consideration.
12. It was agreed that regular engagement with Commissioners would be important going forward. It was noted that the Chairperson and Sue Gray had made arrangements to meet on a quarterly basis and Commissioners next meeting with

Sue Gray would be at the annual Permanent Secretaries Group meeting in November 2018.

CONSULTATION ON THE COMMISSIONERS DRAFT DISABILITY ACTION PLAN [PAPER 25/18]

13. Commissioners considered the responses received to the consultation on their draft Disability Action Plan. After detailed consideration of the responses received and their engagement with the NICS Disability Working Group, Commissioners agreed as final the Disability Action Plan 2018-2022, subject to minor amendments.
14. Commissioners noted that the Secretariat would consider a Summary Report of the Consultation exercise and circulate to Commissioners as appropriate.

ACTIONS: Secretariat to draft a letter to Ronnie Armour, NICS Disability Champion and Chair of the NICS Disability Working Group for approval by the Chairperson on behalf of Commissioners.

Secretariat to consider a Summary Report of the Consultation exercise and circulate to Commissioners, as appropriate.

Secretariat to submit Commissioners' Disability Action Plan 2018-2022 to ECNI and publish the Disability Action Plan and Consultation Summary of Responses Report, when agreed, on the OCSC website.

UK CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONS' ANNUAL REPORT [PAPER 26/18]

15. Commissioners noted the UK Civil Service Commissions' 2017/18 Annual Report.

AOB

16. Commissioners agreed the proposed draft agenda for the Permanent Secretaries meeting in November and asked that it be shared with HOCS for agreement.

ACTION: Secretariat to seek agreement of the draft agenda with HOCS.

17. Commissioners had a brief discussion on Commissioners' role in recruitment complaints in relation to an issue raised in correspondence to Commissioners.

**Office of the Civil Service Commissioners
for Northern Ireland**