

NORTHERN IRELAND LAW COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE COMMISSIONERS MEETING 10 August 2009 at 1.20 pm

Present: Declan Morgan
Neil Faris
Sean Doran
Venkat Iyer
Bobby Hunniford
Judena Goldring (minute taker)
Derek Noble in attendance (for finance issues on CEO Report)

Lunch

1. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed. It was emphasised that the minutes should go onto Trim after formal approval at the following Board meeting. .
Action: Paula Sullivan

2. Matters arising

It was agreed that the decision in paragraph 9 that the Commission Chairman should sit on every SG should be rescinded. The SG meetings would instead be chaired by the lead Commissioner or as in the case of bail co- chaired.

It was noted that governance training would be provided for the Commissioners in September 09.

3. CEO report

Finance: noted that extensive audits are being carried out as required by NIO.

Staffing: It was agreed that the CEO should initiate the recruitment of an SPLO by open competition. The SPLO would be allocated to work on the business tenancies and the multi- unit developments projects. Action: JG

Training: The CEO undertook to examine the options for engaging a trainer on equal opportunities for the Commission but reminded the Board that it was likely a tender exercise would have to be undertaken for this approach. Action: JG

Agreed that the draft Equality Scheme would be circulated by email so that Commissioners could comment on it in advance of the next Board Meeting.
Action: JG

Meeting with political parties: Following a request from the UUP for a meeting to discuss the bail project, it was hoped to arrange the meeting for the week commencing the 31 August. The Chairman's RCJ office to be contacted to arrange a suitable date. Attendees from the Commission to be: the Chairman, Bobby Hunniford, Professor Doran and Katie Quinn. Action: Paula Sullivan

4. Corporate strategy

The Commission's efforts to develop its processes further in order to support the organisation's strategic and business objectives were discussed. It was agreed that the new arrangement for a Projects Meeting in advance of the Board meeting was a positive development for improving communication within the Commission. The reinvigorated practice of Steering Group meetings and the establishment of regular lawyer meetings were measures which would improve project planning and implementation and communication. Agreed that it is acceptable and desirable for Commissioners take part in informal discussions with other Commissioners, lawyers and researchers on each of the Projects without intervening outside of Board meetings in the operation of other Projects.

5. AOB

The availability of car parking spaces was discussed. VI expressed a number of concerns (including about the manner in which allocation of parking spaces had been made – and recently withdrawn in relation to some Commissioners) and noted that the current arrangements were unsatisfactory. He suggested that the matter needed reconsideration and expressed the view that a good starting point might be to return to the rationale which underlay the purchase by the Commission at its inception of six parking spaces. It was agreed that pending further consideration of the principles on which spaces should be allocated that the Commissioners (given the current arrangements) would use external car parking facilities and reclaim expenses. JG is to explore other possible options and practice in equivalent organisations and the possible availability of other spaces in the car park for report to next Board meeting. Action: JG and for Agenda for next Board meeting