

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION (JAC) MEETING

11 February 2021

Minutes of Board Meeting

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

1. Apologies and matters arising

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Brie Stevens-Hoare.
- 1.2 The minutes of the 10 December 2020 meeting were agreed.
- 1.3 No interests were declared by any Commissioner in respect of any matter under discussion on the agenda.

2. Chief Executive's Report and Management Information Pack

2.1 The Chief Executive:

- reported on the agreed two-year programme with HMCTS and the work conducted to date; and
- provided an update on the JAC's financial position.

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.

Welsh Matters Committee

- 3.2 Barry Morgan (BM) reported back from the Welsh Matters Committee (WMC).
- 3.3 The Committee considered the Law Commission's proposals on the Devolved Tribunals for Wales, which include a recommendation that the JAC retains a role in recruiting to these Tribunals under the current section 83 agreement with the Welsh Government.
- 3.4 The Committee heard updates on the strands of work to encourage more Welsh applicants and work currently underway to recruit Welsh panel members.

Digital Board Meeting

- 3.5 Andrew Kennon (AK) reported back from the Digital Board (DB) held on 11 February 2021.
- 3.6 AK reported that the DB considered the proposed Digital Strategy from April 2021 through to March 2023.
- 3.7 The DB reviewed the Digital Business Continuity Plan for 2021; the Online Test Schedule for Qualifying Tests for dry runs, tests and mop-ups from February to the end of April 2021; and the support provided to panel members on Google Drive.
- 3.8 The DB received an update on the progress of the Digital Road Map.
- 3.9 The DB was briefed on the Risks Assumptions Issues and Dependencies log.
- 3.10 The DB was updated on the staff changes on the digital team.

Advisory Group

- 3.11 Jane Furniss (JF) provided an update to the Board on the Advisory Group meetings which took place on 15 December 2020 and 26 January 2021.
- 3.12 The Group reviewed the situational judgement questions for District Judge, District Judge (Magistrates' Courts) and for High Court Judge; the new online 'tie-break' for legal and non-legal entry-level roles and the role-play for Recorder.

Audit and Risk Committee

- 3.13 JF reported back from the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). ARC held a deep-dive discussion on 'Financial resources'.

3.14 ARC received an update from the Government Internal Audit Agency who reported on work completed during Q3 and currently underway for Q4.

3.15 The National Audit Office presented their proposed approach for the audit of the 2020-21 financial statements, setting out the expected timing of the audit and their fees.

3.16 The Committee conducted its annual review of the ARC related documents and were content with what is in place.

4. Chairman's Report

4.1 The Chairman briefed the Board on his recent meeting with the HMCTS Chairman, Tim Parker.

5. Selection Process for the Deputy District Judge (Magistrates' Court) exercise

5.1 The Selection Exercise Manager presented a paper outlining the planned selection process for the forthcoming Deputy District Judge (Magistrates Court) exercise.

5.2 Following discussion, the Board endorsed the proposed process for this exercise.

6. 2021 Testing in the Deputy District Judge and Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal exercises

6.1 The Head of Operations and Digital presented a paper seeking the Board's agreement on the proposed process for testing in the Deputy District Judge (DDJ) and Fee-paid First-tier Tribunal (FTT) & Fee-paid Employment Tribunal (ET) exercises in 2021.

6.2 Following discussion, and in light of ongoing pressures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission agreed to hold separate Qualifying Tests for each exercise, rather than a Combined Qualifying Test as held in 2020.

6.3 The Commission agreed to minimise the impact on candidates by continuing to apply the other process changes introduced previously to both exercises. Candidates will not have to complete a full application until after the test, and dual candidates will be able to use the same application and independent assessment for both roles.

7. Mandatory judicial retirement age: impact of change on 'reasonable length of service'

7.1 The Deputy Chief Executive provided an update on the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) review of the mandatory judicial retirement age (MRA) and the steps that are being

taken to ensure transitional arrangements are in place to manage the impact on applicants for judicial vacancies.

7.2 The Board noted the update and was content with the MOJ's planned approach.

8. Forward Look and AOB

8.1 The Board noted the 2021 Forward Look and the Chairman confirmed the next Board meeting would be held on 11 March 2021.

8.2 This concluded the business of the Board.