



Coimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta  
an Duine agus Comhionannas  
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

Minutes of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission  
Thirtieth Plenary Meeting  
5 February 2019

***Present:***

- Emily Logan, Chief Commissioner (EL)
- Teresa Blake (TB)
- Heydi Foster Breslin (HFB)
- Frank Conaty (FC)
- Paddy Connolly (PC)
- Colm O' Dwyer (COD)
- Caroline Fennell (CF)
- Tony Geoghegan (TG)
- David Joyce (DJ)
- Orlagh O'Farrell (OOF)
- Sunniva McDonagh (SMD)
- Siobhán Mullally (SM)
- Fidèle Mutwarasibo (FM)
- Ray Murphy (RM)

***Apologies:***

- Salome Mbugua

***In Attendance:***

- Laurence Bond, Director (LB)
- Dr Iris Elliott, Head of Policy & Research (IE) for items 3.1 & 4.1(b)
- Jean O' Mahony, Head of Strategic Engagement (JOM) for items 3.1 & 4.1 (a)
- Michael O' Neill, Head of Legal (MON) for items 3.1, 4.1(c) & 6.1
- 
- Muireann Ní Thuairisg, Minute Taker

The Thirtieth Ordinary Plenary Meeting of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission took place between 10:30am and 2:00pm on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission offices, 16–22 Green Street, Dublin 7.

## 1.1 Apologies, Quorum and Declarations of Interest

### Apologies:

Salome Mbugua

### Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest made in relation to any item on the agenda.

## 1.2 Minutes of previous Commission Meetings

The draft minutes of the plenary meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2018 were approved, proposed by RM and seconded by HFB.

The draft minutes of the extraordinary plenary meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2018 were approved, proposed by RM and seconded by FM.

## 1.3 Matters arising, not otherwise dealt with on the Agenda

There were no matters arising.

## 1.4 Update from Chief Commissioner

On 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018, EL met with Josephine Feehily, Chairperson of the Policing Authority.

On 12<sup>th</sup> January 2019, the Joint Committee appeared before the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice and Equality on the issues and potential risks raised by Brexit in terms of human rights and equality in Ireland, and how to ensure and strengthen the protection and promotion of human rights and equality on the island. IHREC was represented by EL and Dr Ruth Gallagher.

A meeting of the Section 35 Inquiries Working Group will be held in the coming weeks to consider possible themes for an inquiry.

## 2.1 Director's Report

The Director's Reports had been circulated in advance of the meeting and were taken as read.

Members discussed how to best use the Section 40 cases to yield systemic change. It was agreed that the Casework committee could examine this matter in more detail.

LB to ensure that publication of Amicus submissions on the website is up to date.

Noted that SM is also a member of the Casework Committee.

Members noted the finding of 'no assurance' of the Internal Audit on ICT Security and asked for an update. LB noted that the primary weakness arose from the delay in implementing the move to the ICT shared service. This was now in progress and was expected to be completed within Q2.

### 3.1 Draft Workplan 2019

LB outlined the work carried out in the staff team in preparing the draft workplan, throughout which the focus had been addressing the priorities in the new Strategy Statement 2019-2021. He noted that work was ongoing on developing out approach and possible metrics for measuring and reporting on the delivery of the workplan. Commission members reviewed the draft work plan section by section and further information and clarifications were provided by the management in response to a number of queries. Members noted the value of agreeing a workplan which provides a key guide to the work of the staff in the year ahead, while emphasising that the Commission will also need to be responsive where important new issues of concern emerge throughout the year.

Subject to some minor drafting changes, the draft work plan for 2019 was approved by the Commission.

### 3.2 Finance Report 2018 and Draft Budget 2019

LB outlined the financial outturn in 2018 as set out in the memo circulated in advance, noting that the pay and non-pay and non-pay underspends were broadly in line with the forecasts presented to the Commission in September. The finance report was approved by the Commission.

LB outlined the draft budget as set out in the memo circulated in advance and confirmed that it had been prepared in tandem with the workplan. The draft budget 2019 was approved by the Commission.

### 4.1 Update on Committees

4.1 (a) Worker Employer Advisory Committee  
**The revised terms of reference were approved.**

4.1 (b) Disability Advisory Committee  
**The revised terms of reference were approved.**

4.1 (c) Casework Committee  
**The proposal on the purpose, responsibilities and duties of the Committee were approved. The draft terms of reference will be brought to the next plenary meeting.**

4.1 (d) Audit and Risk Committee  
**EL and LB had met with DPER officials on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2019 to clarify a number of matters concerning corporate governance and the role of the Accounting Officer and a note on these matters will be circulated to the Commission. The matter will be discussed further at the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019.**

### 4.2 Appointment of Commission Members 2019

It is anticipated that eight vacancies, including that of Chief Commissioner, will arise on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

EL proposed that she would write to the Minister for Justice and Equality regarding anticipated vacancies on the Commission on 31 October 2019, to request that he invoke Section 13 (2) of the IHREC Act and indicate that the Commission intends to identify from amongst its members a working group, one of whom will act as the liaison person to the Department of Justice and the Public Appointments Service, for the purposes of the recruitment process.


EL declared a conflict of interest on the basis of her intention to reapply for the post of Chief Commissioner, information that will be communicated to the Minister.

Members agreed that EL should write to the Minister

5.1 Ms Oonagh Buckley, Deputy Secretary General, Department of Justice and Equality

Oonagh Buckley, Deputy Secretary General, Department of Justice and Equality briefed the Commission on the restructuring of the Department and their key priorities and objectives, covering matters such as direct provision, human trafficking, prison services and equality matters.

6.1 Amicus Proposal

  
The Commission agreed to apply to the Supreme Court for liberty to appear as amicus curiae in the above entitled proceedings, in exercise of its powers under section 10(2)(e) of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014.

5.1 AOB

It was agreed to prepare a submission on the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government's public consultation on proposals to modernise the Electoral Registration Process. It was agreed to request an extension to the closing date of 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019 in order for the submission to be brought to the next plenary meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at 2:30pm.



Signed: Emily Logan, Chief Commissioner

Date: 19 March 2019