

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

BOARD of COMMISSIONERS Meeting MINUTES

Monday 11 March 2024 1.30pm - 3.30pm

Location: G/34, 1 Horse Guards Road, SW1A 2HQ London, and via Google Meet

Attendees:

Baroness Gisela Stuart	First Civil Service Commissioner	Chair
Kate Owen	Interim Chief Executive Officer	Board Member
Joanna Abeyie	Commissioner	Board Member
Stephen Cohen (Virtual)	Commissioner	Board Member
Sarah Pittam	Commissioner	Board Member
Lea Paterson	Commissioner	Board Member
Chris Pilgrim	Commissioner	Board Member
Paul Gray	Commissioner	Board Member
Elizabeth Walmsley	Commissioner	Board Member
Martin Spencer	Commissioner	Board Member
Dr Neil Wooding (Virtual)	Commissioner	Board Member
Tony Poulter	Commissioner	Board Member
Elisabeth Hambley	Commissioner	Board Member

Apologies: Atul Devani, Commissioner and Board Member and Paul Kernaghan, Commissioner and Board Member.

1) Chair's Welcome

1.1) The Chair gave the following updates:

- The register of interests, minutes of the previous meeting and action log were reviewed. Minutes of Board meetings will now be published on the Commission's website.
- The Chair welcomed three new Commissioners, bringing the total number of Commissioners to 14. Their induction is ongoing.

- Sarah Pittam is stepping down in her role as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, and Atul Devani will also be moving on after two meetings. Martin Spencer will take on the role of ARC Chair.
- An event for the Ministry of Justice, the winners of the Commissioners' Mark of Excellence will be held at the House of Commons on Thursday 14th March and an online event on Monday 18th.
- The Chair gave an update on current competitions and a recent meeting of the Senior Leadership Committee. The Chair is giving evidence to the SSRB on 12th March and will be speaking at an event on 18th March on standards in public, parliament and the civil service along with Doug Chalmers, the Chair of the Committee on Standards in Public Life and Daniel Greenberg Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards
- The Chair updated the Board on how competitions would be affected once a General Election is called.

2) CEO Update

2.1) The CEO updated on the Commission's current headcount, new starters, leavers and ongoing recruitment, and a blog by the CEO on the Commission's approach to secretariat recruitment has been published on the Commission's website.

2.2) The secretariat provided an operational update covering February 2024. Complaints and allocation numbers were stable. Breaches relating to secondments have increased. The majority of Civil Service Code complaints remain out of scope. Recruitment Principles complaints were often about the advertised process not being followed.

2.3) The CEO set out the team's priorities for the next period, including onboarding of new staff and Commissioners, rolling out the new compliance process, a renewed focus on the Civil Service Code, and planning the Annual Report and Accounts.

3) Introduction to new Commissioners

3.1) The three new Commissioners, Tony Poulter, Elisabeth Hambley and Dr Neil Wooding introduced themselves to the rest of the Board.

4) Board Effectiveness Review - Michael Jary, Government Lead Non-Executive

4.1) Michael thanked Commissioners who had taken part in the review. His overall view was that the current Board was effective but there was room to improve operations through implementing a "federated model" with a Joint Operations Committee (JOC) overseeing the corporate functions of the three Independent Offices operating alongside a CSC Board focused on the Commission's strategy and the delivery of its statutory responsibilities.

4.3) Terms of Reference would be set out the JOC's and the Commission Board's remit.

4.4) The Board discussed the make-up of the Board, reporting lines of the Chief Executive, and the need to maximise the way in which Commissioners' experiences from competitions are used to inform the Commission's development, which could have a significant influence driving good practice in recruitment and policies such as External by Default.

4.7) The Commissioners thanked Michael for a clear and helpful report and agreed with the next steps set out in the cover paper.

5) Commissioners' role in compliance

5.1) The Compliance team outlined that there will be two audits in April and then four a month. A full session for Commissioners on their role in the process will be held in May. Commissioners will be involved in moderation meetings as well as the CEO and Compliance team.

5.2) Link Commissioners will play an important role in the new compliance process. The compliance team will ask for intelligence on the department's performance and after audits the Link Commissioner will help take forward any recommendations for their link departments. Audit reports will be sent to Permanent Secretaries and departmental Non-Executive Directors.

6) Introduction to the Director General Workforce Team, Cabinet Office

6.1) The team explained to the new Commissioners that they offer a centralised recruitment service for all departments, although their use is not mandated.

6.2) The group discussed approaches to Commissioner panel reports, the importance of making time in the planning meetings to discuss the role with the executive search agency, the Permanent Secretary and ministers, and how to bring in more talent from outside the Civil Service.