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| Present: | Judith Robertson (Chair) JRJane-Claire Judson (JCJ, left part way through Item 9)Susan Kemp (SK)Alan Mitchell (AM) |
| In Attendance: | Tiia Kontro (Minute Secretary) (TK)Kavita Chetty (KC)Liz Gibb (LG, items 1- 6 only) |
| Apologies: | No apologies |
| List of Acronyms:  | NHRI: National Human Rights InstitutionSPCB: Scottish Parliament Corporate BodyPCS: Public and Commercial Services Union |

1. Welcome and Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

It was noted that the previous meeting was held in February as March 2020 was cancelled due to it not being quorate.

The minutes of the meeting held on February 2020 were approved.

1. Matters Arising

The matters arising report was discussed and the following points noted.

**3.1** JR shared an update of the 4 NHRI meeting which was held in Belfast in February 2020. No official meeting minutes have been circulated yet.

**Action:** JR to circulate the minutes with the Commissioners as soon as they are available.

**3.2** AM raised a question on whether the 4 NHRIs should have a joint discussion on COVID-19 impact on human rights. KC noted that this has already been considered and it was agreed that the Commission will reach out to the other NHRIs to suggest this.

**3.3** SK pointed out that the NHRIs could also discuss work areas in relation to the current COVID-19 situation and suggested the Commission could share some of our work areas with the other NHRIs.

**Action:** The Commission to reach out to the other NHRI’s to suggest a joint discussion on COVID-19 impact on human rights.

1. Outcomes Report

KC introduced the Quarter 4 outcomes report.

**4.1** All of the Commissioners expressed that the Commission’s ability to adapt to working conditions during COVID-19 has been impressive. The Commissioners agreed that both the quality of discussions as well as the ability to also focus on longer term impacts of the current situation has been noted and greatly appreciated. They asked that their views be passed on to staff.

**4.2** SK also pointed out that the Commission is involved in ongoing demanding and time sensitive work which KC confirmed. KC explained that the Commission has had to rapidly re-prioritise tasks and adjust work plans accordingly. Some of this re-prioritising has been done by projects naturally being paused or postponed due to COVID-19. KC outlined all projects that are still going ahead and others that are being worked on with slower timescales.

**4.3** The Commission discussed whether the Strategic Plan should be amended but it was agreed that the current Strategic Plan continues to stand up to the current situation. It was agreed that significant reactive work is required in the current climate and that the Commission has met the demand as much as possible.

1. Finance Report

LG shared the Quarter 4 Finance Report with the Commissioners and updated on how underspend in some areas has been redeployed. The original plans were changed slightly due to the current situation but the end of year situation remained positive.

**5.1** It was noted that Contingency funding has been secured for maternity cover and increased pension costs.

**5.2** A question was raised about arrangements for staff whose capacity has been affected due to COVID-19. It was confirmed that the Commission is following relevant SPCB guidance.

**5.3** The Commission discussed and approved a pay award reflecting the interim pay award agreed between SPCB and PCS. It was noted that SPCB and PCS have agreed this interim award on the basis that full pay negotiations will take place once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted..

1. COVID-19 Impact Update

JR explained the SPCB requirement to nominate an alternative Accountable Officer in the event of the Chair being absent for more than four weeks . A revised Scheme of Delegation was introduced for comment and approval.

**6.1** The Commission approved the amended Scheme of Delegation with minor amendments.

**6.2** The Commission approved an increased limit for cost approval by the Chair.

1. Updates on Current Work

A general update was shared about current work taking place. The following points were noted.

**7.1** The Commission has been asked to provide input to the Scottish Government on COVID-19 as a key stakeholder. The Commission published a briefing on the UK emergency legislation at the end of March and a follow up briefing on the relevant Scottish legislation.

**7.2** It was noted that the current work has been highly responsive across a range of issues. Continuing requests for input will be interrogated in the coming weeks to map out future work. The whole staff team and the Commissioners have worked well in the unusual circumstances and all contributions from the Commission have been welcomed and acknowledged.

**7.3** SK shared an update on the first meeting of the Independent Advisory Group to look at Police Scotland’s use of new emergency powers in the context of COVID-19. The first report of the group is due in the next few weeks.

**7.4** AM shared an update on the Commission’s work on prisons which has been impacted by COVID-19. The Commission agreed to develop and issue a public statement on its ongoing concerns about current prison conditions.

**Action:** The Commission to draft a public statement on its ongoing concerns about current prison conditions.

1. Workplan Update

KC introduced the workplan which is intended to capture work planned especially for the next quarter. This provides a snap shot of where the Commission is and where we anticipate we will be in the next few months. The following points were noted.

**8.1** The Commission’s involvement in the Independent Deaths in Custody Review is going ahead with final confirmation pending of financial resources from the Scottish Government to support this work.

**8.2** Recruitment for maternity cover for the Legal Officer: Human Rights Based Approach has been completed. The successful candidate is currently going through pre-employment checks and will bring a new skillset to the team. Work will be divided between staff accordingly.

**8.3** The Commission decided to delay the upcoming Governance Review until quarter 3 due to capacity challenges arising from COVID-19.

**8.4** Ongoing work includes a more detailed piece of work on COVID-19 legislation. This also means that the Strategy and Legal team has increased requirements for capacity. This will be covered by redeployment of the Participation Officer temporarily to assist the Strategy and Legal team.

**8.5** The workplan was received positively by the Commission and it was suggested that should this be useful for the rest of the staff, it would be good to consider creating one regularly in the future.

1. Restructure Proposal

JR shared responses from consultation with both staff and PCS. A Commission-only discussion took place and the following action was noted.

**Action:** JR to rework the agreed sections and share them with the Commissioners for further approval.

1. AOB

Following the meeting Commissioners discussed by email the additional hours being worked by 2 Commissioners and agreed to the proposal to approach SPCB with a business case in relation to these additional hours.

**Action:** The Commission to approach SPCB with a business case in relation to additional hours worked by the Commissioners.