

**COMMISSIONER FOR PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS'
REPORT ON A SELECTION PANEL TO RECRUIT
MEMBERS, NORTHERN IRELAND VETERANS ADVISORY AND PENSIONS
COMMITTEE - IN CONFIDENCE**

This report describes the outcome of the public appointments process to select appointable candidates for the post of Member of the Northern Ireland Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee (VAPC).

Role and Person Specification

The VAPC members play a central role in promoting the interests and welfare of Veterans and their families. Members are expected to be involved in a wide-ranging agenda of issues relating to the functions of the committee set out above. Whilst knowledge of service life would be useful it is not necessary, what is most important is that the applicant should have a real commitment to supporting Veterans and their Families.

Successful candidates will demonstrate:

- an ability to contribute to a committee setting;
- good all round communication skills and be able to consider complex issues.
- an ability to look ahead and work with others to develop practical plans.
- some experience and knowledge of service pensions and/or compensation schemes in terms of policy impact.
- a willingness to become familiar with the Government's commitment to veterans as set out in the Armed Forces Covenant.

Process

I chaired the selection panel throughout. The independent panel member was XXXXXX, a businessman and entrepreneur based in Northern Ireland. He has business interests in property development, engineering, catering, retail and leisure spanning across Ireland. He has been a manager, company director and owner of a number of companies over the last 20 years or more. I was satisfied that the panel was properly constituted to assess candidates impartially against the full breadth and depth of the requirements of the role.

The post does not attract remuneration and was advertised on the Public Appointments website as well as through ex-Service networks.

The outcome of the selection panel will now be forwarded for ratification to the Minister of State for Defence Personnel and Veterans via Veterans UK.

Sifting of applications

No sift was carried out and the Panel was in agreement to proceed straight to interview. There were 3 applications, including two from candidates carried forward from the previous

campaigns who had been unable to attend interviews. All 3 applications were from men. None of the candidates declared a disability and all were white British.

For each candidate we had an application form and CV giving evidence and examples of their ability to meet the criteria in the role.

Final Interviews

The interviews were held on 04 February 2019. Candidates started the interview giving a short overview about themselves before outlining why they wished to apply to become a member of the Northern Ireland Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committee. Our questions covered the criteria outlined in the advertisement for the position and are included below for completeness.

- an ability to contribute to a committee setting;
- good all-round communication skills and be able to consider complex issues.
- an ability to look ahead and work with others to develop practical plans.
- some experience and knowledge of service pensions and/or compensation schemes in terms of policy impact.
- a willingness to become familiar with the Government's commitment to veterans as set out in the Armed Forces Covenant.

Taking account of performance at interview together with all the other evidence that had been obtained, the panel reached the following conclusions on each of the candidates.

XX XXXX

Overall score XX. Mr XXXX has been a co-opted Member of the committee for the past 2 years. He is thoughtful and articulate but modest and polite. He has an excellent network in County XXXXX; one of the "gaps" in the coverage of the Northern Ireland Committee and is up to date on many of the complex issues facing veterans in Northern Ireland. His long experience in the armed forces both as an "other rank" and as an officer will add real value to the Committee.

Appointable

XXXX XXXX

Overall score XX. Mr XXXXX has plenty of experience of Committee work and is a consummate professional and has an excellent veterans' network, both in the UK and Ireland. He is reasoned and thoughtful and a sound communicator. He has previous experience of veterans' casework in the past in a high-profile role with RBL. The panel consider him to be highly appointable.

Appointable

XXXXX XXXXXX

Overall score XX. Mr XXXXXX presented as a strong, confident and cogent young man who is an excellent listener and communicator. His technical knowledge of Human Rights issues will be a real bonus to the Northern Ireland Committee as we tackle the implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant there and address some of the specific challenges raised by Section 75 legislation. The panel consider him to be highly appointable.

Appointable

Conclusion

I am satisfied that this competition met the requirements of the Commissioner for Public Appointments' Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies.
I was grateful for the administrative support provided by KXX WXXX throughout the process.

I would be grateful if SXXXX BXXXX would ensure that the Commissioner for Public Appointments is told as soon as possible when the Minister has chosen their candidates for appointment.

Signed Kingsley Donaldson (Panel Chair):

(by email)

Date: 14/02/2019