



Social Mobility
Commission

Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 18 December 2019

11.00 – 4.30pm, Church House

Attendees: Commissioners

Dame Martina Milburn
(Chair)
Saeed Atcha
Alastair da Costa
Steven Cooper
Pippa Dunn
Sam Friedman
Harvey Matthewson
Jody Walker
Sandra Wallace
Liz Williams
Sammy Wright

Members of the Secretariat

External Guests: Ali Cooper, Melanie Field, Hayley Willingale, Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

Apologies: Jessica Oghenegweke, Farrah Storr, Child Poverty Action Group

Introductions

1.0 The Chair started off with apologies and an overview of the agenda.

1.1 The Director of Secretariat recapped on activities during purdah and post election.

Corporate Governance

2.1 Previous board meeting minutes were noted. Commissioners expressed satisfaction with the standard of the minutes. Martina confirmed talks are ongoing with the ethics team in Cabinet Office about correct procedures to enable Commissioner Friedman to undertake the civil service project.

2.2 Commissioners want the draft DfE framework to be amended to include Ministerial engagement and were asked to send Secretariat any further ideas for inclusion.

Action: Secretariat to revise framework agreement and agree with sponsorship.

2.3 Commissioners requested amendments to specific KPIs and to identify a core set of measures.

Action: Secretariat to revise and recirculate KPIs

2.4 Secretariat staffing needs were discussed.

Action: Secretariat to circulate an organogram showing filled positions and vacancies.

Annual Statutory Report

3.0 A draft approach and baseline for the annual statutory report was circulated and the following topics were discussed:

- Context, methodology and rationale for selection
- Commissioners involvement in the process
- Areas to improve on

3.1 The Commission was satisfied with the new approach. When finalising the report Commissioners will focus on recommendations relating to their portfolio.

External Speakers – Equality Human Rights Commission

4.0 Melanie Field, Executive Director (EHRC), began with introductions and then moved to the focus of their presentation - the Socio-Economic Duty. She outlined what the duty is, why it is needed, where it is implemented and key intended outcomes. She stated that the EHRC were keen to work with the Commission to get the Duty introduced in England. Working together to showcase ways that SEB could be implemented in England would have significant outcomes.

4.1 Hayley Willingale, Head of Human Rights Monitoring, conducted a live demonstration of their Human Rights Tracker. The online tool sets out all recommendations that the UN has made to the UK over the last five years.

Action: Secretariat to consider the Tracker in the context of the monitoring report

1st Year Reflections

5.0 Commissioners reflected on their 1st year in post including what they had done effectively, what more they could do, additional resources needed and plans for engaging with Parliamentarians.

Actions: Secretariat to prioritise letters to PM and DfE SoS before

Christmas. Letters to other SoS to be sent in the new year.

Communications Update

6.0 Jill provided a summary of events and publications we released this year - both traditional and digital media.

6.1 There was an open discussion on Commissioner speaking engagements and increasing their visibility. Commissioners are keen to speak about their portfolio areas but need Secretariat support in the form of briefings and potentially media training.

Actions: Secretariat to upload Commissioner biographies and headshots on website. Secretariat to arrange an annual event with journalists who work on social mobility. Secretariat to consider resourcing implications of increased Commissioner media activity.

Future Meetings

6.0 The next board meeting will be in Portsmouth/SW on 16th February.

Action: Annual comms plan to be included for the next board meeting

AOB

7.0 Due to time constraints the research project paper was deferred.

Actions: Secretariat will provide the research project updates during the January telebriefing with Commissioners. Secretariat to reorganise Child Poverty Action Group presentation.