

**MINUTES OF THE QUARTERLY MEETING
BETWEEN SCCRC AND LAW REFORM DIVISION
2 JULY 2020 – 14:00, TELE-CONFERENCE**

Present:

Anna Donald, Acting Deputy Director, Criminal Justice Division
[redacted], Criminal Law & Practice Team

Gerard Sinclair, Chief Executive, SCCRC
Chris Reddick, Director of Corporate Services, SCCRC

1.0 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2020 were agreed as a true and fair record of the meeting by those in attendance and subsequently approved.

2.0 Matters Arising

Mr Sinclair provided a brief update on the Lockerbie review which resulted in a referral to the High Court on 11 March 2020. He also provided an overview of the additional work that had been undertaken since the referral was made in respect of access to additional papers.

3.0 Quarterly Objectives Report:

2020-21 Business Plan

3.1 Mr Reddick provided a summary of the 2020-21 Business Plan which had been agreed by the Commission's Board. In terms of overall performance for 2019-20, he confirmed that the overall referral rate was 5.3% and that the referral success rate was 66%. He noted that one of the Commission's key targets in respect of the review of sentence-only cases had been missed by an average of 0.5 months. Mr Sinclair noted that the target was already very tight at 4 months average and that the Commission was heavily reliant on other parties to assist in the achievement of this. Despite this, it had been agreed that the target would remain for 2020-21.

Mr Reddick also provided an overview of the agreed business plan objectives for 2020-21. Mr Sinclair set out a proposed change to Management Team meetings, whereby all staff would be invited to attend post-Board briefings in an attempt to keep everyone well informed.

Case Statistics

3.2 Mr Sinclair provided an overview of the quarterly case statistics to 30

June 2020, confirming that a total of 18 cases had been received. He noted that the impact of COVID-19 had initially resulted in a reduction in applications to the Commission, although this appeared to be increasing again.

3.3 Mr Sinclair also provided an update on Post Office cases resulting from problems with the Horizon System which had resulted in 100 applications being received by the CCRC and 43 referrals being made so far. He confirmed that there would likely be a number of Scottish cases and would provide a further update at the next meeting.

Finance Report

3.4 Mr Reddick provided a full update on the Commission's quarterly finance report to 30 June 2020. He noted that the impact of COVID-19 had seen a reduction in some costs, particularly those associated with Board Member's travel and miscellaneous operating costs. However, overall the impact against budget had been minimal.

3.5 Mr Reddick also provided an update on legal actions, noting that costs at the end of the first quarter represented 38% of the annual budget. Mr Sinclair also provided an update on action being taken to recover costs in respect of [redacted].

4.0 2019-20 Annual Report

Mr Reddick provided a summary of the 2019-20 Annual Report which had been approved by the Board and was due to be laid in Parliament later in the month, along with the 2019-20 Annual Account. He noted that COVID-19 had impacted on the production of the Annual Report and Annual Accounts, however the Commission had still managed to turn both documents around very quickly during a very difficult period.

5.0 2019-20 Annual Accounts

Mr Reddick provided an overview of the Audited Annual Accounts, highlighting additional areas for inclusion resulting from the office move in October 2019 and the capitalisation of both the Commission's contribution to works and benefit resulting from the landlord's contribution. He confirmed that the annual audit had been taken forward remotely this year as a result of COVID-19, although noted that the process had been relatively smooth with definite areas of benefit which could be incorporated into future year's audits. He confirmed that the auditors had also provided an unqualified opinion.

6.0 Staffing/Board Update

6.1 Mr Sinclair provided an update on staffing arrangements arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, noting that the response to home working had been extremely efficient, with all staff set up on encrypted laptops prior to the pandemic and various remote systems in place to ensure the secure transfer of case related materials. He confirmed that there had been various

delays in obtaining papers from 3rd parties and that this had had an impact on review times.

6.2 Mr Sinclair also reported that a new staff rota system had now been put in place with all staff attending the office 2 days per week and working from home 3 days per week. Extensive guidance had also been put in place, with new H&S arrangements in place at the office to ensure social distancing and increased hygiene.

6.3 In respect of the Board, Mr Sinclair confirmed that all Committee and Board meetings had been progressing efficiently with the use of Zoom video conferencing.

7.0 Sponsor Team Updates

[redacted] noted that the Board was now officially down one Member following the departure of **[redacted]** and asked if the Commission was content to operate with the reduced number for the time being. Mr Sinclair confirmed that he was fairly flexible in terms of appointments and suggested this be discussed further at the next meeting.

8.0 AOB

Mr Sinclair reported that the NZ CCRC had officially commenced operating on 1 July 2020 and that **[redacted]**, Mr Reddick and he had all attended a launch Zoom on 30 June 2020.

9.0 Date of Next Meeting

Proposed dates for the next meeting would be circulated in due course.

Chris Reddick
2 December 2020