

HOUSE OF LORDS APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE 52ND MEETING HELD ON 12TH JANUARY 2009

Present: Lord Jay (Chairman)
Baroness Dean
Lord Dholakia
Prof Dame Joan Higgins
Dr John Low
Baroness Campbell
Lord Hurd

Geraldine Alexander (secretariat)
Kate Campbell (secretariat)
Pam Cooke (secretariat)
Richard Jarvis (secretariat)
Maggie O'Boyle (secretariat)

Apologies

1. There were no apologies.

Minutes

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 2008 were agreed.

Chairman's update

3. Lord Jay was due to meet David Cameron MP on 15 January. A meeting with the Prime Minister was anticipated, but no date had yet been arranged.
4. The Commission noted the Cabinet Office's data handling measures and how this would effect the way information was circulated to Members.
5. The Commission agreed that its Code of Practice did not need amending and would continue to be in effect.

Feedback and the complaints process

6. The Commission agreed that its existing complaints process did not need amending.
7. It was also agreed, after lengthy discussion, that its feedback policy would not be changed.

Review of the criteria

8. The Commission considered the paper on the review of the assessment criteria.

It agreed that:

- The criterion of significant achievement should remain. However, it wished to explore further what this criterion meant in practice. The Secretariat was invited to develop a discussion paper on this topic for the next meeting.
- The criterion of contribution to the work of the House was important and should remain. The Commission agreed that it would be beneficial for nominees if its website could provide more information on the job of being a cross-bencher; the Secretariat was invited to consider the best way of providing this information.
- The criteria of understanding the constitutional framework, integrity and independence and a commitment to the principles and highest standards in public life would not be amended.
- The criterion of time available would be strengthened, to make clear that nominees are expected to make a commitment to making an effective contribution to the House.
- The party-political independence criterion would also be changed to read "who are *and expect to remain* independent of any political party".
- The Commission would introduce a new criterion of nominees being currently tax resident in the UK. (While the Commission already required this as part of its eligibility and vetting process, it agreed that it should be included in its selection criteria to highlight the issue.)
- In reference to the amended criteria, no current nominee will be rejected for not meeting the new standards. However, any nominees invited to interview will be asked to show how they meet the new criteria.
- The amended criteria would be published.

Implementation of changes to the assessment process

9. The Commission agreed the steps outlined in the paper on the implementation of changes to the process.
10. It also considered the format of its interviews of nominees. It agreed that wherever possible three members should form the panel, and that the summary at the end of the interview should be unambiguous. The Secretariat was invited to provide advice on options for how interviews could be formatted in future, based upon best practice and the experience of other bodies.

Discussion of names

11. The Commission considered the sub-committees' suggestions for interviewed nominees. It agreed with the conclusions of the sub-committee, other than:
 - [REDACTED] nomination should be rejected.
 - [REDACTED] nomination (on which it was noted there had been a number of letters of support) should be rejected. (known to BD)
 - [REDACTED] nomination (friend of JH) should be rejected.
 - [REDACTED] nomination should be rejected.
 - [REDACTED] nomination should be rejected.

- [REDACTED] nomination (known to DH) should be retained for further consideration.
- [REDACTED] nomination should be retained.
- [REDACTED] nomination should be retained.

12. Therefore, the Commission retained 12 nominations for individuals who had previously been interviewed: [REDACTED]

13. It was agreed that other than [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], the non-interviewed holdovers whose nominations were more than two years old would be rejected.

Communications – letting people know the outcome

14. The Commission agreed that the draft letters to unsuccessful nominees should be reviewed. The letters would be signed by the Secretary on behalf of the Commission. The Secretariat was invited to start processing the letters and to send them once the appropriate checks had been completed. The Commission asked for a briefing pack to be circulated to Members when the rejection letters were sent.

Freedom of information

15. The paper on freedom of information was noted.

Vetting

16. The Commission noted the paper on vetting. It requested a further briefing paper on the vetting criteria for party-political and non-party-political nominees.

Any other business

17. There was no further business.

Commission Secretariat
January 2009

