

MATTERS ARISING SINCE 4 APRIL 2011

Appointment of Assistant Commissioners

1. Members will recall that the Appointments Commission have been contracted by the Commission to administer the recruitment process for Assistant Commissioners. Following clearance by Members of the recruitment material, the Appointments Commission began advertising the vacancies on 21 April in a number of websites and print publications. The application period closed on 18 May and the Appointments Commission inform us they have received 1022 applications. Following a sifting process, formal decisions on which applicants to invite to interview will be taken on 15 June and notifications sent out as soon as possible thereafter. Interviews will be held 27 June – 8 July, with the results subsequently being submitted to Members in order for them to be able to make final decisions on who to recommend to the Deputy Prime Minister for appointment.
2. The sift and interviews will be conducted by a three-member panel consisting of Tony Bellringer and two representatives from the Appointments Commission, Penny Bennett and Helen Yarrow. The Appointments Commission have provided brief background information on Ms Bennett and Ms Yarrow as follows:

Penny Bennett (Appointments Commissioner): Penny joined the Commission in 2003 following a professional career as a solicitor in the private sector. Penny has experience of the health sector following Chair and non-executive Director roles for the East Gloucestershire NHS Trust and the Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic Health Authority. Alongside her role as Commissioner, Penny also serves on the board of the Hanover Housing Association and is chair of their Audit Committee. Penny has declared that she is not politically active.

Helen Yarrow (Independent): Helen is a freelance recruitment consultant and Accredited Independent Public Appointments Assessor with eleven years experience undertaking complex and senior appointments for Government Departments, public sector and Charitable organisations, playing a full and active part in the appointments process. She is passionate about ensuring effective public appointments are made on merit following a fair, open and transparent process. She took a lengthy career break in order to care for her severely disabled daughter, during which time she was (and in some cases still is) actively involved in a number of related charities and schools, as Committee Member, Trustee and Chair.

Update from Elections and Democracy Division

3. Members will want to be aware of two significant personnel changes in our sponsor Division that have been announced since the last Commission meeting. **Mark Sweeney**, who as Director of Elections and Democracy Division (EDD) had direct responsibility for managing the Government's relationship with the Commission, left EDD on 13 May to take up the post of Principal Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Justice. Mark's line manager, **Vijay Rangarajan**, Constitution Director, has announced that he will be leaving Cabinet Office in July to return to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. We expect that

arrangements for Mark Sweeney's successor to be announced shortly, though Vijay Rangarajan's replacement may not be confirmed for some time. Given the importance of the relationship between the sponsor Division and the Commission, Members may wish to consider arranging an informal early meeting with Mark Sweeney's replacement – perhaps with the Deputy Chair in the first instance – once an individual has arrived in post.