

MATTERS ARISING SINCE 8 JUNE 2011

Publications

1. Two key publications have been issued since the last meeting. The Annual Report for the financial year 2010/11, *Our Year in Review*, was published on our website at the end of June with hard copies sent to key stakeholders. The Annual Report was the first BCE publication to use our new corporate “look and feel”.

2. The *Guide to the 2013 Review* was published on 28 June. All MPs representing constituencies in England were sent printed copies and a press release was distributed to announce its publication. Electronic copies were sent to those who had registered an interest in receiving notification of its publication. Informal feedback on the booklet – received from the likes of Treasury Solicitor lawyers, Assistant Commissioner candidates, and political party representatives – has been very positive.

Appointment of Assistant Commissioners

3. Members will be aware from their special meeting on 18 July that the selection panel for Assistant Commissioners completed its interviewing and presented a merit list to Members, from which 27 names were selected for recommendation for appointment. Members also made provisional selections – pending formal appointments being made – of which individuals to allocate to which region, and which to designate as the Lead Assistant Commissioner for each region. The formal request for the 27 appointments to be made was submitted to the Cabinet Office on 20 July. One of the recommended individuals subsequently withdrew, and Members agreed by e-mail a substitute recommendation and some re-allocation of individuals to regions. We understand that Cabinet Office officials made the formal submission to their Minister on 18 August, and at the time of writing appointments were still on track to formally commence on 1 September. A further update will be provided at the meeting.

Public Hearings

4. The Secretariat have now organised venues for all 36 public hearings. Details of the dates of the hearings and the associated locations and venues were published on the Commission website on 15 July.

5. A thorough procurement process has also been conducted to identify an appropriate transcription service provider for the public hearings, resulting in the selection of Merrill Legal. Merrill Legal provide transcription services for Parliamentary hearings, the Greater London Assembly and the Iraq Inquiry, amongst others. Additionally, a Public Hearings Co-ordinator has been recruited to the Secretariat team for the period of 15 August to 16 December. The Co-ordinator, Ged Robinson, will be responsible for finalising the detailed practical arrangements for delivery of the public hearings, successfully implementing those arrangements, and providing an overarching report after the hearings have concluded, reviewing the process and identifying lessons to be learned for the next review.

Handling of representations

6. The Secretariat has continued work to establish a system for handling representations made during the consultation. The consultation website, currently under its final stage of development prior to “go-live” on 13 September, will be used as the tool (and master database) for storing all paper, email and online submissions. Paper and email representations received in the office will be uploaded through the consultation website. The Secretariat has arranged for additional IT hardware to allow this exercise to proceed without disruption to existing staffing arrangements and hardware.

7. While paper and email copies of representations will be stored securely in the Secretariat’s offices, electronic copies of all representations will be stored in secure off-site storage, which will be regularly backed up to mitigate against data loss. At the end of the consultation period, the Secretariat will receive a master copy of the database containing all representations. In addition, members of the Secretariat will be able to access any representation (including those made through the website) at any time of the consultation period, using a secure log-in to the consultation website. This will allow ongoing analysis during the consultation period, rather than having to wait for the close of the consultation.

Update from Elections and Democracy Division

8. Members were notified at the last meeting of two changes within Cabinet Office: the departure of Mark Sweeney, who as Head of Elections and Democracy Division (EDD) had direct responsibility for managing the Government’s relationship with the Commission, and the imminent departure of Vijay Rangarajan, whose responsibilities as Constitution Director including line management of Mark and strategic oversight of EDD’s work. Cabinet Office have since announced the appointment of Ciaran Martin a direct replacement for Vijay as Constitution Director. Ciaran’s previous roles include Principal Private Secretary to the Cabinet Secretary, and experience in HM Treasury. Ciaran will be making an appointment to replace Mark Sweeney in due course, though this is not now expected to be within the next few months.