



Summary of meeting

Advisory Council on National Records and Archives

14 May 2009

The following is a summary of the meeting of the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Council on National Records and Archives held on 14 May 2009 at The Royal Courts of Justice, London, WC2A 2LL.

Lord Clarke of Stone-cum-Ebony, Master of the Rolls, in the Chair. Members present were Else Churchill, Dr Jeevan Deol, Professor Harry Dickinson, Sir David Durie, Dr Clive Field, Ms Christine Gifford, Mr Graeme Herd, Viscount De L'Isle, Professor Arthur Lucas, Professor Heidi Mirza, Professor Michael Moss, Ms Janet Smith, Mr Ian Soutar and Ms Stephanie Williams.

Also present were Ms Natalie Ceeney, Chief Executive, The National Archives, Ms Carol Tullo, Director of Information Policy and Services, The National Archives Mr Nick Kingsley, Head of National Advisory Services, The National Archives Mr Stuart Abraham, Head of Transfer and Access, The National Archives Mrs Judy Anckorn, Private Secretary to the Master of the Rolls Ms Lâle Ozdemir, Secretary to the Advisory Council

Access to public records

Following its closure being queried by the Council, it was pleased that a government department had agreed to release a file on a Medical thesis medal.

Draft Advisory Council Annual Report

The Council approved the draft Annual report (2008-09) which will be laid before Parliament in July in accordance with 1(3) of the Public Records Act.

Advisory Council profile raising workshops: report

It was discussed how the aim of the workshops led by the Head of Transfer and Access and the Secretary had been twofold:

- (1) To assess the scope for improvement of the process for the closure of records upon transfer
- (2) To raise the profile of the Council across government.

It was also agreed that in order to further raise the profile of the Council and to understand the unique issues faced by departments, that two of the four Council meetings would be hosted at a chosen government department from 2010 onwards.

Freedom of Information cases handled by The National Archives and considered by Council Panels

In line with its statutory role under FOIA Advisory Council Panels advise on the strengths of the public interest test considerations applied by departments when they seek to close historical information held at The National Archives. The Panels advise on information, which is deemed sensitive under the Freedom of Information Act and requires a public interest test. A paper was presented to the Council that detailed information on the work of Freedom of Information Advisory Panels over the last year. Over the last year (1 April 2008- 31st March 2009) the Council has convened 24 Panels. They have advised on a total of 113 cases in total. 7 Panels advising on 32 cases have been convened since the February meeting.