

Labour Relations Agency
Notes of a Senior Management Team Meeting
Held on Monday, 10th May 2010 in Room 2, Gordon Street

Present: William Patterson
Penny Holloway
Gerry O'Neill
David McGrath

In Attendance: Alison Wolfe (Minute Secretary)

- | | Minute | Action |
|--|---------------|--------------------|
| 1. Apologies | | |
| There were no apologies. | | |
| 2. Minutes of Meeting held on 14 April 2010 | | |
| The minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2010 were agreed. | | Secretariat |
| 3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes | | |
| There were no matters arising from the previous minutes. | | |
| 4. Board Meeting – 20 May 2010 | | |
| The CEO outlined the papers to be prepared for the Board meeting on 20 May in particular the discussion paper on the revision of the Agency Arbitrator List. | | |
| It was noted that the meeting on 20 May will be held at The Mount Conference Centre beginning at 9.30 am. The meeting will be followed at 11.00 am by the joint meeting with the Equality Commission and conclude with lunch at 1.00 pm. | | |
| It was further noted that the CEO will discuss future Board meeting dates with the Chairman. | | CEO |
| 5. Corporate Services Report | | |
| It was noted that the informal SMT held on 4 th May dealt with the April corporate service report. Two outstanding items were (1) the issue of appraisal documentation and (2) the progression of an Absence policy, both of which will be taken further at the JNCC on 19 May. | | DCS |
| It was also noted that: | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✚ TUS comments on the Dignity at Work policy had been received; DCS is to feedback to SMT;✚ Recruitment is progressing and is on target;✚ Construction Services are to respond to the DCS by 19 May | | |

- regarding refurbishment plans;
- + Corporate Services will be decanting to Unit 1 within the week.
- + It was agreed that it was important to keep the impetus going and seek prompt responses from Construction Services and short turnaround business case approval from DEL.

CEO/ DCS

It was noted that budget spend needed particular attention early in the financial year in order to ensure steady spend. Directors are to consider a spend profile for the year in respect to Directorate activities.

SMT

6. Risk Register

It was agreed that the SMT will meet to discuss the Risk Register on Wednesday, 19 May at 10.00 am in Room 2.

Secretariat/SMT

7. Agency Corporate Plan 10/13 and Business Plan 10/11

The CEO awaited Departmental approval which was due after the Department had considered the outcomes of the DEL Review of the Agency.

CEO

It was agreed that Directors will re-examine objectives in the Business Plan in light of the DEL Review of Dispute Resolution and forward to CEO.

DIRS

➤ *Management Charter*

It was noted that the CEO will be providing a further draft to Directors for discussion.

CEO

➤ *Research & Evaluation*

It was noted that the Research Committee met on 12th April. The Committee had agreed to meet with the New Economics Foundation on 28th May following which a decision will be taken as to whether to undertake an Agency evaluation of its economic and social impact by using the NEF or the Pam Meadows methodology.

The SMT discussed the objectives set out in the Business Plan 2010-11 for Research and Evaluation. It was agreed to prioritise the objectives in line with the target dates set. It was noted with regard to objective 1 that a draft specification was with Directors for consideration and response to CEO. It was agreed to remove objectives 2, 3 and 5.

DIRS/CEO

It was noted that:

- + progress was being made to carry out a stress risk assessment, probably during May/June 2010.
- + the corporate services user satisfaction survey would be an internal project
- + the DAS will provide the DCS with information on the last staff attitude survey carried out in the Agency.

DCS

DCS

DAS

8. 2009 DEL Review of Agency

It was noted that the Agency awaited the outcome of the DEL Review of the Agency.

CEO

9. DEL Review of Dispute Resolution

It was noted that

- ✚ the CEO gave presentations to staff on 6th May on the DEL Review of Dispute Resolution Policy Proposals;
- ✚ the SMT as a whole and as individual Directorates will be revising the Business Plan in light of the review;
- ✚ the CEO, DAS and DCA met with Tom Evans, DEL on 29 April;
- ✚ the Chairman will be meeting with the Permanent Secretary regarding certain items in the review and also with the Minister on 25 May.

DIRS

CH/CEO

10. IS/IT Strategy

➤ *IS Strategy - Security & Data Protection*

It was noted that ICMS was being addressed as a matter of urgency.

DCA

➤ *Case Management developments*

It was noted that a number of staff will be visiting the LRC in Dublin 14 May to assess the advantages and disadvantages of the IKEN system used by LRC.

DCA

It was also noted that the DCS will be re-tendering the IS Strategy contact as the PwC contract had reached end term.

DCS

11. Operations

➤ *Customer Complaints*

It was noted that the CEO has offered to meet with a complainant under the final stage in the complaints procedure.

CEO/DCS

➤ *SMT meetings*

It was agreed that the regular informal SMT meeting were proving constructive and meaningful. It was agreed to issue a revised programme of dates through to December 2010.

Secretariat

➤ *PRONI – disposal of Agency files*

A list of files identified for destruction/retention by PRONI is to be approved by CEO & Directors.

CEO/Dirs

12. Accommodation

➤ *HQ*

See point 5 above.

DCS

13. JNCC

➤ *Progress on Policies and Procedures*

It was agreed to re-arrange the pre-JNCC meeting for Wednesday, 19 May following the SMT discussion on the Risk Register. The JNCC is scheduled to take place on the afternoon of 19 May at 2.30 pm in Room 2. Agenda and minutes of the previous meeting to be distributed this week.

Secretariat

DCS

As mentioned in item 5 above MS will indicate that they wish to concentrate on the issue of appraisals and the absence policy.

DCS

Dignity at Work – TUS comments have been returned to MS for consideration.

DCS

➤ *Progress on Secretary meetings*

It was noted that due to work priorities the JNCC secretaries had not been able to meet; a joint secretaries meeting had been arranged for 11 May.

DCS

14. Continuous Improvement

➤ *Continuous Improvement Action Plan*

➤ *IiP Assessment Methodology*

It was noted that a business case for IiP was underway.

DCS

It was agreed to remove IiP Assessment Methodology from the agenda.

Secretariat

➤ *Staff Conference*

It was noted that a health and well-being day was being organised for staff on Friday, 4 June 2010 at the NICS Pavilion, Stormont.

**DCS/CO/
Secretariat**

The SMT is to discuss the agenda for a Staff Conference later in the year.

SMT

➤ *Diversity Training*

The DCS is awaiting a business case from David Walsh to progress diversity training.

DCS

15. SMT Team Development

➤ *PA Meetings*

It was noted that the SMT will be meeting with PA Consulting on 17 May to assess progress since their meeting on 29 March.

SMT

16. Any Other Business

➤ *On-line information services*

Discussion took place around the provision of on-line information services for operational staff as provided by IDS and XpertHR. An XpertHR presentation is to be given to staff 27 May. It was agreed that the DCA speak to Michael Bagally, IDS with regard to providing a demonstration to staff.

DCS

DCA

It was agreed that there was a need to examine the Agency's information base including electronic library and information services including assessing links with University services.

SMT

➤ *SMT availability – summer 2010*

It was noted that

- ✚ the CEO will be on annual leave w/c 28 June for one week and 7-23 July inclusive;
- ✚ the DAS will be on leave during August;
- ✚ the DCA will be on leave 4-25 June inclusive;
- ✚ DCS to advise of leave arrangements.

Secretariat

It was agreed to move the SMT scheduled for Monday, 28 June to Friday, 25 June. It was noted that the DCA will be unavailable.

Secretariat/SMT

➤ *Pay*

As requested by DFP the DCS is seeking legal opinion on equal pay case pay implementation.

DCS

➤ *Annual Report 2009-10*

It was noted that the Annual Report process is underway; the CEO and Chairman are to provide their commentaries.

CEO

➤ *EOI Certification Office*

After some discussion it was agreed to fill this vacancy by recruiting from an employment agency.

DCS

➤ *Williams Travel*

It was noted that due to the impending retirement of the Business Travel operator in Williams Travel, the Agency will have to look at alternative travel arrangements. The DCS is to look into the service provided by NICS contract and advise the SMT accordingly.

DCS

16. Date of Next Meeting

- Informal SMT 17th May – with Joan Hart
- Formal SMT 24th May