

**Labour Relations Agency**  
**Notes of a Senior Management Team Meeting**  
**held on Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> May 2010 in Room 2, Gordon Street**

**Present:** William Patterson  
Penny Holloway  
Gerry O’Neill  
David McGrath

**In Attendance:** Alison Wolfe (Minute Secretary)

	<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1. Apologies</b>	There were no apologies.	
<b>2. Minutes of Meeting held on 10 May 2010</b>	The minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2010 were agreed.	<b>Secretariat</b>
<b>3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes</b>	There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.	
<b>4. Board Meeting – 20 May 2010</b>	It was noted that the main item for discussion was the revision of the Agency Arbitrator List which will be examined further at the June meeting. In this context it was agreed that the Arbitration Secretary will provide the CEO with background information on current arbitrators and their roles.	<b>DCA/AS/CEO</b>
	It was noted that the draft accounts are to be forwarded to Board Members in electronic format.	<b>Secretariat</b>
	Some discussion took place around the electronic issue of papers to Board members; it was agreed that this was an insecure method at the current time. It was agreed that the CEO speak to the Chairman about presenting Board papers via a data projector and screen at meetings in conjunction with the issue of hard copy documents.	<b>CEO</b>
	The CEO outlined the papers which will be presented to the June Board meeting. It was agreed to defer a procurement paper until the August meeting. The CEO is to examine the format of the bi-monthly reports paying particular attention to rationalising the strategic objectives.	<b>DCS</b> <b>CEO</b>

## 5. Corporate Services Report

The recently announced freeze on NI Civil Service recruitment was noted. The implications of any possible resultant freeze on recruitment within the Agency will be stressed to DEL.

CEO

It was noted that:

- ✚ the next quarterly meeting with DEL is due to take place on 27 May;
- ✚ the Agency is proceeding with filling current vacancies;
- ✚ business cases have been submitted to DEL/DFP for IT: SO and Helpline posts and a response is awaited.

CEO/DCS

CEO/DCS

## 6. Risk Register

It was noted that the SMT met on Wednesday, 19 May to discuss the Risk Register. The CEO is processing the revisions agreed at the meeting.

CEO

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

It was noted that the Agency continues to implement both the Corporate and Business Plans; revisions which will be received as a result of the DEL Review of the Agency will be addressed.

CEO

It was agreed that the DCS check the wording of the FM/MS with respect to whether or not DEL approval of the Plans is required as opposed to the documents being submitted to DEL for information only.

DCS

### ➤ *Management Charter*

The CEO circulated a 'Framework for Competency' document to Directors; it was agreed to discuss feedback at the next SMT meeting (informal 1 June).

Dirs

It was agreed that the DCS circulate a presentation he had given to the Board in late 2009 re competencies.

DCS

### ➤ *Research & Evaluation*

It was noted that the next Research Committee meeting will take place on 28 May when Eilis Lawlor of the New Economics Foundation will provide a presentation outlining the NEF approach to measuring social and economic impact.

CEO/Secretariat

It was also noted that DEL may stress the importance of demonstrating the VFM of Agency services through the DEL Review of the Agency.

It was agreed that the minutes of the DEL Quarterly meetings should be issued to Directors.

CEO

## 8. 2009 DEL Review of Agency

It was noted that the Agency awaited the outcome of the DEL Review of the Agency. The CEO and DCS will be raising progress at the DEL/LRA Quarterly meeting to be held on 27 May.

CEO

## 9. DEL Review of Dispute Resolution

It was noted that

- ✚ the SMT as a whole and as individual Directorates will be revising the Business Plan in light of the review;

Dirs

## 10. IS/IT Strategy

### ➤ *IS Strategy - Security & Data Protection*

It was noted that while progress was being made with security and data protection issues the Agency may find it difficult to meet some of the targets set. It was noted that the 'limited assurance' statement received during the audit of information technology systems had been caused by delay with the business continuity plan. A review meeting on the IT Strategy is due to take place on 28 May. It was also noted that plans to test equipment during the summer months may cause difficulties, particularly with respect to the large number of EP cases received.

DCS

With regard to security accreditation it was noted that a number of policies and procedures were imminent. An initial report recommending minimum requirements as set out by PwC is to be issued to Directors for comment.

DCS

### ➤ *Case Management developments*

It was noted that the IS Strategy is likely to recommend the replacement of the Case Management system; however resources are currently not available to progress this.

Feedback from the delegation of staff who visited the LRC in Dublin to assess the advantages and disadvantages of the IKEN system used by LRC indicated a number of queries with regard to managing the system. It was agreed to examine the technical requirements and draw up a business case for a project management professional to progress the LRA programme of work.

DCS

## 11. Operations

### ➤ *Customer Complaints*

It was noted that the case previously reported was now closed.

CEO

### ➤ *SMT meetings*

It was noted that the revised programme of dates for the remainder of 2010 had been issued. It was agreed to remove this item from the agenda.

Secretariat

➤ <i>PRONI – disposal of Agency files</i>	A list of files identified for destruction/retention by PRONI is to be approved by CEO & Directors.	<b>CEO/Dirs</b>
	It was agreed to move STA files currently stored in the General Office to off-site storage to facilitate the refurbishment of the ground floor; files can be easily retrieved if required.	<b>DCS</b>
<b>12. Accommodation</b>		
➤ <i>HQ</i>	It was agreed to change the headings under Accommodation to ‘Premises’ and ‘Furniture’.	<b>Secretariat</b>
	It was noted that the Phase II of the move to Unit 1 is due to take place today.	<b>DCS</b>
<b>13. JNCC</b>		
➤ <i>Progress on Policies and Procedures</i>	The SMT agreed fresh wording for the Equal Opportunities Policy and the Recognition and Procedural Agreement. DCS is to re-issue to the SMT.	<b>DCS</b>
	In the pipeline are Dignity at Work (with the Union), Customer Complaints and Hospitality Guidelines.	<b>DCS</b>
➤ <i>Progress on Secretary meetings</i>	It was noted that MS hope to commence the joint secretaries meetings again in the near future.	<b>DCS</b>
<b>14. Continuous Improvement</b>		
➤ <i>Continuous Improvement Action Plan</i>	It was noted that an action plan had been circulated at the Board meeting on 20 May. Matters arising were discussed.	<b>DCS</b>
➤ <i>Staff Conference</i>	It was noted that a health and well-being day is being organised for staff on Friday, 4 June 2010 at the NICS Pavilion, Stormont. 42 members of staff had indicated they wish to attend.	<b>DCS/CO/ Secretariat</b>
	It was noted that the IiP Action Plan indicated that a staff conference would be held in October; a suitable date to be progressed by the Secretariat.	<b>Secretariat</b>
➤ <i>Diversity Training</i>	The DCS is awaiting costs for various options from David Walsh in order to progress diversity training.	<b>DCS</b>

## 15. SMT Team Development

### ➤ *PA Meetings*

It was noted that the SMT have completed their Myers Briggs assessments which have been forwarded to PA Consulting. Further meetings with PA will take place on 28 May and 6 July. It was agreed to discuss the CEO's revised format for SMT meetings (emailed to Directors), at the informal meeting on 1 June.

**SMT**

## 16. Any Other Business

### ➤ *Staffing*

It was noted that

- ✚ the ERO (job share/IC) retired on 21 May;
- ✚ the deadline for applications to fill the vacancy had been extended to 2 June to cover applications from interested staff;
- ✚ the DAS agreed to chair the selection panel for the ERO (J/s);
- ✚ the DCS will be chairing the selection panel for the EOII (Finance) vacancy.

**DCS**

**DAS**

**DCS**

## 16. Date of Next Meeting

- Informal SMT 1<sup>st</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> June
- Formal SMT 25<sup>th</sup> June