

Labour Relations Agency
Notes of a Senior Management Team Meeting
held on Monday, 4th October 2010 in Room 2, Gordon Street

Present: William Patterson
Penny Holloway
Gerry O'Neill
David McGrath
In Attendance: Alison Wolfe (Minute Secretary)

- | | Minute | |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Apologies | | Action |
| | <p>There were no apologies.</p> <p>The SMT welcomed Joan Hart, PA Consulting to the meeting as an observer.</p> | |
| 2. Minutes of Meeting held on 23 August 2010 | | |
| | <p>The following changes to the minutes were agreed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✚ Para 4 – add DP/ before FOIA at the end of the first paragraph;✚ Para 5 – third bullet point should read FTC and not FCT. <p>Subject to the above changes, and subject to comment by the DCA, the minutes were agreed.</p> | Secretariat |
| 3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes | | |
| | <p>There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.</p> <p>Following a short discussion it was agreed, on a trial basis, to hold formal SMT meetings once every two months. The formal meetings will be scheduled in line with the issue of the Board bi-monthly performance report. Next formal meetings 25th October and 13th December.</p> | SMT |
| 4. Board Meeting – 30 September 2010 | | |
| | <p>It was noted that a further Board paper is to be submitted on the recruitment of arbitrators.</p> <p>It was noted that a further Board paper was required in relation to charging for Agency services. This would include consideration, in light of VFM, of shared services. It was agreed to include consideration of the effectiveness and impact of charging on ACAS.</p> <p>With regard to the recent Agency conference it was noted that:</p> | CEO/DCA

CEO/DCS |

- ✚ the Secretariat will be reviewing the mailing list for future events to include a wider clientele;
- ✚ events such as the conference should be highlighted on the Agency's website;
- ✚ consideration should be given to charging for such events;
- ✚ there is the potential for the next International Agencies conference to be held in Belfast.

Secretariat

In respect of the LRA/LRC joint meeting it was agreed to re-examine the timings for the day. **DAS**

5. Corporate Services Report

It was noted that:

- ✚ the Agency needs to examine recent changes to procurement by the Public Accounts Cttee; **DCS**
- ✚ the SMT will be discussing the potential impact on the Agency of public service budget cuts; **SMT**
- ✚ the DCS has added competencies to the JDs for each grade;
- ✚ a response is awaited from TUS with respect to the JD for the vacant ERO post in Conciliation; it was hoped to have the post advertised by w/e 20 October; **DCS**
- ✚ a training evaluation paper had been issued to Directors; comments to be returned to CEO; **Dirs**
- ✚ it was noted that a reminder on dealing with absence management had been issued to staff;
- ✚ the SMT will be meeting with representatives from Carecall on 18 October to discuss the findings of the recent stress risk assessment. **SMT**

6. Risk Register

It was noted that the SMT are to review the risk register and forward comments to the DCS. The risk register is due to be reviewed by the Audit Committee on 13 October. **SMT**

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

It was noted that the CEO will be briefing staff on 8 October on the budget cuts, the corporate planning process 2011/14 and the DEL vfm review of the Agency. The DCS will be briefing staff on accommodation issues. **CEO/DCS**

It was noted that the CEO will be undertaking further staff briefings in light of public service budget cuts and the implementation of the DEL vfm review recommendations. **CEO**

The CEO will also present a first draft Corporate Plan to the Board in November. **CEO**

➤ **Management Charter**

It was noted that the CEO will be reviewing the Management Charter. It was agreed that the format should be general rather than a training and development charter.

CEO/DCS

➤ **Research & Evaluation**

It was noted that

- ✚ the Research Cttee met on 22 September;
- ✚ SROI is being tendered through CPD.

DAS

8. 2009 DEL Review of Agency

It was noted that the Agency Board had considered the report and accepted the main thrust of the recommendations. The SMT will be discussing the recommendations 6 October with a view to creating an action plan giving some indication of indicators/measures of impact to be included in corporate and/or business plans.

SMT

It was noted that a delegation from the Agency will be meeting with the DEL Committee on 10 November; the CEO is to prepare a short briefing paper for the Committee.

CEO

9. DEL Review of Dispute Resolution

It was noted that the CEO and DCA recently met with DEL representatives. DEL had been informed of the Agency's position on (1) an appeal to statutory arbitration (2) confidentiality for Agency staff and (3) Tribunals seeking a compelling reason. A further meeting is to take place with Tom Evans on the implementation of the ADR review.

It was noted that DEL was now of the view that Agency staff were not covered by statutory protections in respect of relational mediation and other non-jurisdictional ADR processes. The Agency is seeking legal advice on this matter.

CEO

It was noted that the CEO will be attending the DEL ADR Review implementation group meeting 19 October.

CEO

The CEO is to write to Tom Evans, DEL on the proposed revised TOR for arbitrators in respect of the generic statutory arbitration scheme.

CEO

10. IS/IT Strategy

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

It was noted that the SMT had reviewed and agreed the PwC report on the IS Strategy.

SMT

It was agreed to change the title of this bullet point to 'Data Security'.

Secretariat

It was noted that that in terms of systems security the IT policy manual has been re-drafted and will be issued to the SMT for comment within the next few weeks. **DCS**

➤ *Case Management developments*

It was noted that the contingency site in Derry was being tested on 4 October in respect of ICMS and that a test of the Sage would follow when the configuration at Derry had been upgraded. **DCS**

It was noted that the CEO will be following up on 1) the lack of response from DEL on the business case for IS managed services; 2) the fixed- term contact posts and 3) the PR contact. **CEO**

11. Operations

➤ *Customer Complaints*

It was agreed that the DCS will clarify roles and matters relating to confidentiality as per the Customer Complaints Procedure before re-issuing to staff. **DCS**

➤ *PRONI – disposal of Agency files*

It was agreed to check the current position with regard to a revised procedure; secretariat & general office staff to be involved. **DCS**

12. Accommodation

➤ *Premises*

It was noted that:

- ✚ accommodation will be discussed in detail at the SMT away day on 6 October; **SMT**
- ✚ the DCS has circulated a plan for the decant of staff to allow for the refurbishment of the Agency premises; **DCS**
- ✚ due to refurbishments taking place the Secretariat are to source alternative venues for Board meetings for the remainder of the year; **Secretariat**
- ✚ there will also be disruption to advisory workshops and all events will have to be held outside the main office building. **DAS**

➤ *Furniture*

Nothing further to report.

13. JNCC

➤ *Progress on Policies and Procedures*

Nothing further to report.

It was noted that a special JNCC would be held on 26 October to discuss accommodation. It was also noted that the KPMG report had **CEO**

been issued to TUS.

➤ *Progress on Secretary meetings*
Nothing further to report.

14. Continuous Improvement

➤ *Continuous Improvement Action Plan*
It was noted that the Learning and Development Plan had been circulated to the SMT for comment.

SMT

➤ *Staff Conference*
It was noted that a second staff health and well-being day is to be organised.

DCS

Following discussion it was agreed to hold a staff conference in January 2011 possibly around the theme of diversity.

DCS

➤ *Diversity Training*
It was noted that the DCS will prepare a tender for the above.

DCS

15. Digital Communications/Marketing/PR

It was noted that the next meeting of the PR Group had been postponed. The Agency awaited DEL approval of a PR contract.

CEO/DCS

It was noted that the Belfast Telegraph ER supplement would be going ahead.

SMT

It was agreed that the DCS ascertain if any staff would voluntarily act as Agency photographer at Agency events. The SMT also agreed to consider the re-establishment of a staff newsletter at a future meeting.

DCS

16. SMT Team Development

➤ *PA Meetings*
It was noted that further meetings with Joan Hart had been arranged for 26 Oct and 23 November.

SMT

17. Any Other Business

The SMT discussed the evaluation of the process for the NICS equal pay settlements. The CEO is to discuss details with the DCA and decide on the way forward.

CEO/DCA

18. Date of Next Meeting

- Informal SMT 11 & 18 October
- Formal SMT 25 October