

**Labour Relations Agency
Minutes of a Senior Management Team Meeting
held on Tuesday, 21 August 2012 in Room 4, Gordon Street**

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

In Attendance: Alison Wolfe (Minute Secretary)

Minute	Action
1. Apologies There were no apologies.	
2. Minutes of Meeting held on 25 June 2012 The minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2012 were agreed.	
3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.	
4. Innovation in Employment Relations	
4.1 Generic Arbitration Scheme It was noted that the launch of the Generic Arbitration Scheme will take place on 27 September at Riddell Hall. Invitations have been issued. The DEL Minister has been invited to provide the opening address. Directors are to liaise with staff regarding attendance bearing in mind operational requirements. It was agreed to contact Invest NI in relation to publicising the launch in their e-zine.	CEO DAS/DCA
It was noted that the CEO had forwarded the document 'Framework for Tribunal Excellence' to OITFET and DEL and would be following this up in respect of replying to the International Agencies meeting (Australia).	CEO
4.2 Review of NI Employment Law It was noted that on 19 July the Agency responded to the DEL Discussion Paper on the Review of NI Employment Law. DEL will be giving a presentation to the Board 30 August on the responses received.	CEO
It was noted that the Agency continues to monitor developments in GB on a monthly basis.	SMT
4.3 Roundtable Discussion on NI ER A meeting of the Agency's key stakeholders is due to take place on 31 August. The purpose of the meeting will be to agree a common agenda and way forward.	CEO

- 4.4 International Agencies Meeting 2013**
 It was noted that the DAS will be reporting to the Board 31 August on the International Agencies meeting held in Montreal in July. **DAS**
- The Agency is to contact the LRC regarding the joint hosting of the International Agencies meeting 2013. **Chair/CEO**
- 4.5 Skill Exchange Hub**
 It was noted that a skill exchange hub was to be introduced in NI. John Taylor CEO ACAS is involved and will be keeping the Agency informed of developments. **CEO/DAS**
- 5. Agency Strategy and Services**
- 5.1 Corporate Plan 2011-14**
 It was noted that the Corporate Plan was now formally approved by DEL on 2 May.
- 5.2 Business Plan 2012-13**
 It was noted that the Business Plan was formally approved by DEL on 2 May. The first formal submission of progress to date of the objectives in the business plan will be made to the Board on 30 August. **SMT**
- 6. ICT**
- 6.1 IS Managed Services**
 It was noted that a meeting had taken place with CPD and a buyer had been appointed. A revised model had been received highlighting a number of major areas which were now being progressed. **DCS/DCA**
- 6.2 Security Accreditation**
 A favourable review had been received from the auditor. The Agency now awaits final verification of the security accreditation. **DCS**
- 7. Leadership Organisation and Performance Management**
- 7.1 SMT Development Programme**
 It was noted that the SMT assessed the SMT Development Programme at their Away Day on 6th July. The SMT is to review senior management competencies as part of the appraisal process and will be reporting progress to the Board in May and November of each year. **SMT**
 Any matters arising would be raised through the F&P Committee.
- Regarding cover arrangements for the DCA, who will be undertaking a Fulbright Scholarship, for the period 1 February- 1 June 2013 – it was agreed to consult with TUS on issuing an internal staff circular to ERM's at the beginning of October seeking expressions of interest in deputising for the DCA for a period of one month/maximum four months. **DCS**

7.2 Cross Directorate Working Groups

The CEO is to standardise the draft TORs.

CEO

It was agreed that the CEO would write to ERMs seeking views on the possible overlap in the function of the SMT/ERM meetings and the cross directorate groups. The CEO will propose continuing with the cross directorate groups and holding SMT/ERM meetings twice yearly (April & October) to cover a more detailed update and discussion regarding organisational performance.

CEO

It was noted that:

- ✚ the practical outworking of IS Security policies is yet to be finalised;
- ✚ sections need to document their progress on the Customer Focus agenda;
- ✚ the Agency remains on target with regard to budget spend.

DCS

7.3 Performance Appraisal

It was noted that the SMT appraisals were with the Chairman for countersigning and section appraisals were also close to completion.

SMT

7.4 IiP

It was agreed to examine the criteria for silver status and benchmark against organisations that had already achieved this standard.

DCS

7.5 Staff Conference – February 2013

The SMT agreed to discuss proposals for the above at their next informal meeting on 28 August.

SMT

8. Evaluation

8.1 PPEs

The DCS circulated a detailed list of PPE scheduling. The DCS is to update the list accordingly and advise the SMT of progress.

DCS

8.2 SROI

It was noted that CPD will be contacting the successful tender. The SMT and project team will meet the company in due course. The requirement for an equality dimension to be incorporated into the process was noted.

SMT

8.3 Value for Money

The CEO will continue to take the strategy forward. It was noted that the commendation correspondence had been very positive about the delivery of the collective conciliation service.

CEO

9. Governance and Accountability

9.1 Management Statement/Financial Memorandum

The Agency awaits a response from DEL.

CEO

9.2 LRA 'Black Book'

It was noted that the staff handbook was being compiled in 5 sections for submission to the SMT and thereafter to the JNCC.

CEO

9.3 Statutory Compliance

Attention was drawn to compliance matters within the newly approved Equality Scheme in relation to Strategy, Processes and People. Key areas are the embedding of equality parameters in research activity and new systems development combined with Board awareness training.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 JNCC

It was noted that the next JNCC is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 26 September 2012.

Secretariat

10.2 Staffing

It was noted that:

- ✚ the successful ERO (full-time) was in post;
- ✚ the successful ERO (job-share) candidate had accepted the offer of employment and will commence employment on 5 September;
- ✚ a number of Conciliation staff had indicated their interest in deputising at the EOII grade;
- ✚ interviews took place for the temporary SPS vacancy and the successful candidate was now in post;
- ✚ the successful ERM (Corporate Services) was now in post;
- ✚ a request had been received from a member of staff at ERO grade wishing to convert to part-time working. It was agreed to consider the reserve list from the recent ERO exercise.

DCS

10.3 Invest NI Employer Helpline

It was noted that Invest NI was operating an employer helpline.

CEO

10.4 Promotion of Agency services

After some discussion it was agreed that the SMT consider ways to raise the profile of the Agency, with particular attention to public sector bodies and individual trade unions.

SMT

11. Date of Next Meetings

- ✚ Informal Meetings: - Tuesday, 28 August 2012
Monday 3, 10, 17, 24 September 2012
Monday, 1, 8, 15 October 2012
- ✚ Formal Meeting: - **Monday, 22 October 2012**