

**Labour Relations Agency  
Minutes of a Senior Management Team Meeting  
held on Monday, 17 December 2012 in Room 2, Gordon Street**

**Present:** William Patterson  
Gerry O'Neill  
Penny Holloway

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

	<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1. Apologies</b>	An apology was received from David McGrath.	
<b>2. Minutes of Meeting held on 22 October 2012</b>	Subject to the following amendments the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2012 were agreed –  Para 4.6 – should read ‘The CEO is to circulate the NI Equality Commission report to the SMT for information.’  Para 10.1 – add the word ‘issues’ after ‘operational’ on the first line.	<b>Secretariat</b>
<b>3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes</b>	There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.	
<b>4. Innovation in Employment Relations</b>		
<b>4.1 Generic Arbitration Scheme</b>	It was noted that the operational effectiveness of the Scheme continued to be monitored. Promotion of the Scheme continues to take place.	<b>DCA</b>
<b>4.2 Review of NI Employment Law</b>	It was noted that the Chairman, CEO and Board representatives met with the DEL Minister on 23 October. The Minister has now formally requested that the Agency should promote early neutral evaluation and PCC.  It was further noted that feedback on the monthly update provided by the Agency to the Review of NI Employment Law is very positive.	<b>Chair/CEO</b>  <b>CEO</b>
<b>4.3 Roundtable Discussion on NI ER</b>	It was noted that the Roundtable will be meeting with the DEL Minister on 9 January 2013. The Roundtable has agreed (1) meeting dates for 2013 and (2) to hold a Workshop focusing on three priority topics on 8 February 2013.	<b>Chair/CEO</b>
<b>4.4 International Agencies Meeting 2013</b>	It was noted that the International Agencies meeting will take place w/c 29 July 2013 with the LRA hosting a conference in Belfast on	<b>Secretariat</b>

<p>2 August. The Secretariat is currently sourcing venues for the Conference. The CEO is to met with Keran Mulvey CEO LRC to finalise arrangements for the visit and will be contacting the international representatives in relation to their participation in the conference. It was agreed to issue ‘hold the date’ notification to attendees early in the new year. The Board have established a sub-group to oversee the conference and will be holding their first meeting 16 January 2013.</p>	<p><b>CEO</b> <b>Secretariat</b> <b>Conf. Sub-Grp</b> <b>Secretariat</b></p>
<p><b>4.5 <i>Equality Awareness Report</i></b> The CEO is to circulate the NI Equality Commission report to the SMT for information.</p>	<p><b>CEO</b></p>
<p><b>4.6 <i>LRA/ECNI Joint meeting</i></b> It was noted that presentations were provided by both the LRA and ECNI and that full discussions took place between the organisations. Mention was also made of the possibility of benchmarking the functions of Corporate Services with those provided by ECNI.</p>	<p><b>Secretariat</b></p>
<p><b>4.7 <i>DEL Ministerial speeches</i></b> The SMT welcomed the recent speeches made at the Northern Ireland Assembly and the interest shown by the DEL Minister in the employment relations agenda. The SMT will be discussing how to take the broader agenda forward operationally.</p>	<p><b>Secretariat</b>  <b>CEO</b></p>
<p><b>5. Agency Strategy and Services</b></p>	
<p><b>5.1 <i>Corporate Plan 2011-14</i></b> Directors are to discuss strategic objectives for the Business Plan 2013-14 their section and forward comments to the Secretariat. The CEO indicated that a corporate planning process to determine the Corporate Plan 2014-17 and Business Plan 2014-15 is to commence in September 2013.</p>	<p><b>SMT</b></p>
<p><b>5.2 <i>Business Plan 2012-13</i></b> It was noted that the Board continue to receive the bi-monthly update and that the strategic issues therein are progressing.</p>	<p><b>CEO</b></p>
<p><b>6. Leadership Organisation and Performance Management</b></p>	
<p><b>6.1 <i>SMT Development Programme</i></b> It was noted that the CEO will be reviewing end of year (April 2013) performance with a view to reporting to the Board in August 2013.</p>	<p><b>CEO</b></p>
<p><b>6.2 <i>Cross Directorate Working Groups</i></b> Cross Directorate Working Groups continue to meet; one page briefs on the current position within each group have been submitted to the CEO. The DCS agreed to chair the IS/IT group in the absence of the DCA. It was agreed that the groups need to discuss and focus on vfm indicators.</p>	<p><b>DCS</b> <b>SMT</b></p>

<b>6.3 Performance Management</b>	The DCS has reviewed results from the survey on the performance management system and updated the procedural documentation. This has been provided to the SMT for further discussion.	<b>DCS</b>
<b>6.4 IiP – Staff Conference/Christmas event</b>	It was agreed that at the staff conference the CEO would provide an overview/year-end report on the Agency performance. Reports will also be provided by the 4 Cross Directorate groups on their function within the Agency.	<b>SMT</b>
	The Secretariat is currently sourcing venues for the staff conference in early 2013. It was agreed that the conference will be a half day event (morning).	<b>Secretariat</b>
<b>6.5 Flexible Working Policy (inc. Partial Retirement)</b>	The DCS is to circulate the current draft policy for SMT comment.	<b>DCS</b>
<b>6.6 Policy on Corporate Social Responsibility (inc. Charity Events)</b>	The DCS is to review the draft policy and circulate to the SMT for comment. It was noted that potential conflicts of interest may require attention.	<b>SMT</b>
		<b>SMT</b>
<b>6.7 Redundancy Policy</b>	It was noted that correspondence had been received from TUS with respect to moving the Redundancy Policy forward. The DCS is to incorporate Director comments and return the policy to TUS.	
<b>6.8 Recruitment Policy</b>	It was noted that further correspondence had been received from TUS and will be discussed by the SMT.	<b>DCS</b>
<b>6.9 Changes to 2012/13 Annual Report</b>	Under corporate governance arrangements it was noted that the CEO has asked for a rationalisation of the text and presentation of the Annual Report 2012/13. This is on-going.	<b>SMT</b>
<b>6.10 Feedback on Learning &amp; Development Plan</b>	It was noted that the Learning & development Plan was now available to staff.	<b>DCS/ERM</b>
<b>6.11 Equal Pay Audit</b>	It was noted that this has been delayed awaiting the implementation of the 2012/13 pay remit.	<b>DCS</b> <b>DCS/CEO</b>
<b>7. ICT</b>		
<b>7.1 IS Managed Services</b>	It was noted that the IS Managed Services tender is to be issued by	

CPD on 2 January 2013.	<b>DCS</b>
<b>7.2 Security Accreditation</b>	
The Agency has received final verification of security accreditation.	
It was noted that ICMS risk has been revised and reported to the Board.	<b>DCS</b>
<b>8. Evaluation</b>	
<b>8.1 PPEs</b>	
Work on PPEs is ongoing.	<b>SMT</b>
<b>8.2 SROI</b>	
It was noted that work on SROI is continuing with cross directorate support.	<b>DAS/TW</b>
<b>8.3 Value for Money</b>	
It was noted that the SMT will be giving consideration to focusing on indicators of efficiency.	<b>CEO/DCS</b>
It was noted that the Ecorys report on the Collective Conciliation service was well received by the Board and has been forwarded to the DEL Minister and DEL Committee for information.	
<b>9. Governance and Accountability</b>	
<b>9.1 LRA Funding 2012/13</b>	
It was noted that the Agency will encounter increasing difficulties with the fixed budget allocation.	<b>SMT</b>
<b>9.2 Statutory Compliance</b>	
It was noted that there is a need to review operational guidelines to take account of equality issues.	<b>SMT</b>
<b>9.3 Environmental Review</b>	
On-going. This is to be discussed at the next meeting of the SMT.	<b>SMT</b>
<b>9.4 MSFM</b>	
It was noted that the Board discussed the re-draft of the MSFM at their meeting on 25 October; the Chairman will be taking matters forward with DEL.	<b>Chair/CEO</b>
<b>9.5 'Black Book'</b>	
It was noted that TUS are reviewing the 'Black Book' proposals put forward by MS with particular reference to policies and procedures which are still 'live'.	<b>DCS</b>

## 10. Any Other Business

### 10.1 JNCC

It was noted that the meeting planned for 19 December has been postponed until late January; date to be agreed.

SMT/Sec

The CEO chaired the Health & Safety Committee on 11 December 2012.

### 10.2 Staffing

It was noted that:

- ✚ a staff notice was issued updating staff on recent organisation developments;
- ✚ the SMT agreed to seek expressions of interest from ERMs in respect of deputising for the DCA February-June 2013.

DCS

### 10.3 Promotion of Agency services

It was agreed, at the next informal SMT meeting, to discuss the promotion of Agency services.

SMT

### 10.4 Security

It was agreed to record appreciation to the security guard in remaining on the premises outside normal working hours owing to meetings taking place.

## 11. Date of Next Meetings

- ✚ Informal Meetings: - Thursday 3 January 2013  
Tuesday 8, 15, 22, 29 January 2013  
Tuesday 5, February 2013
- Formal Meeting: - Tuesday 12 February 2013