

**Labour Relations Agency  
Minutes of a Senior Management Team Meeting  
held on Monday, 13 February 2012 in Room 2, Gordon Street**

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

**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 19 December 2011</b> |   |                    |
|   | The minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2011 were agreed subject to the following amendments –   |                    |
|   | Para 4.6, line 2 – insert appropriate date.   |                    |
|   | Para 5.2.1 – move final para regarding the HR Strategy to become the second para under 6.3.   |                    |
|   | Para 8.1 – replace 5 <sup>th</sup> line with ‘It was noted that a job description was currently being prepared.’  | <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 Promotion of Pre-Claim Conciliation</b>  |                    |
|   | It was noted that while June 2012 will mark the year end for Board performance reports, the year end PCC report will be presented to the Board in August. | <b>DCA</b>         |
|   | <b>4.2 Generic Arbitration Scheme</b>   |                    |
|   | It was anticipated that legislation will now become effective from June 2012; however the timing of the launch remains undecided.                         | <b>CEO/DCA</b>     |
|   | <b>4.3 Code of Practice on Time Off for Trade Union Duties</b>  |                    |
|   | DEL has indicated that approval of the Code of Practice on Time Off may allow for an effective date in April 2012.  | <b>DAS</b>         |

#### **4.4 Review of Employment Relations LRA Seminar**

It was noted that preparations are well underway for the Agency's seminar on 'Employment Relations – The Future for Northern Ireland'. The seminar will take place on Thursday, 16 February 2012 at Riddel Hall, Stranmillis Road, Belfast. Speakers have been confirmed and approx 90 delegates have registered to attend the seminar. Agency staff and Board members will also be in attendance. It was noted that the DCS was currently tendering for PR support for the event.

**DCS**

**DAS/DCA**

Directors have agreed to provide literature for a display stand at the seminar. One speaker presentation has been received to date and will be printed for distribution to delegates. If further presentations are provided it may be possible to email these to delegates following the seminar.

**Secretariat**

**CEO**

It was noted that the review of NI employment relations arrangements was included in the 2012/13 Business Plan.

**CEO**

#### **4.5 Programme for Government**

It was noted that the Agency had responded to the Programme for Government on 19 December 2011.

### **5. Agency Strategy and Services**

#### **5.1 Corporate Plan 2011-14**

#### **5.2 Business Plan 2011-12**

It was noted that the Business Plan 2012/13 had been submitted to DEL on 6 February 2012. The Agency awaits DEL approval.

**CEO**

#### **5.2.1 ICMS**

The DCS confirmed that a new configuration of the existing ICMS was now in operation which offered sufficient resilience to secure the system until it is replaced (approx 2 years). A programme of work which will lead to system replacement has commenced and initial meetings have been held involving the IT Manager and users.

**DCS**

### **6. Leadership Organisation and Performance Management**

#### **6.1 SMT Development Programme**

It was acknowledged that the Board had agreed that the SMT Development Report would be submitted at the year-end (May Board) and at the half-year (November Board).

**CEO**

#### **6.2 Performance Appraisal**

It was noted that the few outstanding appraisals were to be followed up and completed.

**DIRS**

### **6.3 IiP**

It was noted that the Agency had received an excellent report leading to the award of IiP bronze status. The SMT is to arrange a meeting with Eddie Salmon to discuss the report and agree an action plan.

**DCS**

**CEO**

It was agreed that the Agency should acknowledge the contribution of staff in achieving the bronze award. The CEO is to discuss the format of such an event with the Chairman.

**DCS**

The SMT discussed the possibility of inviting a speaker from USEL or a similar organisation, who has achieved silver status, to address staff at the staff conference in Autumn 2012.

**Secretariat**

It was agreed that a copy of the IiP report should be provided to the Board.

## **7. Evaluation**

### **7.1 PPEs**

It was noted that the DCS will, in light of the IiP action plan, be submitting a revised HR Strategy to the Board by May 2012.

**DCS**

Following discussion the DCS indicated that guidelines for PPEs would be issued to all staff.

**DCS**

### **7.2 SROI**

It was agreed that the DAS contact DEL to enquire as to the current status of the revised business case.

**DAS**

### **7.3 Value for Money**

It was noted that the DCA has produced a questionnaire for the evaluation of mediation services; this is currently with the SMT for comment.

**SMT**

It was noted that the CEO will be drafting a value for money strategy for the Agency drawing together a number of strands which are already in process.

**CEO**

## **8. Governance and Accountability**

### **8.1 LRA Funding 2011-12**

It was noted that any surplus at the year- end would be less than 2% of the 2011/12 budget. Steps were being taken to reduce this surplus further through a series of VFM procurements that would require two short business cases for CEO approval. The purchases were for ICT hardware and software.

It was noted that the following projects would be in progress at the year end and would have to be accurately accrued (if not completed):

DCS

- ✚ New front door for Gordon Street;
- ✚ Refurbishment of toilets;
- ✚ Carpets for the Certification Office;
- ✚ Upgrades to meeting rooms.

It was agreed that the following procurements were to be noted for 2012/13:

- ✚ LRA Signage on both Gordon & Hill Streets;
- ✚ A new sign for the Regional Office;
- ✚ Carpeting for 1<sup>st</sup> floor;

## 9. Any Other Business

### 9.1 Redundancy Procedure

It was noted that MS and TUS are due to meet on 24<sup>th</sup> February to discuss the above procedure.

SMT

### 9.2 JNCC

It was noted that the next JNCC will take place on Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2012.

SMT

### 9.3 Recognition & Reward Strategy

It was noted that a revised Recognition & Reward Strategy was being progressed by the DCS.

DCS

### 9.4 Fundraising

It was agreed that in current exceptional circumstances staff in the Conciliation section could organise fundraising events.

DCA

### 9.5 Staffing

It was noted that the DCS is currently progressing vacancies at ERO grade.

DCS

It was also noted that a request for partial retirement was being progressed.

CEO/DCS

### 9.6 Inter-departmental groups

It was noted that 4 inter-departmental groups with SMT leads were being set up to cover (1) IS/IT (DCA) (2) Customer focus (DAS) (3) Organisational Relations PR/HR (DCS) and (4) Corporate Governance (CEO).

SMT

## 10. Date of Next Meetings

- Informal SMT – Mon, 27 February 2012  
Mon 5, 19, 26 March
- Formal SMT - Mon 2 April 2012