

Labour Relations Agency

Minutes of a Senior Management Team Meeting held on Tuesday, 23 February 2016 at 10.00 am

Present: Tom Evans
Penny Holloway
Gerry O'Neill

In Attendance: Alison Wolfe (Minute Secretary)

Item	Minute	Action
1.	<p>Apologies</p> <p>There were no apologies.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 January 2016</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January were agreed subject to the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Page numbers to be added ✚ Item 7, para 5, last line should read 'ERO' vacancy not 'ERM' ✚ Item 13 should read 'some proposed' amendments. 	Sec
3.	<p>Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes not listed on this Agenda</p> <p><i>Item 3 – 7.1 - Cross Directorate Working Groups</i> To be discussed following Board business planning day in February.</p> <p><i>Item 3 - 10 – Disability Action Group</i> The SMT agreed that the fire alarm should be tested weekly at 9.15am (Wednesday).</p> <p>SMT to discuss issues agreed at the recent Health & Safety meeting concerning fire drills. Set fire drills are carried out twice per year; DCS to check Fire Service protocol on holding randomised fire drills.</p> <p>Fire doors – it was agreed to have an independent assessor examine the fire door requirement in HQ and to assess which doors are fit for purpose. Doors may need to be repaired and labelled accordingly. SMT to discuss further.</p> <p><i>CEO/Directors Update</i> CEO to follow up on his meeting with Stephen Fey & Michael Dawson of Land & Property Services to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the rent review clause. LPS should be able to forecast the rent over a 5-year period.</p> <p>It was agreed that there was a need to establish a working group to</p>	<p>SMT</p> <p>DCS/Compliance Officer</p> <p>SMT/DCS</p> <p>SMT</p> <p>CEO</p>

<p>examine the Agency's physical accommodation requirements.</p> <p>Item 4 – OITFET MoU CEO to contact Eileen McBride, OITFET President, with a view to progressing the MoU.</p> <p>Item 4 – Self-Assessment Checklists DCA to respond to DAS re employment relations diagnostic tools self-assessment checklists.</p> <p>Item 6 liP Celebration event DCS and Roisin Bell will be attending the liP celebration event on 26 February in Belfast Castle.</p> <p>Finance & Personnel Sub-Committee A date for a meeting of the above Sub-Committee will be discussed at the Board business planning day on 25 February.</p> <p>It was noted that Andrew McCormick, Permanent Secretary of the new Department for the Economy, is unable to attend the Board business planning day.</p> <p>ICMS CEO, DCS and ISIT Manager met to discuss the business case which is now being progressed.</p> <p>Certification Office CEO to follow up his meeting with Sarah Havlin.</p> <p>Roundtable Presentations made by the DCA and Alan Scott, DEL at the last meeting of the Roundtable had been very well received. The meeting had been positive with queries raised by members of the Roundtable addressed by the DCA.</p> <p>CEO to raise the issue of a sub-committee of Roundtable members to look at good practice/skills with the DAS.</p> <p>Acas Chair and CEO will be visiting Acas on 1 March and meeting with Anne Sharp and Brendan Barbour to discuss areas of mutual interest.</p> <p>Resources paper CEO to progress.</p> <p>The Employment Bill The Bill reached the further consideration stage on 22 February and would now move to the final stage; a number of amendments had been proposed but few of these would impact on the Agency. CEO to seek an update from DEL.</p>	<p>SMT</p> <p>CEO/Sec</p> <p>DCA/DAS</p> <p>DCS/RB</p> <p>F&P/Sec</p> <p>DCS/ISIT Mgr</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>CEO/DAS</p> <p>Ch/CEO</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>CEO</p>
---	---

4.	<p>Business Plan 2015-16</p> <p>Business Plan Performance Report has been updated and will be included in papers to be tabled at the Board business planning event on 25 February.</p>	Sec
5.	<p>Annual Report & Accounts</p> <p>DCS to prepare a timeline for the production of the Annual Report and Accounts for inclusion in the Board papers; SMT to discuss the timeline at their next informal meeting. Draft accounts to be prepared for the auditors who are due to commence work in the Agency on 9th May.</p> <p>DCS to investigate possible change to the format of the Annual Report & Accounts in line with DEL/DFP guidance.</p>	DCS/SMT DCS
6.	<p>Board Meetings – Business Planning day 25 February</p> <p>The programme and papers for the Board business planning day had been issued.</p> <p>Induction session – CEO will introduce with Directors providing input on the role and function of each Directorate (Advisory, Conciliation, Corporate Services).</p> <p>Board meeting – essential business (Finance & timeline for the preparation of the Annual Report & Accounts). Chair/CEO to raise the question of a launch date for the Annual Report.</p> <p>It was noted that the new Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee was keen to hold 4 meetings during the year.</p> <p>Finance & Personnel Sub-Committee – date to be agreed at Board business planning day.</p> <p>Board Workshop – to be chaired by the Agency Chair. CEO will review performance 1 April 2015 – end January 2016; PEST analysis; Board to agree targets from current plan to roll forward (Conciliation).</p>	Sec CEO/Dirs Ch/CEO F&P Ch/CEO/Bd
7.	<p>Human Resource Issues</p> <p>Michael Riddell joined the meeting to discuss HR issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ ERO vacancies (2.5) in Belfast & Londonderry – reserve list would be used to fill vacancies in both locations ✚ ERM (1) Londonderry – reserve list could cover vacancies in Belfast ✚ Advertisements may indicate that the reserve lists may be used to fill vacancies arising as a result of the introduction of early conciliation ✚ MS keen to issue paperwork to TUS today for comment 	

	<p>ERO Vacancy</p> <p>The SMT had a robust discussion around the issue of whether the half ERO post was a job share or part-time post. It was agreed that the post was a job share post ('to share with an existing person'). The job description would be generic possibly with a footnote indicating that the job share would be expected to work 18.5 hours pw/hours could be flexible or could be as follows... Michael Riddell to look at wording for the advertisement.</p> <p>Application form to be worded to allow applicants to apply for full-time; part-time or both.</p> <p>It was agreed that should a successful candidate decline an offer of employment in a particular location they would reserve the right to remain on the merit list.</p> <p>"A reserve list will be created and will be used to fill posts that arise in Belfast or Londonderry for a period of time."</p> <p>ERM Vacancy</p> <p>The SMT agreed that any reserve list which may be created from the current vacancy in Londonderry would be used to fill any subsequent vacancies in either Belfast or Londonderry.</p> <p>If an applicant indicated that they were interested in both the full-time and part-time posts and were offered a post but declined it, they would remain on the merit list.</p> <p>From a resourcing point of view it indicated the importance of having more time to use a reserve list.</p> <p>The SMT agreed that they needed to be clear about the definition of part-time/reduced hours; technically the Agency should be asking current members of staff who job share or work part-time hours if they would be interested in a full-time post.</p> <p>DCS and Michael Riddell to tidy up paperwork and indicate to TUS that they will ensure no-one in post will suffer.</p> <p>There were a number of issues around competencies; Michael Riddell to produce paperwork and CEO will decide whether 4 or 5 competencies should be included.</p> <p>ERO paperwork to be issued to TUS today. ERM paperwork to be issued for comment.</p> <p>It was agreed to expedite the adverts; to advertise before Easter with 3 weeks response time allowed. Interview panel will comprise CEO, DCA and either DCS or DAS.</p>	<p>MR</p> <p>MR</p> <p>SMT</p> <p>DCS/Michael Riddell</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>DCS/MR DCS/MR</p>
--	---	---

8.	<p>Finance Issues</p> <p>Capital spending plan is dependent on the refurbishment project which is currently being progressed with a view to completion in the current financial year.</p> <p>Draft projections have been prepared by the Finance Officer & DCS.</p> <p>The CEO commended the staff in the finance section for their work throughout the year.</p> <p>Budget forecast to be provided for the Board business planning day.</p> <p>Finance Officer preparing a chart based on the budget and the current establishment figure.</p> <p>Information to be prepared based on current establishment figures broken down by grade/current vacancies along with information on temporary staffing arrangements to allow the SMT to take a decision on which vacancies to fill.</p> <p>There was a need for the Agency to distinguish between its baseline budget and that required for early conciliation.</p>	<p>DCS</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>DCS/FO</p> <p>FO/SMT</p>
9.	<p>Stakeholder Engagement</p> <p>A programme for stakeholder engagement on early conciliation will be required should the Employment Bill pass through the Assembly.</p>	<p>SMT</p>
10.	<p>Risk Register</p> <p>CEO has forwarded an agenda for the next meeting of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee to the DCS for comment. It was noted that there may be a sequencing issue around internal audit.</p> <p>CEO and DCS to discuss the Risk Register. There was an expectation on the SMT to review the Risk Register prior to each A&RAC meeting. Theoretically risks should indicate whether actions have been undertaken and completed or not.</p> <p>Page numbers to be added/typos to be corrected.</p> <p>Following discussion around the role of the CEO and the A&RAC, the CEO clarified that the role of the Internal Auditor and the A&RAC was to provide him with assurance.</p> <p>The SMT discussed the preparation and issue of papers for the A&RAC. It was agreed that this was a function of Corporate Services/DCS.</p> <p>SMT to review and consolidate the Risk Register with individual risks allocated appropriately. Directors emphasised that it was important</p>	<p>CEO/DCS</p> <p>CEO/Directors</p> <p>DCS</p> <p>DCS</p>

	<p>to know who was responsible for individual tasks and to have work allocated on a timely basis e.g. SMT to review the Risk Register one month in advance in order to have it well prepared.</p> <p>The Risk Register was quite an unwieldy document and it was within the remit of the SMT to decide on appropriate wording. While some risk titles had changed the nature of the business remained the same and some risks would continue to be relevant over a period of time.</p>	SMT
11.	<p>IS/IT Priorities</p> <p>A lot of operational issues and quite a lot of catch up on CMRS.</p> <p>SMT discussed whether or not to employ 3 students from Belfast Met to carry out project work for the Agency. A further project had been identified which may assist the Advisory section's interface with CMRS and giving individual employers access to vet their documents.</p> <p>The SMT discussed the conditions around the project work i.e. reimbursing the students; supervision requirements. The DCA felt it important that the Agency understood Belfast Met's expectations around supervision. For students to have a meaningful experience there had to be an element of them meeting the requirements of the project. There was a responsibility on the Agency to ensure that the students had a good experience here. ISIT Manager to look at whether the students would work as a team or individually. It was agreed to employ 2 students in the meantime; SMT to look further at the web idea.</p> <p>The DCA reported that there were still problems with CMS which weren't being addressed mainly due to the SFW contact not being available. There were also problems with Phase 2. DCA to document the problems for DCS. If SFW weren't delivering this was now a procurement issue – CEO or DCS to contact SFW informally if necessary.</p>	<p>DCS/ISIT Mgr</p> <p>DCA/DCS</p> <p>DCS/CEO</p>
13.	<p>ISO27001 Accreditation</p> <p>Short meeting to be arranged to discuss business continuity requirements as in the Business Plan – DCS to minute. 6 month follow up review due to be undertaken by Intertec.</p>	SMT/ISIT Mgr
14.	<p>CEO/Directors Update</p> <p>Scanning project due to commence.</p> <p>Workload in IC remains an issue. Two EROs had returned from sick leave, one has commenced a phased return (Belfast office). One AO is currently off on long term sick leave. An ERM was on leave due to a family bereavement. Staff in the section were under a lot of pressure; the backlog was rising again.</p>	<p>DCA</p> <p>DCA</p>

	<p>The CEO reported on his positive meeting with Marie Therese McGivern, Belfast Met to discuss work placements and to look at ways of promoting the Agency. As Belfast Met run their own media courses Ms McGivern suggested that she ask the Head of Department to talk to the Agency about promotional apps. There may also be an opportunity for the Agency to assist Belfast Met with skills training for non-HR managers.</p>	CEO/SMT
14.	<p>NI & GB Employment Relations Developments</p> <p>None to report.</p>	DAS
15.	<p>AOB</p> <p>None</p>	
16.	<p>Date of Next Meetings</p> <p>Informal – Tuesday, 2, 9, 16 February Formal – Tuesday, 23 February</p> <p>Meetings will be held in the CEO’s office at 10.00 am.</p>	