

Labour Relations Agency

Minutes of a Senior Management Team Meeting held on Thursday, 28th January 2016 at 10.00 am

Present: Tom Evans
Penny Holloway
David McGrath
Gerry O'Neill

In Attendance: Alison Wolfe (Minute Secretary)

Item	Minute	Action
1.	Apologies There were no apologies.	
2.	Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 December 2015 The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December were agreed.	Sec
3.	<p>Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes not listed on this Agenda</p> <p>Item 3 – 7.1 - Cross Directorate Working Groups To be discussed following Board business planning day in February.</p> <p>Item 3 - 10 – Disability Action Group The CEO chaired the AGM of the Health & Safety Committee on 12 January; minutes to be copied to Directors. Testing of the fire drill to be discussed at SMT.</p> <p>Item 3 - 13 – CEO/Directors Update 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 examine the Agency's physical accommodation requirements.</p> <p>Item 4 – OITFET MoU Meeting to be arranged with OITFET President to review MoU.</p> <p>Item 4 – Self-Assessment Checklists DCA to respond to DAS re employment relations diagnostic tools self-assessment checklists.</p>	<p>SMT</p> <p>DCS/SMT</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>SMT</p> <p>CEO/DCA</p> <p>DCA/DAS</p>
4.	Business Plan 2015-16 Directors to look at the status of objectives and what residual efforts	

	can be made to deliver on targets for the year end. CEO will review work throughout the year at the Board business planning day on 25 February. It was agreed to set realistic targets for the 2016/17 year. To be discussed further at informal meeting on 2 February.	SMT
5.	<p>Annual Report & Accounts</p> <p>DCS to produce a timeline, as discussed at the Board meeting on 21 January. The timeline will sequence inputs from Board, A&RAC, Directors, tender process etc and will commence in mid-February and run until the accounts are laid before the Assembly. To be discussed further at informal meeting on 2 February.</p> <p>DCS to investigate possible change to the format of the Annual Report & Accounts in line with DEL/DFP guidance. DCS to forward email to CEO.</p>	<p>CEO/DCS</p> <p>DCS</p>
6.	<p>Board Meetings – Action Points from 29 October/26 November 2015 meetings</p> <p>liP – meeting dates proposed 8 & 11 February – date to be confirmed.</p> <p>CEO to discuss attendance at the liP Celebration event on 26 February with the Chair. Possible staff attendees would be those most involved in the liP preparation work – R Bell, M O’Brien and M Blaney. DCS to check RSVP date.</p> <p>Finance & Personnel – CEO had a very positive meeting with Albert Mills, new Chair of the F&P Sub-Committee. Agreed that the Committee would agree a standard agenda for F&P meetings. It was suggested that the new ERM in Corporate Services should attend SMT meetings to discuss HR issues and also provide a presentation at the next F&P meeting on the HR approach. Date to be arranged for a meeting of the F&P Sub-Committee in March.</p> <p>Chair has written to Andrew McCormick inviting him to join the Board at their business planning meeting on 25 February to talk about the new Department and how he envisages it will relate to the Agency.</p> <p>SMT to discuss their presentations for the business planning day.</p> <p>ICMS – CEO to meet with DCS and IT/IS Manager to discuss latest draft of the Phase 2 business case.</p> <p>CEO reported that he had a positive meeting with Sarah Havlin on 26 January to discuss revisions to the MoU between the Agency and the Certification Office. Will follow up to ensure the new MOU is adopted asap.</p> <p>Roundtable – next meeting 5 February at which a presentation on early conciliation will be made by the Director (Conciliation &</p>	<p>Sec</p> <p>CEO/DCS</p> <p>CEO/HR ERM</p> <p>Chair</p> <p>Ch/CEO/SMT</p> <p>CEO/DCS/IS/IT Manager</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>CEO/DCA</p>

	<p>Arbitration) along with a presentation on the Employment Bill/early case management process by a DEL representative.</p> <p>The Employment Bill – the CEO reported that the Employment Bill has now passed through both the formal and informal Committee stages and in mid-February will go to the consideration stage at the Assembly. The CEO confirmed that the Committee’s proposed Early Conciliation Review amendment will be adjusted to deal with the Agency’s concerns about analysis by individual case; also that DEL amendment to neutral assessment clauses will delay any introduction of Neutral Assessment and negate the need to complete a feasibility study.</p> <p>Acas – Chair and CEO will be visiting Acas on 1 March 2016. Directors to provide briefing notes on some of the issues Acas face on early conciliation and on advisory issues.</p> <p>Resources paper – agreed at Board; business case can now be prepared on the basis of the analysis. DCA to forward slides in electronic format to DCS. Some issues have been raised by Alan Scott; CEO to chat with DCA and Alan.</p> <p>SMT to consider at the next informal SMT meeting the Board’s proposal that there is a need to provide appropriate training/support for staff to help them cope with the pressures/changes arising from the introduction of EC. The SMT agreed to take this forward as a matter of priority recognising that these changes will put significant pressure on the organisation outside of the normal learning and development plan.</p> <p>Appraisals/PLDPs – when the CEO joined the Agency it was agreed that Directors would use the objectives in the business plan 2015/16 as the basis of their FJPs for the year. CEO to speak to Chair about signing off Director appraisals for y/e 31 March 2015.</p> <p>DCA to forward ERM appraisals to CEO for countersignature; DCS and DAS to forward outstanding appraisals from their sections.</p> <p>CEO reported that he has held very positive meetings with some ERMs to discuss their appraisals. ERMs were positive about cross directorate working. SMT to give consideration to how all ERMs can contribute to corporate objectives. It was acknowledged that the past year has been a year of transition for the Agency.</p> <p>South Africa paperwork to be issued/signpost return on investment documentation.</p> <p>CEO to meet Evelyn Collins re joint meeting.</p>	<p>SMT</p> <p>CEO/DCA/DCS</p> <p>DCS/DCA</p> <p>SMT</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>Directors</p> <p>SMT</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>CEO</p>
7.	Human Resource Issues	

	<p>Michael Riddell joined the meeting to discuss HR issues and to seek SMT comment on his draft HR Strategy document. It was acknowledged that there will be a significant amount of recruitment/HR development activity; all of which needed to be carried out efficiently. Michael advised that he is already assessing whether the current HR reporting systems are fit for purpose. He confirmed that a demonstration on a HR system called PAMS is being arranged and that SMT members would be invited.</p> <p>Michael also suggested that the SMT may wish to explore online recruitment with a view to creating a platform which would be appropriate for the next 5-10 years to support workforce/succession planning requirements.</p> <p>An application had been received from Neill Wallace to extend his period of secondment - agreed. CEO to respond to email. Paddy-Ann Moore to be advised that her temporary period of promotion would be extended.</p> <p>Recruitment - CEO confirmed that DEL has agreed that the Agency may now progress with recruitment to existing vacancies. Directors will be meeting with Michael Riddell on 1 February to discuss the JD for the ERO vacancy.</p> <p>It was agreed that SMT should review the duration of all existing temporary arrangements to align with the programme of external recruitment.</p> <p>In the interim, Helen Smyth's period of temporary promotion had been extended and staff in the Regional Office would be reporting to the DCA and Helen.</p> <p>Advisory section was adjusting their workload accordingly to deal with the ERM vacancy in the section. It was noted that some targets may not be met due to the 20% shortfall.</p> <p>The CEO will attend team meetings in February to assure staff that the Board and SMT were aware of the impact of carrying vacancies and that measures are now being taken to fill any gaps.</p> <p>Directors thanked Michael for his presentation which they found very useful and looked forward to further discussions. Some issues would require engagement with TUS and some language needed to be more straightforward and understandable. Directors to provide feedback on the draft HR Strategy</p> <p>CEO confirmed that he would like Michael to become a business partner for the 4 main business areas of the Agency.</p> <p>SMT to agree way forward in relation to HR/Health and Wellbeing as this will be considered at the next F&P meeting.</p>	<p>CEO/DAS</p> <p>DAS</p> <p>Directors/Michael Riddell</p> <p>SMT</p> <p>DAS</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>Directors</p> <p>Michael Riddell</p> <p>SMT</p> <p>DCS</p>
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	Nita Clarke – Engaging for Success (IPA) slides to be forwarded to CEO.	
8.	<p>liP</p> <p>It was agreed that the HR strategy/plan will be informed by the liP report and any issues that come out of the upcoming meeting with the Assessor planned for February.</p>	
9.	<p>Finance Issues</p> <p>Finance issues were fully reported to the Board on 21 January. Critical issues to be addressed were premises and IT.</p> <p>It was noted that the Agency was yet to receive an indication of the budget for 2016/17.</p>	<p>DCS</p> <p>CEO</p>
10.	<p>Stakeholder Engagement</p> <p>The next meeting of the Roundtable would be held on 5 February.</p> <p>As reported above, presentations on early conciliation and the Employment Bill will be made by the Director (Conciliation & Arbitration) and by a DEL representative.</p>	<p>CEO/Sec</p> <p>CEO/DCA</p>
11.	<p>Risk Register</p> <p>At their meeting on 3 December the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee accepted the Risk Register subject to the merger of risks 4 & 5. Final version of the Risk Register to be forwarded to Directors. Recommendations to be scanned and forwarded to Directors.</p> <p>The CEO and DCS had reported on records management. The CEO envisaged two key issues arising, namely the development of a dedicated records management policy covering both hard copy and electronic data and the updating/approval of the existing draft 2012 Retention and Disposal Policy. The CEO indicated that his intention would be to have both issues resolved before the end of the financial year and included in the governance statement of the Annual Report – to be discussed at SMT and CEO to discuss with Chair of the A&RA Committee</p> <p>ASM Governance Review – Ruairi Blee to meet with Directors.</p> <p>Register of Interests for staff – there was a need to put in place a protocol that this should be updated annually.</p> <p>A&RAC – next meeting 2 March at 2.30 pm. CEO to meet with the Chair of the A&RAC. Records management to be added to Risk Register.</p>	<p>CEO/DAS</p> <p>CEO/Directors</p> <p>SMT</p> <p>DAS</p> <p>CEO</p>

12.	<p>IS/IT Priorities</p> <p>Getty Images notification re unauthorised use of photograph – form of words provided to respond to Getty Images latest correspondence.</p> <p>The SMT had identified Phase 2 and the website as priority issues. An urgent priority was to embed changes to the case management system before the end of the year. Phase 1 testing was currently being carried out.</p> <p>Additional development work will be required if the Employment Bill is passed. Paul Herink was examining contingency planning. Quarterly reports from SFW will go to the ISIT group, along with reports from Kelway.</p> <p>Some testing was underway on the new website. It was acknowledged that the structure of the new website was different and there was a need to ensure that all information was successfully migrated.</p> <p>While clients were able to book seminars/workshops online work further work required.</p> <p>CEO to arrange a meeting with representatives from Belfast Met re the arrangements for a work placement student to look at the detail of an app for the Agency.</p> <p>Monthly meetings have been arranged to review the ISIT Strategy. Draft strategy to be circulated to SMT for consideration.</p>	<p>CEO/DCS</p> <p>DCS</p> <p>DAS</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>SMT</p>
13.	<p>ISO27001 Accreditation</p> <p>No information security ISO 27001 issues were raised. A full review will be undertaken at the next meeting prior to the 6 month follow up review to be undertaken by Intertec.</p>	<p>ISIT Manager</p>
14.	<p>CEO/Directors Update</p> <p>IC remains busy with non ET1s. Figures provided by Paul Herink to be updated to include bulk claims; DCA to forward final figures.</p> <p>Advisory section are commencing planning for the 2016/17 events programme with consideration being given to including awareness sessions on Early Conciliation from September 2016 (programme would be issued around May 2016).</p> <p>FE project on vocational courses – case study materials being developed with a view to delivering these in early February.</p> <p>CEO will be meeting Marie Therese McGivern, Principal of Belfast Met,</p>	<p>DCA</p> <p>DAS</p> <p>DAS</p> <p>CEO</p>

	<p>to discuss current projects with the Met.</p> <p>Annual Monitoring Return request not yet received from ECNI.</p> <p>NASUWT exhibition stand – Saturday, 26 February - Advisory staff will be attending; DCA to ask for volunteers among her staff.</p> <p>NIC-ICTU Conference, April – CEO to attend.</p> <p>Pay remit – no response from DEL re pay remit – CEO to follow up.</p> <p>Equal Pay – some proposed amendments in the Employment Bill.</p>	<p>DAS/DCA</p> <p>CEO/Sec</p> <p>CEO</p>
14.	<p>NI & GB Employment Relations Developments</p> <p>The impact of the UK Government’s proposed Trade Union reform and how it will impact on the work of the Certification Officer. Agreed that it is unlikely to be implemented here in Northern Ireland</p>	<p>DAS</p>
15.	<p>AOB</p> <p>None</p>	
16.	<p>Date of Next Meetings</p> <p>Informal – Tuesday, 2, 9, 16 February</p> <p>Formal – Tuesday, 23 February</p> <p>Meetings will be held in the CEO’s office at 10.00 am.</p>	