

Labour Relations Agency

Minutes of a Senior Management Team Meeting held on Wednesday, 1 July 2015 at 2.00 pm

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

In Attendance: Alison Wolfe (Minute Secretary)

Item	Minute	Action
	<p>At the outset of the meeting the CEO informed Directors that he had received a letter from DEL indicating that the Agency should begin planning for a 10% reduction in the 2015-16 budget. The CEO had advised the Agency Chair about the letter and would be emailing Board members to advise them.</p> <p>After some discussion it was agreed to seek clarification from DEL regarding any lead in time to a possible reduction in the budget; would any reduction be proportional to the residual budget at that time; would the Agency have access to the same financial support arrangements as other parts of central government.</p> <p>Directors to prepare an up-to-date forecast of expenditure and highlight options/implications. It was also agreed to revisit the documentation prepared when a similar indication was received from DEL in 2014.</p>	<p>CEO</p> <p>Dir's</p>
1.	<p>Apologies</p> <p>There were no apologies.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 May 2015</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 26 May were agreed.</p>	Sec
3.	<p>Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes not listed on this Agenda</p> <p><i>Item 3 - 4.4 – International Agencies Meeting 2015</i></p> <p>The Agency awaits information from the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation & Arbitration (CCMA), South Africa regarding arrangements for the 2015 International Agencies</p>	

	<p>meeting. Secretary to look at flight costs to Johannesburg & Cape Town.</p> <p>Item 3 - 7.1 – Cross Directorate Working Groups It was agreed that at their next meeting the SMT would discuss and agree the requirement for Cross Directorate Working Groups.</p> <p>Item 3 - 10 – Disability Action Group CEO to chair the next meeting of the Health & Safety Committee which will be held in July.</p>	<p>Sec</p> <p>SMT</p> <p>CEO</p>
4.	<p>Business Plan 2015-16</p> <p>The Business Plan was being issued to staff via team meetings.</p> <p>Staff performance appraisal documentation has been issued with mid-September as the return date for FJPs.</p> <p>In preparation for the completion of Director appraisals the CEO referred to the targets set out in the Business Plan. Secretary to organise individual appraisal meetings for CEO/Directors.</p> <p>It was noted that the review of learning outcomes of seminars and briefings delivered by the Agency (Objective 9) was complete; this will be reflected in new events programme. DCS to confirm the target date (Objective 15).</p> <p>It was noted that the SMT are to agree a revised format for the bi-monthly performance report to the Board which is due in August.</p>	<p>SMT</p> <p>CEO/Dirs/Sec</p> <p>DAS DCS</p> <p>SMT</p>
5.	<p>Annual Report & Accounts</p> <p>It was noted that, in order to finalise the Annual Report & Accounts, the Agency awaited the Certificate and Report from the Comptroller & Auditor General. The report will then be laid before the Assembly.</p> <p>The CEO indicated that the Report was very positive and expressed his appreciation to all those involved in the preparation of the Annual Report & Accounts.</p> <p>Tenders had been sought to print the Annual Report and Account; one tender was received and would be reviewed in due course.</p>	<p>CEO/DCS</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>DCS/Sec</p>
6.	<p>Board Meetings – Action Points from 25 June 2015 meeting</p> <p>Action points from June Board meeting to be issued to Directors for</p>	

	<p>follow-up.</p> <p>The Board had approved the Annual Report and Accounts.</p> <p>The presentation on the Dynamic Employment Law Landscape had been very well received by the Board who expressed their appreciation to those concerned.</p> <p>It was agreed that the SMT look at possible future presentation topics e.g. ICMS, liP re-assessment. CEO to discuss timing of the next presentation with the Chair.</p> <p>It was agreed to send an email to all staff advising them that the 'All Staff' address had been removed from general use and in future would only be available to named officers. Anyone seeking to send an 'All Staff' email should ask their Director for permission.</p>	<p>Sec</p> <p>CEO/DAS</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>Sec</p>
7.	<p>Human Resource Issues</p> <p>(a) In light of the earlier discussion around the Agency budget the CEO requested sight of the aggregated cost of 'acting up' within the Agency. Also look at the cost of Agency staff on a monthly basis. Directors are to examine all the available options and look at how to put staff resources to best use. The possibility of a shared clerical section was also mentioned.</p> <p>(b) OHS – to be discussed at the next SMT meeting.</p> <p>(c) CEO to speak to the Certification Officer regarding the flexibility of EO staff in the CO undertaking supervisory duties in the General Office. SMT to look at staffing in the Certification Office.</p>	<p>SMT</p> <p>SMT</p> <p>CEO/SMT</p>
8.	<p>Finance Issues</p> <p>See note above.</p>	
9.	<p>Stakeholder Engagement</p> <p>The CEO reported on a very positive meeting of the Roundtable on 30 June. A further meeting is planned for late August along with a presentation from the President of OITFET on their new system. The Roundtable was keen to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ meet with DEL Permanent Secretary re the restructuring of departments; ✚ host a Masterclass for the Employment Relations Institute to visit NI to talk about their work; ✚ hold an away half day to discuss priorities for the Roundtable. 	<p>CEO/Ch</p>

	<p>Directors raised the question of whether or not the Agency should be financing Roundtable events.</p> <p>The Chair and CEO also held a very positive meeting with the President of the Industrial Tribunals, Eileen McBride. The President had suggested that OITFET were keen to speak about early neutral evaluation. The CEO indicated that the Agency could give a presentation on the early conciliation process.</p>	CEO
10.	<p>IS/IT Priorities</p> <p>A meeting of the ICMS Steering Group will take place on Thursday, 2 July at 11.30 am. It was noted that the most critical item of business was preparation for the re-assessment of ISO27001 which was due by 27 August. DCS to re-issue his proposal on how to approach re-assessment on an organisation-wide basis - SMT to discuss.</p> <p>It was agreed that the business planning objective should read September rather than June for the project to be fully embedded. (This was in the last minutes and may tie in with Item 4, para 4)</p> <p>As there was some discord about items placed on the Intranet it was agreed that the IS/IT group could discuss governance issues around such items.</p>	SMT DCS
11.	<p>CEO/Directors Update</p> <p>Legal Island has requested Mark McAllister to give two talks at events they are organising – agreed.</p> <p>CEO to respond to DAS email requesting £150-£200 to run a business support advice clinic in association with other organisations (Equality Commission, INI, UU, Belfast City Council, HMRC, Science Park etc). The cost will be divided equally between the partners. It was agreed that participation in this project would be invaluable and would help to raise the profile of the Agency.</p> <p>Holiday pay cases – the Agency had received a request from DEL to provide statistics on holiday pay cases. It was noted that the request would be time consuming and that some information could also be gleaned from OITFET. Helpline can provide some statistics; DCA to discuss the request with her team and report back to CEO.</p> <p>Coaching – Directors to advise HR of the names of their ‘champions’.</p>	DAS CEO/DAS DCA/CEO Dir's

	Correspondence from Margaret Ritchie, MLA – response provided; conciliation section are progressing the issue.	DCA
12.	<p>NI & GB Employment Relations Developments</p> <p>See above – update provided at June Board meeting and slides available on the Intranet. A factsheet is also available highlighting the differences in NI and GB. Information will also be highlighted in the new events programme. Conciliation section are looking at where they can make a contribution to the factsheet.</p>	
13.	<p>AOB</p> <p>The DCA expressed the view that staff in her section had carried out an inordinate amount of work recently in terms of carrying on as normal whilst at the same time developing the new case management system. There had also been changes in personnel within the section. The sheer volume of work in preparing for the new system had taken a lot of staff time and resource. The DCA was grateful to the DAS for releasing a member of his staff to assist in the work. It was agreed that it was appropriate for the DCA to recognise the efforts made by her staff.</p> <p>It was also noted that Helpline were currently short staffed and trying to maintain performance levels.</p>	<p>DCA</p> <p>DAS</p>
14.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Informal – Tuesday, 21, 28 July Informal – Tuesday, 4, 11, 18 August Formal – Tuesday, 25 August </p> <p>Meetings will be held in the CEO’s office at 10.00 am.</p>	