

**MINUTES OF THE 416th MEETING OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY BOARD HELD AT
10.00 am ON THURSDAY, 19th MAY 2016
IN THE AGENCY'S OFFICES, GORDON STREET, BELFAST**

Present: Marie Mallon (Chair)
Louise Crilly
Deirdre Fitzpatrick
Michelle McGinley
Alison Millar
Albert Mills
Jill Minne
Daire Murphy

In Attendance: Tom Evans Chief Executive, (CEO)
Penny Holloway (Director, Conciliation & Arbitration, (DCA))
Gerry O'Neill (Director, Corporate Services, (DCS))
David McGrath (Director, Advisory Services, (DAS))
Alison Wolfe (Minutes Secretary)

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| <p>1. Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received from Pauline Shepherd and Gary McMichael.</p> | |
| <p>2. Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>There were no interests declared.</p> | |
| <p>3. Chair's Opening Remarks</p> <p>The Chair welcomed John Davin, Baker Tilley Mooney Moore, and Paul Cassidy, the Agency's Finance Officer.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that the meeting would focus on a number of essential end year matters including consideration of the draft 2015-16 Annual Accounts and final clearance of the 2016 -17 Business Plan. The Chair also advised that the June meeting would focus primarily on the clearance of the Annual Report and Accounts; also that a meeting of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee is scheduled for 14 June to receive Internal Audit's annual assurance report and the NIAO's Report to those Charged with Governance based on External Audit's scrutiny of the draft accounts.</p> | |
| <p>4. 2015-16 Annual Accounts - Presentation by John Davin, Baker Tilly Mooney Moore</p> <p>Mr Davin, in presenting the draft accounts highlighted a number of minor changes to the format of the Annual Report & Accounts as required by DFP's financial reporting manual (FReM). He also reported that the External Auditors had now completed their preliminary fieldwork and that no major issues had arisen. Some minor adjustments still to be made to the accounts. Mr Davin indicated that the increase in staff costs was due mainly to increased pension costs and that it was</p> | <p>DCS/Finance Officer</p> |

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| <p>important to note that expenditure had not exceeded the Agency's resource allocation. Mr Davin responded to a number of questions from Board members.</p> <p>The Board recognised that the Agency was structurally underfunded. The CEO referred to the ongoing complex and detailed budget management process required to ensure that the budget was fully utilised but also to avoid an excess vote situation. The CEO explained that the budget review meetings with TUS were helpful in this regard.</p> <p>There was a discussion around the potential impact of Board member training on the budget. The CEO emphasised the importance of supporting a development programme for Board members and staff to enable them to fulfil their roles within budget constraints. The Chair indicated that Board members had confined themselves to governance training and that there is merit in examining collective training opportunities. The Chair was encouraged to see that the Agency was investing in staff, including provision for training around early conciliation. It was agreed that, as part of the regular HR reports received by the Board, it would be useful to quantify staff training for the Finance & Personnel Sub-Committee who would then report to the Board.</p> <p>The Board thanked John Davin and Paul Cassidy for the work in preparing the draft accounts and commented that it was pleasing that no major issues had been raised by External Audit.</p> | ERM (HR) |
| <p>5. Minutes of 28 April 2016 Meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2016 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> | Secretary |
| <p>6. Matters Arising from 28 April 2016 Minutes</p> <p>6.1 CIPFA Governance Standard</p> <p>The CEO is to make contact with some of the organisations involved in the CIPFA pilot scheme and report back to the Board in June. The CEO will also examine other available models.</p> <p>The Chair had recently sought the views of Kieran Donnelly, Comptroller and Auditor-General, on a corporate governance standard and awaited his response.</p> <p>6.2 CMRS – Phase 2 Specification</p> <p>The DCS reported that the Phase 2 specification was progressing. As indicated at the April Board meeting the Phase 2 specification for CMRS would cover the residual functions of Advisory Services only with the HR requirements being taken forward under a separate bespoke tender process. Approval had been granted for a business case for the HR process which is now being progressed separately.</p> <p>6.3 Programme for Government (PfG) workshop</p> <p>The CEO reported on his attendance at the recent PfG workshop which confirmed the Executive's commitment to an outcomes approach. The CEO confirmed that a consultation on a draft PfG framework document will issue shortly and that it would be important to work closely with our sponsor Department before finalising its response and in terms to ensure that the Agency's future business planning process is consistent with the PfG. The CEO will keep the Board apprised of any progress.</p> <p>The CEO also reported on a recent meeting with Jackie Kerr, the Director</p> | <p style="text-align: center; vertical-align: top;">CEO</p> <p style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">Chair</p> <p style="text-align: center; vertical-align: bottom;">DCS/DAS</p> <p style="text-align: center; vertical-align: bottom;">CEO</p> |

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| <p>responsible for the DfE sponsor team. Ms Kerr supportive of the Agency's work and particularly the Agency's facilitation of the Roundtable. She has agree to join the Roundtable at their away day on 27 May 2016. It was agreed to invite Jackie Kerr to a future Board meeting.</p> <p>6.4 Board Sub-Committees It was noted that the next meeting of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee will be held at 2.30 pm on Tuesday, 14th June.</p> <p>Arrangements were being finalised for meetings of the Finance & Personnel Sub-Committee and the Research Committee.</p> <p>6.5 Employment Bill - Early Conciliation Business Case The CEO reported that the Early Conciliation Business Case is being adjusted to take account of constructive comments received from the sponsor department's economists. The CEO confirmed that the sponsor Department is aware of the need to progress the business quickly but also advised the Board that the approval processes are necessarily very robust given the total value of the business case.</p> | <p>CEO/SEC</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>CEO/DCS</p> |
| <p>7. Board Member Training/Appraisals</p> <p>The Chair reported that, as a member of the Chairs' Forum, she had attended a focus group hosted by Kieran Donnelly to look at practical ways to aid board effectiveness in areas such as composition, operation, training and development and evaluation. One of the issues raised concerned the lack of young people and females on Boards.</p> <p>The CEO reported on a meeting with Eileen Mullan, Strictly Boardroom, to discuss whether the Agency would be willing to take part in a Boardroom Apprentice programme. The Board confirmed that they are supportive in principle but would want to reserve any final decision until the detail of the scheme is available. The CEO agreed to bring this issue back to the Board when he receives a written proposal.</p> <p>The Board discussed the merits of strategic boardroom leadership training programmes. It was agreed that the Chair and CEO would explore the various delivery options.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Board members for their input to the appraisal process. The Chair reported that her own appraisal meeting is scheduled for 24 May.</p> | <p>CEO</p> <p>Chair/CEO</p> |
| <p>8. Finance Issues</p> <p>8.1 Budget Performance to end April 2016 The DCS reported on spend for the first month of the year with resource expenditure slightly higher than the forecasted position with capital expenditure slightly lower. The DCS explained that this was probably due to year end accruals and that a more meaningful assessment will be available at the end of the first quarter.</p> <p>From September 2016 the Agency it was hoped to be able to start profiling in the additional resource for early conciliation.</p> | <p>DCS</p> |

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| <p>9. HR Issues – Human Resources – Update Paper (Paper 3/16)</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Michael Riddell, HR Manager, to the meeting to update the Board on human resource issues.</p> <p>Michael thanked the Board for their feedback on the draft HR People Strategy which is now being incorporated into the Strategy and reported the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • positive feedback had been received from staff who had attended the recent resilience training with a further session to be held for all IC staff which would hopefully deal with work pressure issues in that section; • a range of metrics including absence statistics being developed for reporting initially to the Finance & Personnel Sub-Committee and then to the Board; • considering possible venues and key themes for a Staff Conference in the Autumn. The Chair indicated that it was important to seek the views of staff and trade union colleagues. <p>The CEO advised Board members that a number of key events would be taking place in the Autumn, namely the annual public meeting and lecture; staff conference and the 40th anniversary of the Agency. Consideration needed to be given to organising the events which could be used to showcase the Agency. The CEO reported that he had asked staff via team meetings for their ideas as to how the anniversary should be celebrated.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Michael Riddell for a comprehensive update.</p> | <p>DCA/ERM (HR)</p> <p>DCS/ERM (HR)</p> <p>SMT/ERM HR</p> |
| <p>10. Business Plan Performance Report for 2016/17</p> <p>The CEO advised Board members that in line with the normal business plan performance reporting cycle a paper would be prepared for the Board meeting in June.</p> <p>In the absence of a formal performance report the CEO highlighted the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Relations Manager and Employment Relations Officer recruitment programmes well advanced and recruitment to the Executive Officer grade commenced; • Work with local government continuing; • SMT will clear a new Records Management Policy along with the Disposal and Retention Schedule at its next formal meeting. Much of this work is being taken forward in conjunction with ISO27001; • Business case for Phase 2 of the new case management records system being progressed; and • The Agency has now commissioned the Department of Finance’s Land and Property Service to initiate discussions with the Landlord regarding the due rent review. The CEO undertook to keep the Board informed of progress. | <p>SMT</p> <p>SMT</p> <p>CEO</p> |

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| <p>11. Draft 2016/17 Business Plan (Paper 4/16)</p> <p>The CEO referred to the draft Business Plan which had been revised in line with Board comments at the April Board meeting. The CEO had shared the draft with DfE who had suggested some minor amendments. The Board approved the final draft for submission to the Department.</p> | <p>CEO</p> |
| <p>12. Any Other Business</p> <p>The DCS reported that the Board self-assessment process was now complete and the information would be forwarded to the auditors. It was agreed to forward the analysis to Board members for information and to examine the outcomes at the Board away day later in the year.</p> | <p>DCS/Sec</p> |
| <p>13. Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the Agency Board will take place on Thursday, 23rd June 2016 at 10.00 am in the Agency's offices, 2-16 Gordon Street, Belfast.</p> | <p>Secretariat</p> |

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