

**Labour Relations Agency
Minutes of a Senior Management Team Meeting
held on Monday, 22 October 2012 in Room 2, Gordon Street**

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

In Attendance: Alison Wolfe (Minute Secretary)

	Minute	Action
1. Apologies	There were no apologies.	
2. Minutes of Meeting held on 21 August 2012	The minutes of the meeting held on 21 August 2012 were agreed.	
3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes	There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.	
4. Innovation in Employment Relations		
	4.1 Generic Arbitration Scheme	
	It was noted that the launch of the Generic Arbitration Scheme on 27 September at Riddell Hall was very successful. Work was now underway to promote the Scheme.	DCA
	4.2 Review of NI Employment Law	
	It was noted that the Chairman, CEO and Board representatives will be meeting the Minister on 23 October in relation to responses to the DEL Discussion Paper on the Review of NI Employment Law.	Chair/CEO
	4.3 Roundtable Discussion on NI ER	
	The second meeting of the Agency's key stakeholders took place on 12 October. The meeting addressed the following items (1) the DEL Review of Employment Law (2) ER Research in NI (3) LRA statistics on dispute resolution and (4) Mediation.	CEO
	4.4 International Agencies Meeting 2013	
	The CEO is to contact the LRC regarding the joint hosting of the International Agencies meeting 2013.	CEO
	4.5 Skill Exchange Hub	
	It was noted that a skills exchange hub is now in place in NI. The Agency is to be the main contact for employment relations information and advice.	DAS

- 4.6 Equality Awareness Report**
The CEO is to circulate the NI Equality Commission report to the SMT for information. **CEO**
- 4.7 BIS Consultation Documents**
It was noted that BIS have produced a number of employment consultation documents which the CEO will be discussing with the Chairman. **CEO**
- 4.8 DEL Employment Law Booklets**
The CEO to raise the ownership of the ER Booklets at the next DEL/LRA quarterly meeting. **CEO**
- 4.9 LRA/ECNI Joint meeting**
It was noted that the joint LRA/ECNI Board meeting will take place on Wednesday, 7 November at Equality House. Items on the agenda will include updates on employment law, equality law and the Agency statutory generic arbitration scheme. **SMT**
- 5. Agency Strategy and Services**
- 5.1 Corporate Plan 2011-14**
It was noted that no matters had arisen regarding the Agency Corporate Plan 2011 – 14.
- 5.2 Business Plan 2012-13**
It was noted that IC/arbitration evaluations are being progressed as set out in the Business Plan. **DCA**
- It was noted that the CEO will be proposing to the Board that Objective 6 which involves contacting individual trades unions, employers and their representative bodies, is stayed until the ER Roundtable establishes a working agenda. **CEO**
- 6. Leadership Organisation and Performance Management**
- 6.1 SMT Development Programme**
It was noted that the SMT will be reviewing and updating performance indicators. **SMT**
- 6.2 Cross Directorate Working Groups**
The SMT agreed to meet on 30 October to review the progress made by the Cross Directorate Working Groups; each member of the SMT is to prepare a one page brief on the current position within their group. **SMT**
- 6.3 Performance Management**
The DCS had issued the report on the outcome of the staff survey to the SMT. It was noted that while Management had some concerns about the current format of the staff appraisal form the majority of staff were content with it. The SMT went on to discuss the benefits of

completing the forms electronically. **SMT**

6.4 *IiP – Staff Conference/Christmas event*

It was noted that:

- a Board/staff event will take place on 20 December **SMT/Sec**
- the Secretariat are currently sourcing venues for a staff conference in early 2013 **Secretariat**
- the CEO will discuss the timing of the staff conference and of the proposed seminar with the Chairman **CEO**
- the SMT will discuss a topic/s for the staff conference **SMT**
- the SMT is to address a strategic approach for IiP. **SMT**

6.5 *Policy for reductions in hours (Partial Retirement)*

The SMT agreed to meet to discuss a specific request for partial retirement. **SMT**

6.6 *Policy on Charity Events*

The SMT agreed to draft a policy statement on charity events as part of the Agency's social responsibility agenda. It was agreed to take note of the Bribery Act in this regard and to establish corporate social responsibility as a standing item on the SMT agenda. **DCS**

6.7 *Redundancy Policy*

The CEO is to provide comments on the draft policy to the DCS. **CEO**

6.8 *Recruitment Policy*

The DCS is to circulate the current draft containing the amendments proposed by TUS for SMT discussion. **DCS**

6.9 *Changes to 2012/13 Annual Report*

It was noted that the Agency will be required to incorporate financial reporting standards into the Management Commentary in the 2012/13 Annual Report. These will set out the management view on current performance and the future direction for the Agency. The DCS is to forward statutory guidelines to the CEO. **DCS/CEO**

Under corporate governance arrangements it was noted that the CEO has asked for a rationalisation of the text and presentation of the Annual Report 2012/13. **CEO/ERM**

6.10 *Feedback on Learning & Development Plan*

It was noted that the 2012/13 Plan had been issued to the SMT for comment. **SMT**

6.11 *Equal Pay Audit*

It was agreed that in order to maintain the momentum on the equal pay audit the Agency's statistics should be anonymised and forwarded to NISRA. **DCS**

7. ICT

6.1 *IS Managed Services*

It was noted that the IS Managed Services specification has been submitted to CPD for tendering purposes. The Agency awaits an update on progress.

DCS

6.2 *Security Accreditation*

A favourable review had been received from the security auditor. The Agency now awaits final verification of the security accreditation.

DCS

It was noted that the Audit Committee has asked for the level of risk on ICMS to be reviewed.

DCS

8. Evaluation

8.1 *PPEs*

Work on PPEs is ongoing.

SMT

8.2 *SROI*

It was noted that the SROI contract has been awarded to 'Just Economics'. Preliminary meetings have taken place between Just Economics and Agency staff.

DAS/TW

8.3 *Value for Money*

It was noted that the staff commendation correspondence continued to be very positive. The CEO will be progressing the demonstration of Agency VfM with a view to determining the matters to be taken forward in the 2012-13 business plan. The DCS will be progressing unit costing.

CEO/DCS

It was noted that the internal auditors will be with the Agency on 1 November.

SMT

9. Governance and Accountability

9.1 *LRA Funding 2012/13*

It was noted that in his recent staff briefings the CEO had raised the issue of the negative impact of fixed Agency funding on the permanent filling of posts. The SMT agreed to meet on 8 November to discuss the budget position.

SMT

9.2 *Statutory Compliance*

It was noted that the DCS is emphasising the inclusion of equality parameters in all schemes. It was agreed that there is a need to include equality as a dimension of the corporate planning process.

SMT

9.3 Environmental Review

It was noted that the recent environmental review of the Agency had highlighted issues such as heating, lighting and energy. The SMT agreed to discuss the report in more detail at an appropriate informal meeting.

SMT

9.4 MSFM

It was noted that a re-draft of the MSFM will be discussed at the Board meeting on 25 October.

CEO

9.5 'Black Book'

It was noted that the 'black book' (Staff Handbook) was withdrawn and that outstanding matters were being taken forward through the revision and assimilation of policies and procedures as agreed at JNCC.

SMT

10. Any Other Business

10.1 JNCC

It was noted that there were no operational issues arising from the NIPSA notice of industrial action.

CEO

The next JNCC is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 19 December 2012.

Secretariat

The CEO will be attending the Health & Safety Committee on 11 December 2012.

CEO

10.2 Staffing

It was noted that:

- ✚ the successful ERO (job-share) had commenced employment on 5 September;
- ✚ the successful EOII (Conciliation) had commenced employment on 17 September.

10.3 Promotion of Agency services

It was noted that both the Advisory and Conciliation sections are continuing to promote their services at relevant events.

DAS/DCA

11. Date of Next Meetings

- ✚ Informal Meetings: - Tuesday, 30 October 2012
Monday 5, 12, 19 November 2012
Tuesday, 27 November 2012
Monday 3, 10, December
- ✚ Formal Meeting: - **Monday, 17 December 2012**