

**MINUTES OF THE 438th MEETING OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY BOARD HELD AT
11.00 am ON THURSDAY, 30th AUGUST 2018
IN THE AGENCY'S REGIONAL OFFICE, 1-3 GUILDHALL STREET, LONDONDERRY**

Present: Marie Mallon (Chair)
Louise Crilly
Michelle McGinley
Gary McMichael
Jill Minne
Daire Murphy

In Attendance: Tom Evans Chief Executive, (CEO)
David McGrath (Director, Employment Relations Services (DERS))
Don Leeson (Director, Corporate Services (DCS))
Alison Wolfe (Minute Secretary)

Action

<p>1. Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received from Alison Millar, Albert Mills, Deirdre Fitzpatrick and Pauline Shepherd.</p>	
<p>2. Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>There were no conflicts of interest declared.</p>	
<p>3. Chair's Opening Remarks</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Alison Wolfe on her return from absence and thanked Wendy Halligan for deputising as Board Secretary during Alison's absence.</p> <p>The Chair also welcomed Patrick McAuley who will be making a presentation on Regional Office developments. The Chair confirmed that as part of the wider transformation process ERMs, as members of the SMT, are being encouraged to attend the full Board meeting when they are scheduled to present on specific topics.</p> <p>The Chair reported that there was no progress with regard to Board member appointments. The Chair outlined the current position regarding terms of office and thanked Board members for accepting extensions offered by DfE. The Chair indicated that she would raise the Board's concerns about lack of progress on appointments with Noel Lavery prior to his attendance at the November Board meeting.</p> <p>The Chair outlined the agenda for the meeting.</p>	<p>Chair/CEO</p>
<p>4. Minutes of 21 June 2018 Meeting (Paper BP01-08/18)</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2018 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>
<p>5. Matters arising from the Minutes of 21 June 2018 Board meeting (Paper BP02-08/18)</p> <p>The DCS introduced the Board Actions progress report, the following matters were discussed:</p>	

<p>5.1 Pay Award The DCS confirmed that the 2017 pay award had been included in August salaries.</p> <p>5.2 Agency Logo The DCS indicated that the new Communications Manager will attend the September Board meeting to present a draft Communications Plan and outline key activities for the year. It was anticipated that the new corporate branding will be launched at the public Board meeting in October.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the Progress Report.</p>	DCS
<p>6. Learning and Development of Board Members (Paper BP03-08/18)</p> <p>The Chair introduced the Board Learning and Development paper which had been informed by the recent self-assessment exercise and individual appraisal meetings with Board members. The paper structured Board learning and development under the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Induction ii. Governance training and development iii. Core business, particularly ER/IR models iv. Ad hoc training on emerging issues v. Team development <p>The Board in approving the paper agreed that much of the Board's learning and development can be delivered through the planned Board workshops and the Board's annual planning workshop.</p>	
<p>7. Chief Executive's Update</p> <p>7.1 Business planning The CEO updated the Board on his attendance at the June 2018 DfE workshop at which the Department provided briefing on the Economy, Brexit, Outcome Delivery Plans and budget considerations. The CEO also presented a paper setting out the implications of a 5% cut that had been requested by DfE.</p> <p>The CEO advised that the SMT are having a workshop in October on Outcome Delivery Plans facilitated by the Executive Office.</p> <p>7.2 FOI Request The CEO briefed the Board on an FOI request relating to an Independent Appeal hearing.</p> <p>7.3 Correspondence to Alastair Hamilton The CEO tabled recent correspondence to Alastair Hamilton on the work being taken forward by the Agency in collaboration with INI and Derry and Strabane District Council. The CEO acknowledged Patrick McAuley's significant contribution in taking this initiative forward. Patrick reported that the Agency had received a number of direct new business referrals as a result of this work.</p> <p>7.4 Staffing The CEO reported the outcome of a number of recruitment competitions at the ERM grade and thanked Board members for their involvement on the selection panels. Board members were impressed by the pool of talent within the Agency.</p>	SMT

<p>7.5 Mediation NI The CEO reported on a meeting with Mary Lynch, Director of Mediation NI to discuss the UU/Mediation NI LLM course in International Commercial Law and ADR. The CEO will be attending mediation training in the new year.</p> <p>7.6 Mental Health Champion The Agency has now signed up to the ECNI Mental Health Charter and a member of staff has signed up as a mental health trainer. Meeting to be arranged to take this forward to involve Gary McMichael, the Board's Mental Health Champion.</p> <p>7.7 Roundtable Michael Gould, DfE, will brief the Roundtable meeting on 10 September on the Skills Strategy consultation. The CEO to attend a skills strategy event on 12 October 2018 hosted by DfE.</p> <p>7.8 International Agencies Meeting The Chair and CEO will be attending the International Agencies meeting in London on 8-12 October.</p> <p>7.9 DfE Review of Organisational Structures The CEO reported on his meeting with DfE officials as part of the organisational review of DfE.</p> <p>7.10 WRC Arrangements are being made for Board members to meet with WRC Council members on 9 or 16 November. Board members to confirm availability.</p> <p>7.11 Senior Management Team The CEO confirmed that the newly formed SMT are becoming more engaged in management decisions; Directors continue to hold regular meetings with their ERMs.</p> <p>7.12 Cardiff Business School The DERS reported on progress with the Acas/Cardiff Business School research project which is looking at how companies manage workplace conflict. The Agency is contributing to the project and has met with Cardiff Business school to refine the questionnaire. A sample of 3,500 private sector companies employing more than 20 people have been identified to take part in the survey.</p> <p>7.13 Conference Request The DERS reported on a request to organise a conference focusing on whistleblowing. The Board agreed that the Agency could not facilitate because of resource constraints.</p>	<p>DCS</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>DERS</p>
<p>8. Update on Roundtable and other Stakeholder meetings</p> <p>8.1 DfE Meeting The Chair reported on a recent meeting with Colin Jack; funding, outcomes approach to service delivery and early conciliation were the key issues discussed. The Board will consider these matters at the next workshop.</p> <p>The CEO confirmed that the business case had been cleared by the DfE Casework Committee and is now with the Permanent Secretary before being submitted to DoF. The Agency still unclear, in the absence of a Minister, if DfE are able to progress the commencement of regulations. An EC Project Board meeting arranged for 19 September.</p> <p>The Chair reported that Colin Jack was very positive about the work of the Agency and supportive of the Board's general approach.</p>	

<p>8.2 Innovation Lab The Chair reported she will be part of a project group looking at ALB sponsorship.</p> <p>8.3 NED leadership development programme Work on a leadership development programme for NEDs is being progressed.</p> <p>8.4 Roundtable The Roundtable skills sub-group met on 26 June to discuss the planned ER/IR a conference. The next meeting of the Roundtable scheduled for Monday, 10 September.</p>	
<p>9. Business Plan Performance Report (Paper BP04-08/18)</p> <p>The DCS confirmed that all key targets are being met. The SMT are currently developing a statistical framework for frontline services which will highlight year-on-year trends. A presentation will be made at the September Board meeting.</p> <p>The DERS reported that DfE have asked the Agency to draw up a delivery plan in the event of a 'no deal' Brexit. Enquiry Point staff are monitoring Brexit queries to identify types and volumes of queries and what will happen post 31 March 2019.</p> <p>The new Agency events programme has been launched and the team are currently refreshing the topics.</p> <p>Patrick McAuley reported on the newly-developed Certificate in Effective Line Manager Practice which arose out of his work with Invest Northern Ireland. Places on the initial course are fully booked with a further session planned for Spring 2019. The Board acknowledged that this is a very positive development which could be further enhanced if the Certificate course was accredited. The CEO suggested that aligning to the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) may be a way forward.</p> <p>The Board recognised that the success of this initiative may create resource pressures and that there may be a need to consider some cost recovery options as opposed to hard charging. It was agreed to discuss further at the business planning day in 2019.</p> <p>The DERS reported that the Agency was conciliating in a number of collective disputes. Currently about 30% of resources are taken up in handling Non-ETs and the Agency is keen to record all areas of work in the performance report and to examine how Non-ETs are handled. This will be included in the statistical framework described above.</p> <p>The CEO reported that a dedicated ERM resource is needed to progress Strategic Theme 2; however this is constrained by lack of funding. The CEO has had further discussions with ILO about the development and promotion of a principles-based ER model and will explore with DfE potential collaboration on research issues.</p> <p>A staffing issue in Civica led to delays in the completion of Phase 2 of the CMRS system project; however it is anticipated that the residual work will be completed by the next Board meeting.</p>	<p>SMT</p> <p>DERS</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>SMT</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>IT Manager</p>
<p>10. Finance Matters</p> <p>10.1 2018-19 Budget Allocation The Agency has yet to receive formal notification of its budget allocation for 2018-19.</p> <p>10.2 Management Accounts to 31 July 2018 (Paper BP05-08/18)</p>	

<p>The DCS introduced the Management Accounts for the period up to 31 July 2018. Small underspend largely due to delayed start dates for new staff and a slight adjustment to maintenance costs.</p> <p>The Board noted the report.</p>	
<p>11. Regional Office – Future Developments (Presentation by Patrick McAuley)</p> <p>Patrick McAuley gave a presentation on a potential new service delivery model for the Regional Office and how that related to the accommodation requirements. The Board endorsed the recommendation that accommodation for the Regional office should continue to include meeting rooms to deliver both advisory and dispute resolution services.</p> <p>The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked Patrick for his presentation.</p>	<p>DCS/ Regional Office ERM</p>
<p>12. Any Other Business</p> <p>The Chair outlined the key milestones of the next 2 Board meetings and other external events.</p> <p>September: A workshop covering 2 elements; presentation on developments/trends in the advisory and dispute resolution services; and a presentation on some of the papers presented to the Roundtable linked to the Taylor Review.</p> <p>October: General governance meeting followed by the annual public meeting focussing on the importance of ER/IR, and signposting the Roundtable’s ER/IR 2019 conference. Possible speakers, Colin Fenwick, ILO, or Brendan Barber, Acas along with a joint presentation from Trade Unions and Employers.</p> <p>International Agencies Conference: hosted by Acas in London, 8-12 October.</p> <p>Visit to WRC, Dublin: tbc 9 or 16 November.</p> <p>Noel Lavery to attend the Board meeting on 22 November.</p>	<p>SMT</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>Chair</p>
<p>13. Closed Session</p> <p>The Board met in closed session to discuss a confidential staffing matter.</p>	
<p>14. Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the Agency Board will take place on Thursday, 27 September 2018 at 10.00 am in the Agency’s Offices, 2-16 Gordon Street, Belfast.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>