

LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY

**MINUTES OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING OF THE FINANCE &
PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY
HELD AT 11.00 AM ON WEDNESDAY, 12 MAY 2010
IN ROOM 1, 2-8 GORDON STREET, BELFAST**

Present: Mr Jim McCusker (Chairman)
Mrs Patricia O'Farrell
Mr Neal Willis
Mrs Brenda Maitland
Mrs Sally McKee

In Attendance: Mr William Patterson (Chief Executive)
Dr Gerry O'Neill (Director Corporate Services)
Mrs Anne Gunning (Minutes Secretary)

Minute

Action

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 10 February 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2010 were proposed by Patricia O'Farrell, seconded by Neal Willis and agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters Arising from Minutes

There were no matters arising.

4. Finance (*Refer to tabled draft Accounts; Corporate Services April Data*)

4.1

It was noted that the budget out-turn had been discussed at the previous joint meeting of the Audit and F&P Committees. The DCS confirmed that the spend for 2009/10 was 7-8% more than last year, but the Agency ended the year with a larger balance in the bank. The accounts are progressing well at the minute with no apparent difficulties regarding format.

It was noted that the Agency's budget for 2010/11 has not yet been confirmed by

DEL. There is some speculation that with the change in Government, there could be a review of public expenditure. It was agreed that when the Agency receives more information, it will be decided whether or not it would be helpful to contact the Department regarding this year's budget.

4.2 Budget 2010/11 (Letter J Ingram; extract from 2010/11 Business Plan)

The letter from June Ingram re the LRA anticipated carry-over of funds into the 2010/11 financial year was discussed. It was noted that -

- £282k can be called down when submitting the Business Plan.
- Further £280k also available, but with-held.
- DEL concerned that the application for carry-over written before the commitment of money for accommodation.
- CEO agreed to respond to letter that Agency is pressing on with accommodation and will be submitting the business case for additional refurbishment when received from construction services.

CEO

It was also noted that the IT business case for £50k was submitted to DEL some weeks' ago. A new contract is to be updated.

5. Personnel and Staffing

5.1 Equal Pay

The Agency is awaiting legal advice on equal pay as to whether or not it is liable on these matters.

5.2 iIP - Continuous Improvement Programme Update

The Committee discussed the iIP Re-accreditation Action Plan for the first quarter to 1 June 2010. It was noted that iIP re-accreditation is scheduled for November 2010.

It was agreed that the Agency is taking a comprehensive approach.

5.3 Other HR Matters

- *Current Vacancies*

Position noted.

- *Absence*

It was noted that the overall average for the last financial year was 5.2%.

- There was a discussion re the number of people acting up to posts in the Agency. It was noted that the longest of these was the temporary

IS/IT Manager post which was created in 2009. It is hoped to have this made a permanent post. It was further noted that several of the acting up posts have been brought about by maternity leave. It was agreed that acting up posts should be for as short a time as possible.

6. Accommodation

It was noted that some of the staff from Corporate Services Department will be moving to Unit 1 the following week. It is anticipated that the refurbishments of the current office space will begin in September 2010.

7. IS/IT Strategy

It was noted that –

- A number of staff have been identified to constitute a project action team. However, there has been a problem diverting staff from operations to the project team.
- This should be a high priority IS/IT Strategy.
- The temporary IS/IT Manager is currently drafting a contingency plan while the upgrading of the case management system is being progressed. It will be tested to ensure that it runs with the Agency's procedures in July/August. It is anticipated that this will be carried out annually.
- Security accreditation is making progress.
- A risk assessment policy and procedure is being drafted by the IS/IT Manager.
- BT is to upgrade the technical structure.
- The upgrading of the IS management service contract has been delayed and a new contract has been written. This will be more explicit in terms of the case management system and is moving forward.

8. CEO Annual Appraisal

The Committee discussed CEO's appraisal 2008/09 and salary in closed session.

9. Any Other Business

- *Procurement*

It was agreed that it would be useful to have a paper prepared for the Board on the procedure for procurement which would set out the procurement policy criteria and would demonstrate that the financial threshold limits are being followed. It was also suggested that the Audit Committee ask the Auditors to look at this as part of their programme on the procurement process.

CEO

DCS

10. Date of Next Meeting

As it was noted that the date of the next meeting of the Finance & Personnel Sub-Committee coincided with the 2010 TUC Conference, it was proposed that the Board re-consider the date at the next Board Meeting.

Chairman

It was agreed that a Board paper would be produced for the next Board Meeting which would set out all the proposed Board and Sub Committee meeting dates for the rest of 2010 for consideration by the Board.

CEO