

**MINUTES OF THE 389th MEETING OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY
BOARD HELD AT 10.30 am ON THURSDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2013
IN THE AGENCY’S OFFICES, 1-3 GUILDHALL STREET, LONDONDERRY**

Present: Jim McCusker (Chair)
Lyn Fawcett
Alison Millar
Albert Mills
Trevor Morrow
Sally McKee
Gordon Parkes
Neal Willis


In Attendance: Bill Patterson (Chief Executive)
Gerry O’Neill (Director, Corporate Services)
David McGrath (Director, Advisory Services)
Alison Wolfe (Minutes Secretary)

Action

<p>1. Apologies</p> <p>There were apologies from Pauline Shepherd, Gary McMichael and Penny Holloway.</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 29 August 2013</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 29 August 2013 were proposed by Lyn Fawcett, seconded by Neal Willis, and agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
<p>3. Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes not listed on this Agenda</p> <p>5.3 Bi-Monthly Management Report – 1 April-31 July 2013 (Paper 26/13)</p> <p>Following concerns raised by the Board in August contact had been made by the CEO and the DCS with DEL regarding the ICMS business case. The ICMS business case had not, as yet, been approved by DEL. The CEO has contacted DEL requesting a meeting in order to resolve outstanding queries.</p> <p>It was noted that the ICMS Steering Group had held an inaugural meeting and established terms of reference. The ICMS Project Team inaugural meeting was being arranged.</p> <p>Board members expressed concern at the delay with the ICMS Business case approval. It was agreed that the Chairman contact DEL in order to ensure that speedy progress was made with the approval of the business case. ICMS remained a high risk for the Agency as recorded in the Agency Risk Register.</p>	<p>CEO</p> <p>Chairman</p>

<p>4 Chairman's Business</p>	
<p>4.1 Declarations of Interests</p> <p>No interests were declared by members.</p>	
<p>4.2 Board Member Training</p> <p>The Chairman recently attended a Chairs' Forum briefing on the political situation.</p> <p>The Chairman highlighted a forthcoming launch by Capita of 'Engage for Success' – an event for those interested in employee engagement. It was agreed that the Chairman and Albert Mills will attend the launch on 3 October at Capita, Belfast.</p>	<p>DCS</p>
<p>4.3 Update on Stakeholder Meetings</p> <p>The Chairman reported that the ER Roundtable 10 September had decided to hold a confidential 2-day residential conference on 7 & 8 November to discuss issues arising out of the DEL Consultation on Employment Law Review. The topics for discussion were (1) early resolution of disputes (2) settlement agreements (protected conversations), (3) the qualifying period for unfair dismissal, (4) the length of consultation period for collective redundancies and the future of employment relations in NI. Speakers were being contacted for the event. A business case will be put to DEL for funding the event.</p> <p>It was noted that the Roundtable members were positive about joint projects and very positive about the performance of the Agency.</p> <p>Board members expressed the view that it would be helpful, at a future date, to have an ACAS speaker address the Board regarding the ACAS perspective on settlement agreements.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Chair/CEO</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Chair/CEO</p>
<p>4.4 DEL/LRA Management Statement/Financial Memorandum</p> <p>The Chairman reported that he awaits a reply to his correspondence of 22 April.</p>	
<p>4.5 LRA Seminar 5 September 2013</p> <p>It was agreed that the Chairman write to Maxine Murphy-Higgins expressing the Board's appreciation of her presentation at the LRA Seminar on 5 September.</p> <p>Board members discussed the seminar attendance profile. The seminar had been well attended. It was agreed that in future the topic, the timing of an event and the background of the speaker were to be given more consideration as it appeared that these aspects significantly influenced the attendance profile. Following further discussion it was agreed that Board member attendance was</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Chairman</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Chair/CEO</p>

important for such public events.	
<p style="text-align: center;">4.6 Joint LRA/EC Meeting – 12 November 2013</p> <p>The CEO is to contact Evelyn Collins regarding the joint meeting agenda. Topics for discussion include the DEL Review of Employment Law, specifically the re-routing of tribunal claims and early neutral assessment.</p>	CEO
<p style="text-align: center;">4.7 Public Board Meeting – 19 November 2013</p> <p>Professor Linda Dickens has agreed to give the LRA public lecture 19 November at the Spires Conference Centre, Belfast. The lecture will take place at 12.15 pm (tbc), followed by the launch of the Agency’s Annual Report and lunch.</p> <p>It was agreed to hold the October and November Board meetings as scheduled.</p>	CEO/Sec
<p>5. Research Committee Meeting</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5.1 Research Committee meeting held on 25 October 2012 (Paper 27/13)</p> <p>The minutes of the Research Committee meeting held on 25 October 2012 were ratified by the Board.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5.2 Meeting held on 29 August 2013</p> <p>It was reported that the Research Committee had discussed the DEL(McClure Watters) report aspects of which had been included in the DEL consultation document on the Review of Employment Law.</p> <p>Board members expressed disappointment at the lack of response to the postgraduate partnership. Appreciation was expressed to Trevor Morrow and Niall Cullinane for their work in trying to promote the partnership.</p>	
<p>6. Chief Executive’s Business</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">6.1 Corporate Plan 2014-2017</p> <p>The SMT provided a presentation to inform Board discussion on the strategic direction to be taken by the Agency 2014-2017. The SMT outlined the work undertaken since 2011 setting out potential strategic themes for 2014-2017.</p> <p>After extensive discussion it was agreed that the CEO prepare a first draft Corporate Plan 2014-17 for the October Board meeting. It was agreed to hold a Board business meeting on the morning of 31 October and to address the draft Corporate Plan 2014-17 in the afternoon. Alternative arrangements are to be made for the Audit Committee meeting which was scheduled to take place following the Board meeting on 31 October.</p>	CEO DCS

<p>6.2 DEL ER Consultation – Draft Agency Response (Paper 28/13)</p> <p>The Board discussed the draft Agency response to the DEL Review of Employment Law consultation document and agreed various changes. A second draft is to be submitted to the October Board meeting.</p> <p>It was also agreed that where questions had resource implications for the Agency the resource issue would be covered in a separate commentary.</p>	<p>CEO</p>
<p>6.3 SMT Response to SROI</p> <p>The SMT are considering the implications of progressing SROI the results of which are to be incorporated into the Corporate Plan 2014-17.</p>	<p>CEO</p>
<p>6.4 DEL/McClure Watters Report (Executive Summary & Recommendations)</p> <p>It was agreed to indicate to DEL that the Agency will be taking into account the DEL (McClure Watters) Report in its response to (1) the DEL Review of Employment Law consultative document and (2) will also be taking account of report in preparing the LRA Corporate Plan 2014-17.</p>	<p>CEO</p>
<p>6.5 Code of Conduct for Staff (Paper 29/13)</p> <p>Board members approved the Code of Conduct for Staff subject to the following amendment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Item 10.1 – bullet point 2 – add ‘as set out in legislation’ before ‘and in the Agency’s Financial Memorandum and Management Statement’. <p>Item 6.1 – it was noted that ‘mal-administration’ refers to any complaints that are under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner for Complaints.</p>	<p>CEO</p>
<p>6.6 Employment Law Agenda</p> <p>The contents of the table were noted.</p>	
<p>7. Corporate Correspondence Received Relevant to Board</p> <p>No correspondence was received.</p>	
<p>8. Any Other Business</p> <p>No other business received.</p>	
<p>9. Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, 31 October 2013 at 10.00 am in Gordon Street.</p>	

An apology was noted from Alison Millar.

It was agreed to email all Board members to confirm arrangements for the October Board meeting and the cancellation of the Audit Committee meeting scheduled for 31 October.

Secretariat