MINUTES OF THE 452nd MEETING OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY BOARD HELD AT 10.30 am ON THURSDAY, 23 JANUARY 2020 IN THE AGENCY'S OFFICES, GORDON STREET, BELFAST

| Present: | Marie Mallon (Chair) Louise Crilly Michelle McGinley Alison Millar Albert Mills Jill Minne | |
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| | Daire Murphy | |
| In Attendance: | Tom Evans Don Leeson Mark McAllister Alison Wolfe Grainne Ni Cheallaigh | Chief Executive, (CEO) Director, Corporate Services (DCS) Director, Employment Relations Services (DERS) Minute Secretary Boardroom Apprentice |

Members of the Board met 'in-camera' prior to the formal commencement of the meeting. The key points from this discussion recorded at Agenda item 10 – Board Effectiveness.

| | Action | |
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| 1. Apologies | | |
| Apology received from Deirdre Fitzpatrick and Gary McMichael. | | |
| Albert Mills had indicated that he would be late arriving for the meeting. | | |
| 2. Conflicts of Interest | | |
| No conflicts of interest declared. | | |
| 3. Chair's Opening Remarks | | |
| The Chair welcomed Colin Lewis and Colin Jack, DfE, to the meeting. The Chair confirmed that the Board would like an understanding of the Department/Executive's thinking on the following issues; ALB review; timeline for the publication of the PfG and impact on annual/corporate planning; policy issues arising out of New Decade, New Approach document; budget position; Partnership Agreement, Board appointments and EU exit. | | |
| The Chair then outlined the business for the meeting. | | |
| 4. Update from DfE Officials | | |
| Colin Lewis, supported by Colin Jack provided a comprehensive analysis of the likely direction of travel in relation to the priorities identified by the Board, the following issues were noted; | | |

| Any review of ALBs will focus on making the public service more effective and efficient, and that the Agency is already seen as an essential part of the business regulation infrastructure; Unlikely that a PfG will be published in the near future but that the Agency should continue its existing OBA-approach to business/corporate planning; There will again be a one-year budget settlement and the Department will seek to cover the Agency's pay and price increases on top of a flat-line budget allocation for 2020-21; Also confirmed funding for the Agency's labour market conference in September; The financing of many of the initiatives referenced in the NDNA document still to being agreed, any additional resource likely to be allocated to health and education; Colin Lewis thanked Board members for their commitment and for accepting a number of extensions to their term of office, and confirmed that work on recruitment competitions to appoint new Board members could now proceed; Colin Jack indicated that DfE should be able to launch a recruitment competition before the summer; One the Minister's initial priorities was to approve the introduction of Early Conciliation and that the Minister would welcome an invite to meet the Board; Colin Jack confirmed that the way in which the EC project has been managed, involving the Agency, OITFET and DfE, is in line with best practice; The Department will be developing a Partnership Agreement to replace the current MSFM and will consult with the Agency to ensure it is fit for purpose; Agreed that it was important for DfE to work with the Agency on the emerging policy agenda and that the Agency would facilitate engagement with the Roundtable. | CEO DCS Chair DCS CEO |
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| Board on a range of issues. | |
| 5. Minutes of 19 December 2019 Board Meeting (Paper BP01-01/20) | |
| The minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2019 <u>agreed</u> as a true and accurate record of the meeting. | Secretary |
| 6. Matters arising from the Minutes of 19 December 2019 Board meeting (Paper BP02-01/20) The DCS introduced the Board Actions Progress Report highlighting the following issues: The research tender is in the process of being awarded to the University of Warwick; project start up meeting planned for tomorrow; Data sharing agreement with OITFET; first meeting with employment judiciary took place on 22 January. | DCS |
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| 7. Chief Executive's Update | |
| The CEO's update focused exclusively on EC implementation: | |
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| Anticipate that the online facility will be available within the first couple of weeks and will be actively promoted; Helpful that the transitional arrangements will be in place for the first month, which will alleviate the initial pressure when staff are less familiar with the new systems; Contingency measures are in place to deal with high volumes; The Board endorsed a proposal from Louise Crilly to host a celebratory | EO |
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| Work on the new portal completed and testing underway; initially, notifications will be via a dedicated phone number and paper-based; Anticipate that the online facility will be available within the first couple of weeks and will be actively promoted; Helpful that the transitional arrangements will be in place for the first month, which will alleviate the initial pressure when staff are less familiar with the new systems; Contingency measures are in place to deal with high volumes; The Board endorsed a proposal from Louise Crilly to host a celebratory event, possibly following a Board meeting, to recognise staff input to EC; The CEO said that staff will appreciate the Board's acknowledgement of | |
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| their endeavours. | |
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| The Board noted the content of the Chief Executive's update. | |
| 8. Business Plan Performance Report (Paper BP03-01/20) | |
| The CEO explained that there have been only been two and a half working weeks since the December meeting when a very fulsome update was provided. The CEO | |
| and Directors provided a brief update. | |
| The Board noted the content of the Business Plan Performance Report. | |
| 9. Management Accounts (Paper BP04-01/20) | |
| The DCS presented the Management Accounts for the period ending 31 December 2019. | |
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| The DCS highlighted that the NICS pay award remains unresolved; and that any increase above the forecasted uplift will create an additional pressure, but that the year-end outturn should be favourable. |)CS |
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| The Board noted the content of the Management Accounts paper. | |
| 10. Board Effectiveness - Action Plan (Paper BP05-01/20) | |
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| The Chair reviewed progress against the action points agreed at the Board Effectiveness Workshop in November 2019. | |
| Agreed that good progress already made and that the Deard would continue to | |
| Agreed that good progress already made and that the Board would continue to monitor progress against the action plan. | hair |
| 11. Stakeholder Meetings – update | |
| The Chair reported that she and the DERS attended the DfE Partnership Agreement workshop on 21 January 2020. | |
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12. Any Other Business

Louise Crilly reported that there has been no progress with regard to the mentee scheme.

Grainne Ni Cheallaigh, Boardroom Apprentice indicated that she found this meeting useful and is now more encouraged to apply for a Board membership role. Grainne will be attending future ARAC and Finance & Personnel Committee meetings.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the **Agency Board** is a Board Business Planning Workshop, on **Thursday, 27 February 2020 at 10.00 am in Malone House, Belfast.**

Secretary