

**MINUTES OF THE 454th MEETING OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY BOARD HELD AT
10.00 am ON THURSDAY, 14 MAY 2020
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

Present: Marie Mallon (Chair)
Louise Crilly
Deirdre Fitzpatrick
Michelle McGinley
Gary McMichael
Alison Millar
Albert Mills
Jill Minne
Daire Murphy

In Attendance: Tom Evans Chief Executive, (CEO)
Don Leeson Director, Corporate Services (DCS)
Mark McAllister Director, Employment Relations Services (DERS)
Alison Wolfe Minute Secretary
Grainne Ni Cheallaigh Boardroom Apprentice

Members of the Board met 'in-camera' prior to the formal commencement of the meeting.

	<i>Action</i>
<p>1. Apologies</p> <p>None.</p>	
<p>2. Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>No conflicts of interest declared.</p>	
<p>3. Chair's Opening Remarks</p> <p>The Chair reported from the 'in-camera' meeting that the Board had discussed CEO recruitment, Board/Chair appointments and Board appraisal process. The Chair will provide an update to the CEO following the Board meeting.</p> <p>The Chair updated the Board in respect of the NI Engagement Forum; at the end of March, the LRA asked by DfE to chair and facilitate the work of the Forum. The Chair emphasised that this work is very important but challenging given the diverse membership and the very sensitive matters for consideration. Alison Millar endorsed the Chair's comments and commended the role that the Agency is fulfilling.</p>	Chair
<p>4. Minutes of 23 January and 27 February 2020 Board meetings (Papers BP01-05/20 and BP02-05/20)</p> <p>The minutes of meetings held on 23 January and 27 February <u>agreed</u> as a true and accurate record.</p>	Secretary

<p>Noted that the March meeting postponed due to the Coronavirus pandemic; the papers issued seeking comments from Board members.</p>	
<p>5. Matters arising from the Minutes of 23 January and 27 February Board meetings (Paper BP03-05/20)</p> <p>The DCS introduced the paper highlighting the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ CEO/DCS to meet with Chair of ARAC prior to June meeting to discuss improvement actions. Risk management workshop also being arranged; ✚ Research into an ER Model for NI by Warwick University underway; ✚ Provided an update on recent reset meeting with Civica; ✚ CEO has agreed with WRC to cancel the international agencies meeting and the Agency conference; will seek to rearrange for 2021; ✚ CEO reported on the outcome of the rent review proposing a substantial increase. CEO has asked LPS to negotiate a reduced figure that will more accurately reflect current rental levels. 	<p>DCS</p> <p>SLT</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>CEO</p>
<p>6. Chief Executive's Update (including the Agency's 'Together' People Programme) (Paper BP04-05/20)</p> <p>The CEO highlighted the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Provided a detailed update on how the Agency has dealt with the challenges presented by Covid-19, and thanked all staff for their commitment, flexibility and resilience; ✚ CEO expressed his personal thanks to Don, Mark & Alison for their support; ✚ Suggested that the Engagement Forum is the most significant facilitation project that the Agency has undertaken, which has further enhanced the Agency's relationships with all stakeholder organisations and commended Marie Mallon's role in chairing the Forum; ✚ Explained that our recently revised contingency plan had been instrumental in ensuring that the Agency was operationally ready for remote working; ✚ In response to the Covid-19 pandemic the SMT had agreed three objectives that has guided all of our work since lockdown, safety, sustaining frontline services and planning for recovery; ✚ All of our work has been underpinned by regular communication which has been so appreciated by staff and trade union colleagues; ✚ A weekly team brief, an end of week communication from the CEO and the establishment of an Employment Relations Group has facilitated the right level of engagement; ✚ All face-to-face services cancelled. The Conciliation and Workplace Information Services have continued to meet a very high demand generated by concerns about safety and job security. SMT has also explored how to deliver other frontline services remotely; ✚ The Agency has developed a bespoke 'Together' People Programme, which has provided an enabling framework to support staff. TUS and staff are very appreciative; ✚ The Chair indicated that she will write out to staff on behalf of the Board thanking them for their hard work and cooperation; 	<p>CEO</p> <p>DERS</p> <p>Chair</p>

<p>✚ Board members expressed their appreciation for what has been achieved in such a short period as an employer and also the work in facilitating the Engagement Forum.</p> <p>The Board had previously suggested hosting an event to show their appreciation to staff and agreed that the Finance & Personnel Committee should look at some form of reward and recognition for staff. The CEO thanked the Board for this proposal and indicated that the Employment Relations Group would be looking at reward and recognition and could bring proposals back to a future meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee.</p> <p>The Board noted the content of the Chief Executive’s update.</p>	<p>CEO Chair of F&P Committee</p>
<p>7. Annual Report & Accounts for 2019-20 (Paper BP05-05/20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Report (Appendix A) • Accountability Report (Appendix B) <p>The CEO offered a brief overview of the Performance and Accountability report and confirmed that a final version of the Annual Report & Accounts will be presented to ARAC on 8 June and then to the Board for approval on 25 June.</p> <p>Due to the late issue of the Performance Report agreed that Board members should have the opportunity to offer comments by close of play tomorrow.</p> <p>The CEO reported that the DERS has agreed to participate in the ‘On Your Behalf’ programme on Saturday morning to discuss emerging labour market pressures due to Covid-19.</p> <p>The Chair expressed her concern about resourcing pressures; noted that SLT continue to monitor uptake of services and redistribute resources as required. DfE supportive of the Agency, however the CEO undertook to raise the issue of resources at the next Oversight & Liaison meeting.</p> <p>Louise & Jill left the meeting (11.55 am)</p> <p>The Board noted the content of the paper.</p>	<p>DCS</p> <p>Board Members</p> <p>DERS</p> <p>CEO</p>
<p>8. Budget 2020-21 (Paper BP06-05/20)</p> <p>DCS presented the Agency’s 2020-21 budget and reported that the spending profile based primarily on the 2019-20 outturn. The DCS also confirmed that Agency has already bid for additional in-year funding of £215K to cover the costs of the August 2020 pay award, rent review and the inward secondment of the Communications Manager.</p> <p>The Board noted the content of the paper and asked for progress updates on in-year bids and any additional resource pressures that may emerge.</p>	<p>DCS</p>
<p>9. End-Year Assurance Statement (Paper BP07-05/20)</p> <p>CEO presented his end-year assurance statement, which did not raise any concerns about financial and non-financial controls. The CEO will raise the data sharing agreement with OITFET and the Board appointment process at the next</p>	

<p>O&L meeting.</p> <p>The Board noted the content of the report.</p>	<p>CEO</p>
<p>10. Any Other Business</p> <p>Board to be advised of upcoming webinars.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>
<p>11. Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the Agency Board on Thursday, 25 June 2020 at 10.00 am by videoconference.</p> <p>While there is currently no facility to send hard copy Board papers, Board members asked to feedback any concerns around meeting arrangements.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>

CONFIDENTIAL