

**MINUTES OF THE 481<sup>st</sup> MEETING OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY BOARD  
HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2023 AT 10.00AM  
AT THE LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY HEAD OFFICE,  
JAMES HOUSE, 2-4 CROMAC AVENUE, BELFAST, BT7 2JA**

**Present:** Gordon Milligan (Chair)  
Geraldine Alexander  
Deirdre Fitzpatrick  
Kevin McCabe  
Daire Murphy  
Jill Minne  
John Taylor  
Lee Wilson

**In Attendance:** Mark McAllister      Acting Chief Executive  
Don Leeson                      Chief Executive  
Paul Lowe                        Director of Corporate Services  
Christine Magill                Boardroom Apprentice  
Oliver Murray                  Executive Assistant

**Apologies:** Clare Duffield  
Michelle McGinley

This was a hybrid meeting, with some Board members attending in person and others by videoconference.

**Declarations of Interest:** None.

**1. Chair's Opening Remarks**

1.1 The Board welcomed the Chief Executive back from sick leave. It was noted that he will resume full duties with effect from 1 February 2023. In the meantime, the Director of Employment Relations Services will continue as Acting Chief Executive and Accounting Officer. The Director of Employment Relations Services and Director of Corporate Services were thanked for their continued leadership of the Agency during the Chief Executive's absence.

1.2 The Chair provided an update on the Board member recruitment process. Interviews are due to be completed on 20 February 2023.

- 1.3 The Board noted progress in respect of the Agency's Employment Relations Conference. It was agreed that Board members will introduce the afternoon workshops; a briefing for this will be given at the next Board meeting.

**Action: Chief Executive**

## **2. Minutes of Previous Board Meeting**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2022 (paper BP01-01/23) were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting for publication on the Agency's website.

**Action: Executive Assistant**

## **3. Action Points from Previous Board Meetings**

- 3.1 The Acting Chief Executive presented the progress report on actions from previous Board meetings (paper BP02-01/23), which was noted by the Board.

## **4. Chief Executive's Report**

- 4.1 The Acting Chief Executive presented the report (paper BP03-01/23), which was noted by the Board.
- 4.2 The Acting Chief Executive reported on a meeting with Acas and Workplace Relations Commission counterparts to discuss a range of issues associated with the current industrial relations climate.
- 4.3 The Acting Chief Executive provided an update ongoing talks with parties involved in collective disputes.
- 4.4 The Board noted publication on the website of the Agency's latest podcast in the 'Challenging Workplaces' series. This edition focuses on domestic violence.

## **5. Briefing by Tribunal Vice President Judicial Mediation.**

- 5.1 The Chair welcomed the Tribunal Vice President who briefed the Board on plans for implementation of Judicial Mediation in NI with effect from April 2023.

5.2 The Board noted that Judicial Mediation has been available in Great Britain for a number of years and has proved successful. The Agency will be a key delivery partner with the Tribunal, supporting the parties with conciliated agreements to settle their dispute should mediation achieve a positive outcome.

## **6. Cost of Conflict Research Report**

6.1 The Acting Chief Executive presented the research report on the cost of conflict to NI employers, which was commissioned from the University of Westminster (paper BP04-01/23). The Board noted that the research extrapolated findings to NI from work undertaken in Great Britain, taking account of the local economy.

6.2 The paper, which will be showcased at the Employment Relations Conference on 23 February 2023, will be published in due course.

**Action: Chief Executive**

## **7. Terms of Reference for Strategic Intervention via Article 86 Review into Collective Bargaining Arrangements in the NI Local Government Sector**

7.1 The terms of reference for the Article 86 review into collective bargaining arrangements in local government (paper BP05-01/23) was approved by the Board.

7.2 It is anticipated that interim findings will be presented to the March Board meeting, with the final report available for Board approval in May/June 2023.

**Action: Chief Executive**

## **8. Business Plan Performance Report for the Period Ended 31 December 2022**

8.1 The Business Plan Performance Report for the period ended 31 December 2022 (paper BP06 01/23) was noted by the Board.

8.2 The Board noted that several actions are pending sufficient resources being identified and therefore will be carried forward into the Business Plan for 2023-24. These include the review of the Mediation Services, organisational transformation, and evaluation of the case management system.

**Action: Chief Executive**

**9. Management Accounts for the Period Ended 31 December 2022**

9.1 The Management Accounts for the period ended 31 December 2022 report (paper BP07-01/23) were noted by the Board.

**10. Review of the Meeting**

10.1 Board members confirmed they were content with the papers, discussions and decisions taken at the meeting.

**11. Any Other Business**

11.1 There was no other business.

**12. Dates of Next Meeting**

12.1 The next Board meeting will be on 22 February 2023 at 10.00am in James House.

**Action: Executive Assistant**