

Labour Relations Agency

Minutes of a Senior Management Team Meeting held on Tuesday, 21 April 2015 at 11.00 am

Present: Tom Evans
Penny Holloway
David McGrath
Gerry O’Neill

In Attendance: Alison Wolfe (Minute Secretary)

Item	Minute	Action
1.	<p>Apologies</p> <p>There were no apologies.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 February 2015</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 24 February were agreed.</p>	Sec
3.	<p>Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes not listed on this Agenda</p> <p>The CEO pointed out that he had drafted a revised Agenda based on current priorities but that the agenda would be flexible to reflect the business needs of the Agency.</p> <p>Item 4.4 – International Agencies Meeting 2015 The CEO reported that he and the Agency Chair hoped to attend the International Agencies meeting in South Africa in November 2015. The Agency was awaiting detailed confirmation of the event from the South African delegates.</p> <p>Item 4.6 – SROI It was noted that following publication of the SROI report Advisory Services had changed some of their evaluations to outcome focus rather than output focus. The Agency was currently examining the recommendation regarding partnering with research organisations such as universities.</p> <p>It was agreed to discuss SROI further at a later date.</p> <p>Copy of Ecorys report on Collective Conciliation to be forwarded to CEO.</p>	<p>CEO</p> <p>DAS</p> <p>SMT</p> <p>Sec</p>

	<p>Item 7.1 – Cross Directorate Working Groups The SMT discussed the make-up and purpose of the Cross Directorate Working Groups.</p> <p>ISIT – involved with ICMS where a number of staff were involved in the development of the case management system. Engagement – progressing liP and the intranet. Customer Service – looked at SROI and Customer Service Excellence Model; made recommendations and subsequent changes were made to services. DAS to copy the Report of the Service Improvement Group on CSE to CEO. It was suggested that perhaps this group could look at generating better qualitative information.</p> <p>It was agreed to review the Cross Directorate Working Groups with a view to setting up groups in other areas and involving staff at grades other than Director and ERM; SMT to discuss this informally.</p> <p>Item 7.2 – Performance Management The appraisal process was outlined to the CEO. It was noted that the HR section anticipated issuing appraisal documentation in May.</p> <p>Item 10 – Disability Action Group It was noted that the Disability Action Group was chaired by an ERM from the Advisory Section.</p> <p>It was further noted that a health and safety issue had been raised regarding the number of staff trained to operate the evac chairs.</p>	<p>DAS</p> <p>SMT</p> <p>DCS</p>
4.	<p>Business Plan 2015-16</p> <p>It was noted that Directors had updated their individual sections of the Business Plan. Following discussion by the Chair and CEO, the CEO will issue a final draft to Directors in advance of their May team meetings. This will facilitate discussion at the meetings and allow for presentations to be made by the SMT.</p> <p>In advance of team meetings the CEO and Directors will agree the nature of the presentation, development and focus of the business plan and the specific role of each Directorate and how this links to other sections.</p> <p>The CEO commented that he had enjoyed attending the various team meetings and engaging with staff. His intention is to continue to attend team meetings for the foreseeable future.</p>	<p>Ch/CEO/Dirs</p> <p>SMT</p>

5.	<p>Annual Report & Accounts</p> <p>It was noted that a timetable has been drawn up and work has commenced on the preparation of the Annual Report and Accounts.</p> <p>It was also noted that Capita have commenced preparation of the final accounts for 2014-15.</p>	<p>Sec</p> <p>DCS</p>
6.	<p>Board Meetings – Action Points from 26 March 2015 meeting</p> <p>The SMT discussed the revised schedule of Board meetings including the format of the bi-monthly report. It was noted that the Agency was involved in important projects which were critical to the success of the strategic aims in the business plan. It was important to highlight these projects to the Board to make them aware that targets were being met. Directors also felt it important that they were given adequate time to highlight the work of their sections at Board meetings.</p>	<p>SMT</p>
7.	<p>Human Resource Issues</p> <p>(a) Following discussion about staff absence the DCS is to forward the Agency’s Absence Management Policy to the CEO. DAS and DCS to follow up paperwork on a current staff absence.</p> <p>(b) It was agreed to prepare a paper for the Board assuring them that the Agency is managing issues which were highlighted in the staff attitude survey and stress risk assessment.</p> <p>(c) The CEO met with TUS to discuss the ERM (Corporate Services) vacancy which it was agreed was a critical post. The CEO had indicated to TUS that the Agency would like to fill the vacancy by open competition in line with the Recruitment Procedure i.e. a panel consisting of the CEO and two Directors. TUS are to consider the above and report back to the CEO. It was hoped to finalise the procedure at the JNCC meeting in June.</p> <p>(d) The SMT discussed a number of staff moves/transfers. In this regard HR was currently preparing an internal trawl at EOII for Helpline.</p> <p>(e) The SMT discussed the issue of managing staff in the General Office. This was currently being done on a deputising basis. It was agreed that it may be possible to transfer the EOII from the Certification Office to the General Office. CEO to meet the Certification Officer.</p> <p>(f) It was agreed to prepare a paper for the Board setting out the process for liP accreditation. DCS to organise a meeting for himself, CEO and the assessor, Eddie Salmon.</p> <p>(g) Staff conference to be discussed at a later date.</p> <p>(h) The DCS, DCA and HR are to discuss arrangements for the</p>	<p>DAS/DCS</p> <p>DCS</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>SMT</p> <p>CEO/SMT</p> <p>DCS</p> <p>SMT</p>

	<p>phased return to work of an ERM in Conciliation who was currently on sick absence.</p> <p>(i) JNCC – next meeting 4th June @ 10.30 am. CEO to look at agenda. Apology noted from DCA who will be on annual leave.</p>	<p>DCS/DCA</p> <p>CEO/Sec</p>
8.	<p>Finance Issues</p> <p>DCS to draft a letter to DEL on behalf of the CEO regarding £28K additional funding which is now available to the Agency.</p> <p>Following completion of internal audit reports the DCS will prepare the draft assurance statement.</p> <p>The SMT agreed that it was important that Directors were involved in initial discussions on the scope of audits within their sections and also in the final stages. Audits were currently taking place within IT and finance systems. It was agreed that the CEO should also meet the internal auditors and raise this issue.</p> <p>The Agency had been advised of an increase in the rate of pension contributions which may result in a possible spend of £50K. In line with a request from DFP the Finance Section was currently collating information highlighting the impact of such an increase.</p> <p>The DCS is to forward budget information to the SMT.</p> <p>The DCS is to forward the leases for both Agency properties to the CEO.</p> <p>Audit Cttee meeting possible dates - 21 May, 4 June or 9 June – DCS to confirm.</p>	<p>DCS/CEO</p> <p>DCS</p> <p>DCS/CEO</p> <p>DCS</p> <p>DCS</p> <p>DCS</p> <p>DCS</p>
9.	<p>Stakeholder Engagement</p> <p>The CEO reported on recent stakeholder meetings. Further meetings are being arranged for the Chair and CEO.</p> <p>Consideration was being given to holding a half day event, possibly around skills, for Roundtable members.</p> <p>The CEO and DCA reported on their attendance at the CEF 'Managing a Merger' event which was informative and interesting. It was agreed to circulate the accompanying booklet to the DAS and DCS.</p>	<p>Sec</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>CEO/DCA</p>

10.	<p>IS/IT Priorities</p> <p>The next meeting of the IS/IT Cross Directorate Group will be held on 5 May.</p> <p>The priorities for IS/IT were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Review of ISO27001 due at the end of August; (b) Project approach (Moody – assessor); CEO and DCS to discuss meeting with the assessor; (c) Web replacement; DCS in contact with DID re meeting to discuss requirements; (d) Intranet – needs to go ‘live’ before liP assessment; (e) ICMS Phase 2 business case – focused on Advisory Services with some input from Corporate Services; (f) Continuity planning. <p>The CEO would discuss IS/IT issues with the IT Manager. It was agreed that it was timely to review priorities given that the case management system was bedding in. The SMT would examine targets in the Business Plan about the development of a business case for Phase 2.</p> <p>It was agreed to discuss IS/IT further at the informal SMT meeting on 28 April with a view to prioritising issues at the IS/IT meeting on 5 May.</p> <p>The DCS advised that the Agency needed to source internal auditors to quality assess the system; possibly the project steering committee.</p>	<p>CEO/DCS</p> <p>CEO/SMT</p> <p>SMT</p> <p>DCS</p>
11.	<p>CEO/Directors Update</p> <p>The DCA raised concern about aspects of the new ICMS system such as templates which were not on the system as yet. This was creating a further backlog of work and added pressure on the section. SMT to look at the scale of the problem and issues arising.</p> <p>It was noted that the Teachers Joint Negotiating Committee had agreed to changes in procedures. It was further noted that the new Education Authority was now in place.</p> <p>The SMT agreed in principle to participation in an SME survey involving other statutory agencies subject to the detail being ironed out.</p>	<p>SMT</p> <p>DAS/SMT</p>

12.	<p>NI & GB Employment Relations Developments</p> <p>The CEO reported on a meeting he and the DCA had with DEL representatives. It was noted that the Employment Bill would be laid before the Assembly in the near future which would create a new environment for early conciliation, changes to the Tribunal processes and grant enabling powers for neutral assessment.</p>	
13.	<p>AOB</p> <p>It was agreed to copy reports/papers to all members of the SMT.</p> <p>Agency folders – it was agreed to look at re-producing Agency folders/seminar covers.</p> <p>Public Interest Disclosure – DEL letter dated 09 April 2015 – the SMT discussed a possible response to the DEL letter and to consultations in general. It was agreed that Directors consider the questions posed in the letter and whether or not the Agency should respond. Directors to email the CEO with a view to further discussion at the informal SMT on 28 April.</p>	<p>SMT</p> <p>Sec</p> <p>SMT</p>
14.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Informal – Tuesday, 28 April Formal – Tuesday, 19 May Informal – Tuesday, 5, 12 May</p> <p>Meetings will be held in the CEO’s office at 10.00 am.</p>	