

**MINUTES OF THE 385th MEETING OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY
BOARD HELD AT 10.00 am ON THURSDAY, 18 APRIL 2013
IN THE AGENCY'S OFFICES, GORDON STREET, BELFAST**

Present: Jim McCusker (Chair)
Albert Mills
Neal Willis
Gordon Parkes
Trevor Morrow
Alison Millar
Pauline Shepherd
Sally McKee
Gary McMichael

In Attendance: Bill Patterson (Chief Executive)
Gerry O'Neill (Director, Corporate Services)
Karen Tarr (Acting Director, Conciliation & Arbitration)
Anne Gunning (Minutes Secretary)

Action

<p>1. Apologies</p> <p>There were apologies from Lyn Fawcett, David McGrath and Penny Holloway.</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 28 February 2013</p> <p>5. 5.1 TUPE Consultation – LRA Response</p> <p>It was agreed that this item should read -</p> <p><i>‘Following discussion, the majority agreed that the Agency would not make a response to the Consultation.’</i></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2013 were then proposed by Trevor Morrow seconded by Gary McMichael, and agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting, subject to the above agreed amendment.</p>	<p>Secretariat</p>
<p>3. Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes not listed on this Agenda</p> <p>3. 6.6 Collective Conciliation Mediation Evaluation Reports</p> <p>It was noted that the evaluation reports would be published shortly.</p> <p>4. 4.5 Visit to the European Foundation and LRC Dublin</p> <p>It was noted that further to the Board visit to the LRC Dublin, Ger Deering from the Workplace Relations Reform & Liaison, Department for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in the ROI had given a talk 17 April to Agency staff</p>	<p>DCA</p>

<p>on the ROI Reform Programme. The talk, on the structural changes to employment relations institutions in the Republic, had been very well received. Board members are to receive copies of the presentation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5.5 LRA Neutral Assessment Service</p> <p>It was noted that the CEO had met with the LRA Arbitrators on 17 April. There had been a very fruitful discussion on the proposed model LRA Neutral Assessment Service. The Arbitrators had suggested that neutral assessment should be presented as part of the conciliation process.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7. Any Other Business</p> <p>The Chairman confirmed that he had written to Sir George Quigley’s widow on behalf of the Board. The Chairman read Lady Moyra Quigley’s reply which was warmly received.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CEO</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CEO</p>
<p>4. Chairman’s Business</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">4.1 Declarations of Interests</p> <p>No interests were declared by members.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">4.2 Board Member Training</p> <p>There were no reports of Board member training.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">4.3 Update on Stakeholder Meetings</p> <p>The Chairman reported on the ER Roundtable meeting on 8 February. The discussions covered -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Routing cases to Labour Relations Agency in first instance</i> • <i>Tribunal Reform</i> • <i>Qualifying period for unfair dismissal rights</i> <p>It was noted that the next meeting of the Roundtable will be held on either 9th or 16th May (date to be confirmed).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Chairman</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">4.4 DEL/LRA Management Statement/Financial Memorandum</p> <p>It was noted that DEL had replied, 13 March, accepting the Board’s suggested changes to the DEL LRA MS/FM. Following discussion it was agreed that the Chairman await the response of DFP to DEL’s acceptance of the Board’s proposals. The Board noted the emphasis on the independence of the Police Ombudsman as contained in its Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Justice.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Chairman/ CEO</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">4.5 LRA/International Agencies Conference</p> <p>It was noted that the Department had given an undertaking to allocate £30,000 of additional funds to cover conference costs. Members reviewed the</p>	

conference agenda and noted the satisfactory progress on taking forward arrangements.	CEO
<p>4.6 LRA Seminar</p> <p>It was anticipated that the DEL employment relations and employment law consultation document may be published in June 2013. The Agency awaited confirmation of the publication date in order to make appropriate arrangements for a related seminar.</p>	Chairman/ CEO
<p>4.7 Research Committee 6 March 2013/Just Economics Presentation</p> <p>It was noted that the Research Committee meeting scheduled for 6 March 2013 did not take place as there was no quorum. However the presentation on SROI, which reflected well on the Agency, did take place. It was noted that the final draft SROI report was being considered in detail before finalisation.</p>	DAS/CEO
<p>4.8 LRA Vice Chair</p> <p>The Chairman indicated that the position of Board Vice-Chair had become vacant following the end of Brenda Maitland's second term of office. The Chairman gave notice that he intended to formally nominate Sally McKee as Vice-Chair at the next Board meeting. This proposal was noted by members.</p>	Chairman
<p>5. Audit Committee Meeting</p> <p>5.1 Audit Committee meeting held on 10 October 2012</p> <p>The minutes of the above meeting were ratified by the Board.</p> <p>5.2 Meeting held on 7 March 2013</p> <p>The Chairman of the Audit Committee provided a verbal report of the meeting held on 7 March, the main items being the review of the Agency Risk Register and the Internal Audit Report which reported as satisfactory on matters of corporate governance, conciliation and arbitration and information technology.</p>	
6. Chief Executive's Business	
<p>6.1 Half year assessment of the LRA Statutory Arbitration Scheme</p> <p>Karen Tarr provided an assessment of progress of the Agency's new Statutory Arbitration Scheme for which five cases had been received to date. An update on the promotional activities relating to the scheme was also provided. Following discussion members agreed to receive a full year report in the Autumn.</p>	DCA/CEO
6.2 Accommodation – Break Clause in HQ Lease (Paper 12/13)	

<p>Following discussion, the Board agreed that it had no strategic accommodation issues that would require a review of the lease arrangements.</p>	<p>DCS</p>
<p>6.3 <i>Law Centre (NI) Response to DEL Employment Law Discussion Paper (Paper 13/13)</i></p> <p>The CEO introduced the NI Law Centre’s submission in respect of the DEL Review. Following discussion the submission was noted.</p> <p>The Chairman informed the Board of a presentation by the NI Law Centre to the NI ER Roundtable on either 9th or 16th May or 14th June and that with the agreement of the Roundtable Board members might be invited to attend this presentation.</p>	
<p>6.4 <i>Employment Law Agenda 2012-15 (table)</i></p> <p>The contents of the table were noted.</p>	
<p>6.5 <i>Draft Governance Statement (Paper 14/13)</i></p> <p>Following discussion the statement was noted by the Board with some proposed minor amendments.</p>	<p>CEO</p>
<p>6.6 <i>LRA Annual Report & Accounts 2012-13 – draft structure issued to Board 18 April 2013 (Paper 15/13)</i></p> <p>It was agreed that the draft structure of the Annual Report was clear and concise. The revised format was approved by the Board.</p>	<p>CEO/DCS</p>
<p>6.7 <i>DEL Advisory Group</i></p> <p>It was noted that the main interest of the Advisory Group was the DEL employment law agenda.</p>	
<p>6.8 <i>Promotion of Agency Services – ADR</i></p> <p>Karen Tarr provided an update on the recent promotional work being undertaken by the Advisory Section and the Conciliation and Arbitration section. The verbal report was noted.</p>	<p>CEO</p>
<p>6.9 <i>Mc Clure Watters SME Research Report</i></p> <p>It was noted that the Report has not yet been published.</p>	
<p>7. Corporate Correspondence Received Relevant to Board</p> <p>Nothing received.</p>	

<p>8. Any Other Business</p> <p>It was noted that the Chairman will be progressing, as required by DEL, performance assessments of Board members for 2012-13.</p> <p>It was noted that LRA draft accounts 2012-13 would be forwarded to Board members in advance of the joint Audit Committee and Finance and Personnel Committee briefing 15 May 2013.</p>	<p>Chairman</p> <p>DCS</p>
<p>9. Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, 23 May 2013 at 10.00 am in Gordon Street. The Board meeting is to be followed by a meeting of the International Conference group.</p>	