

**MINUTES OF THE TWENTY THIRD MEETING OF THE  
FINANCE & PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE  
LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY  
HELD AT 11.00 am ON THURSDAY, 31 JANUARY 2013  
IN THE AGENCY'S OFFICES, 2-16 GORDON STREET, BELFAST**

**Present:** Mr Jim McCusker (Chairman)  
Mr Albert Mills  
Mr Trevor Morrow

**In Attendance:** Mr William Patterson (Chief Executive)  
Dr Gerry O'Neill (Director Corporate Services)  
Mrs Anne Gunning (Minutes Secretary)

**Minute**

**Action**

**1. Apologies**

There was an apology from Sally McKee.

**2. Minutes of Meeting held on 27 September 2012**

As there was only one member present who had attended the last meeting on 27 September 2012, it was agreed that the minutes from that meeting would be adopted at the next meeting of the committee.

**Chairman**

**3. Matters Arising from Minutes**

**5. Finance**

One minor typing amendment was agreed.

**7. Partial Retirement Request**

It was noted that a draft flexible working policy is being drawn up.

**DCS**

**4. Finance (Paper FP/1/13)**

The Finance Report was discussed.

Although there was overspend at the end of December 2012, it was noted that management was working towards breaking even at 31 March 2013. It was also noted that for the 2013/14 financial year the staff training budget has been reduced from £55k to £30k.

Concern was expressed at the ongoing reduction in Agency discretionary spend. Particular concern was expressed at the potential for staffing being negatively impacted by the decreasing real spend available to the Agency. This area is to be closely monitored.

It was noted that regular monthly MS/TUS meetings have been arranged to discuss the Agency budget position beginning February 2013.

As the Agency's funding from the Department will not increase for the foreseeable future, certain capital projects e.g. ICMS and the LRA International Conference will require additional funding in 2013-14.

It was noted that the narrative in the Finance report would be modified with some agreed amendments.

**DCS**

## **5. Personnel & Systems**

### **5.1 HR Strategy Progress**

The HR Strategy report for 2013-14 was presented by the DCS. It was noted that the HR Strategy 2011-13 has been updated for 2012-15. Some consideration has been given to the clarification of accountability and the ongoing development of line managers. It was noted that progress against the key output areas was steady with an emphasis being placed on staff engagement. It was noted that the modified version of the report has been forwarded to the TUS. After discussion, it was agreed that the strategy was realistic and was amenable to measurement.

### **5.2 IS Strategy Progress**

The IS Strategy report was presented by the DCS. It was noted that the upgrade of the ICMS system remains the most critical item on the Agency's agenda. Work was ongoing in relation to the ICMS specification as a basis for the development of a business case in preparation for the tender process. It was anticipated that the procurement process will begin in September 2013.

It was noted that a representative from Invest NI will be invited to attend a future Board meeting to demonstrate Invest NI's use of social networking.

**CEO**

### **5.3 Selection Panels – Board Involvement**

Following the Board's review 2012 of the Agency Recruitment and Selection Procedure, it was agreed that the Board would withdraw from selection panels at ERM level. This proposal had been discussed with the TUS who had expressed reservations about the proposed change. TUS had requested a meeting with the Board on this matter. Following discussion, it was suggested that the Chairman

**CEO**

meet with the TUS officers informally to explore the situation. It was agreed that this proposal would be discussed at the next Board meeting.

**6. CEO Remuneration**

The Committee discussed the CEO's appraisal and remuneration in closed session.

**7. Any Other Business**

There was no other business to be discussed.

**8. Date of Next Meetings**

- Joint Meeting with Audit Committee -  
Wednesday, 15 May 2013 @ 10.00 am (draft accounts)
- Thursday 26 September 2013 @ 2:00 pm