

**Minutes of the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held on Monday
23 April 2018 at 4.00pm at the Labour Relations Agency, Gordon Street, Belfast**

Present: Albert Mills (Chair)
Michelle McGinley
Jill Minne

In attendance: Tom Evans (Chief Executive)
Don Leeson (Director of Corporate Services)
Paul Herink (IT Manager)
Michael Riddell (HR Manager)

Apologies: None

Declarations of Interest: No conflicts of interest were declared.

This meeting had been rescheduled from March 2018.

It was noted that this was Michael Riddell's last Committee meeting before leaving the Agency. Members expressed their appreciation for Michael's work for the Agency and his support to the Committee.

1. Minutes of the Last Meetings

1.1 The minutes of the Finance and Personnel Committee meetings held on 2 October and 30 November 2017 were agreed as accurate records (papers FP 01-4/18 and FP 02-4/18 respectively refer).

2. Matters Arising from the Last Meeting

2.1 All matters arising from the minutes of the last meetings were dealt with under the relevant substantive agenda item.

3. Finance Update

3.1 The Director of Corporate Services reported that the Annual Report and Accounts for 2017-18 are being prepared. It is expected that the Agency will meet its financial target of spending at least 98% of its budget allocation.

- 3.2 The Committee noted that confirmation of the Agency's budget for 2018-19 is awaited. Once this has been received, it is the intention to submit the budget for approval at the May 2018 Board meeting.

Action: Director of Corporate Services

- 3.3 The Chief Executive reported that the Agency has been allocated funding to operate a Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES) in 2018-19. The Committee noted that the need for a VES would be considered by the Board in the light of financial pressures resulting from the resource budget allocation, when confirmed, and the longer term financial outlook. The Committee also noted the comments made by the Trade Union Side at the September 2017 Board meeting about the need for Board support to seek to protect the Agency's budget if further reductions are proposed.

4. HR Issues

Organisational Transformation Update

- 4.1 The Chief Executive gave an update on the Transformation Programme. The Agency is in the process of filling transformed posts, initially through internal trawls and promotions. External recruitment exercises will then be conducted to fill remaining vacancies.
- 4.2 The Senior Management Team has been widened to include Employment Relations Managers, as well as the Chief Executive and Directors. The first formal meeting of the wider SMT is scheduled for 25 April 2018. This follows a workshop held on 28 March for senior managers to consider the new arrangements for the operation of the SMT.
- 4.3 The review of administrative functions has concluded and the report and recommendations will be considered at the SMT meeting. This paves the way for the merger of administration teams into a new Business Support Team.
- 4.4 The Chief Executive reported on the outcome of the Staff Conference, which took place on 20 April 2018. The main focus of the conference was on the Agency's values and the culture needed to support organisational transformation. The Agency's Investors in People assessor gave a presentation to the conference on the outcome of the recent online diagnostic assessment (see below) and the Chair of Legal Island presented on organisational culture. Staff also had the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments using the Mentimeter online tool – these will be responded to in due course.

Action: Director of Corporate Services/Chief Executive

HR Update

- 4.5 The HR Manager tabled a report on key HR metrics (paper FP 03-4/18 refers). The Committee noted the increase in days lost through sick absence, which has resulted mainly from the long term absences of a small number of staff. The Committee also noted that the Agency has developed a new sick absence policy, based on that of the NICS, for consultation with the Trade Union Side.

Action: HR Manager

Investors in People

- 4.6 The Committee noted Investors in People Online Assessment Diagnostic Report (paper FP 04-4/18 refers), which was discussed at the recent Staff Conference. The HR Manager reported that, while the Agency generally performed well, the assessment has identified two areas for further development: leadership; and reward and recognition. Within the former, the key issues were trust and communication. Discussions at the conference had focused on these areas.

- 4.7 The Committee noted that formal reassessment against the Investors in People Standard will be in October/November 2018.

Action: HR Manager

Draft HR Plan for 2018-19

- 4.8 The HR Manager presented the draft HR Plan for 2018-19 (paper FP 05-4/18 refers). This implements the second year of the People Strategy for 2017–21, which was approved by the Board in November 2017. The Committee noted that the plan takes account of the fact that the organisation is in transition and also includes a focus on trust in response to the liP assessment report. Building on earlier feedback from the Committee, the plan contains a commitment to identify a Diversity Champion within the SMT.

Action: HR Manager

- 4.9 The HR Plan for 2018-19 was approved by the Committee.

5. ICT

ICT Update

- 5.1 The IT Manager gave an update on ICT issues. The Agency has invested in laptops for the wider SMT to facilitate paperless meetings and remote working. These will also include 'soft phones' to allow calls to office extensions to be received in any location.

5.2 The IT Manager reported on current website statistics. These show a decrease in website usage, which is reflective of a wider preference for accessing information through apps. The data also shows that the website is accessed mostly from mobile devices. These statistics will inform the approach to the development of a new website for the Agency.

CMRS Phase 2 Project Update

5.3 The IT Manager gave an update on the CMRS Phase 2 Project. The new case management environment has been built and will be tested and implemented over the summer. In addition to the main functionality set out in the specification for Phase 2, a new facility to allow bulk cases to be processed is being developed, which will produce significant efficiency savings.

Draft IS Plan for 2018-19

5.4 The IT Manager presented the draft IS Plan for 2018-19 (paper FP 06-4/18 refers). This implements the second year of the IS Strategy for 2017–21, which was approved by the Board in November 2017. The activities include CMRS Phase 2 implementation, development of a new website, and a new web portal to facilitate the secure exchange of documents.

Action: IT Manager

5.5 The IS Plan for 2018-19 was approved by the Committee.

6. Accommodation Issues

6.1 The Committee noted that a key priority for the year ahead will be securing longer term accommodation for the Regional Office when the current lease expires in June 2019.

Action: Director of Corporate Services

7. Any Other Business

7.1 There was no other business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

8.1 It was agreed to reschedule the next Committee meeting to take place after the summer.

Action: Director of Corporate Services