

Department for Employment and Learning Board Meeting

3 June 2010

Board Room, Adelaide House

Present: Alan Shannon (Chair)
Catherine Bell
Andrew Hamilton
Fred Gray
Brian Scott

In attendance: Trevor Connolly
Beverley Harrison
Patricia McAuley (for item 2 only)
Roger Arneill (Minutes)

1. Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 6 May 2010

1.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed without amendment.

2. Impact of Recession and Welfare Reform on Employment Service and its Customers

2.1 Mrs. McAuley highlighted that, as a consequence of the recession, there has been a significant rise in the number of unemployed people and thus an increasing number of people who are mandated to participate on DEL programmes. She gave an overview of the interim arrangements in place to ensure the Employment Service meets its commitments in working with the unemployed but highlighted that significant backlogs still exist. There is a significant level of risk that clients will become disengaged and demotivated, leading to further increases in long-term unemployment and failure to take full advantage of the recovery. This existing pressure is

- compounded by the fact that the implementation of Welfare Reforms will increase the need for additional staff and financial resources further. The Department is considering a number of additional measures to manage these demands but each of these will have financial implications.
- 2.2 The Board discussed the feasibility of bringing additional staff to the Employment Service to help manage the growing demands placed upon it. This included the consideration of temporary contracts, the mobility of staff within the Northern Ireland Civil Service and the financial implications involved.
- 2.3 It was agreed that there were two distinct strands of work – the planning for and implementation of migration of clients from Incapacity Benefit and dealing with the increased numbers of unemployed clients. On the former, the Board agreed that Mrs. McAuley would seek the additional funding required for the project team from the Social Security Agency, and that the Department would subsequently identify the staff to undertake the work. The project team would then develop options and a business case to take forward the reforms. On the latter, it was agreed Mrs. McAuley would take forward work on how the current pressures could be managed and develop bids for use in Budget 2010.

Action: Mrs. McAuley to seek funding from SSA for project team; Department subsequently to identify staff; project team to develop business case for IB migration.

Action: Mrs. McAuley to take forward work outlining the additional resources required to manage the growing number of people mandated on to DEL Programmes.

3. Finance and Corporate Services

3.1 Finance Report

- 3.1.1 Risk Register – Mr. Hamilton and Mrs. Bell gave an update on the management of each risk included on the Risk Register.
- 3.1.2 Provisional Outturn 2009/10 – Mr. Connolly gave an overview of DEL's final position. The Board noted their thanks to all involved in the successful management of the budget over the last financial year.
- 3.1.3 June Monitoring – Mr. Connolly gave an update on the June Monitoring position.
- 3.1.4 Departmental 2010/11 Balanced Scorecard – Mr. Connolly presented the scorecard to the Board for approval. The Board suggested the following changes:
- review the date included at item 31;
 - at item 11, where the cash reducing efficiency target is recorded, add the line: and the additional savings of x million as imposed by the Executive; and
 - the wording of item 23 should be reviewed.
- 3.1.5 Subject to these amendments, the Board agreed the Departmental 2010/2011 Balanced Scorecard. Mr. Connolly informed the Board that the next steps were to publish the Scorecard on the DEL website and circulate it to Directors which will initiate the development of divisional scorecards.

Action: Mr. Connolly to consider the revisions detailed above before publication of the Departmental Balanced Scorecard 2010/11.

- 3.1.6 Account NI: Prompt Payment Performance – Mr. Connolly gave an overview of the Department's performance on prompt payment and

recommended that this was presented to the Board and Senior Management Team on a monthly basis. This was agreed.

Action: Mr. Connolly to present statistics on DEL's prompt payment performance to the Board and SMT on a monthly basis.

3.2 Corporate Governance Framework

3.2.1 The Corporate Governance Framework was agreed as presented.

3.3 Draft Departmental People Strategy

3.3.1 Ms. Harrison outlined the purpose of the Departmental People Strategy drawing attention to the four key HR themes detailed in the paper.

3.3.2 Following discussion, it was suggested that the Strategy should clearly reflect the responsibility of managers to manage, with the support of Departmental HR. Ms. Harrison agreed to review this point.

3.3.3 After discussing some of the challenges the Department will face in its implementation, the Board agreed the Strategy, subject to the action recorded below.

Action: Ms. Harrison to update the Strategy to reflect the responsibility of line managers to work with Departmental HR in delivery of its aims.

3.4 HR and Corporate Services Update

3.4.1 Ms. Harrison gave an update on absence management figures. The Board then discussed the Managing Attendance Action Plan and noted the key learning priorities.

4. Formal Notings

4.1 All other papers were noted without further discussion.

5. Any Other Business

5.1 No further items were raised.