

Department for Employment and Learning Board Meeting

11 October 2010

Board Room, Adelaide House

Present: Alan Shannon (Chair)
Catherine Bell
Andrew Hamilton
Russel Griggs
Brian Scott

In attendance: Beverley Harrison
Trevor Connolly
Des Armstrong & Stanley Simpson (for item 1 only)
Fergus Devitt (for item 4 only)
Roger Arneill (Minutes)

1. NI Public Procurement – The Remedies Directive

- 1.1 Mr Armstrong informed the Board that the European Union had introduced new regulations, under the Remedies Directive, which would have a significant impact on the public procurement process in Northern Ireland.
- 1.2 Mr. Simpson gave a presentation highlighting the key changes and the issues Departments now need to be aware of through the procurement process.
- 1.3 The Board discussed potential impact of these regulations, with a particular focus on how implementation may affect SMEs in the local economy.

2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

- 2.1 No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Minutes and Matters Arising from the Board Meeting on 2 September 2010

3.1 The minutes of the Board Meeting held on 2 September were agreed without amendment.

3.2 There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

4. Update on the Stranmillis / QUB Merger

4.1 Mr Devitt informed the Board that the Equality Impact Assessment had concluded on 1 October and that 24 responses had been received, the majority from individuals. Stranmillis would now analyse the responses and publish a summary. The Department was waiting for legal advice from the Attorney General in relation to issues associated with the merger.

5. Finance and Corporate Services

5.1 Budget 2010

5.1.1 Mr Connolly informed the Board that the Department would not receive its final budget allocation until after the UK Government makes its budget announcement on 20th October. The Executive will then need to agree Departmental budgets before the final position is confirmed.

5.1.2 Mr Hamilton gave an overview of the Department's current considerations on where savings can be made; these will be subject to Ministerial agreement after confirmation of the Department's budget allocation.

5.2 Finance Report

5.2.1 **Risk Register** – Mrs Bell gave an update on the recorded risks.

5.2.2 **August Management Accounts & September Monitoring** – Mr Connolly gave an update on the current position.

5.3 HR and Corporate Services Update

5.3.1 Ms Harrison highlighted the Department had not received a final absence target but was on track for the temporary target set internally. She provided an update on current staff numbers and vacancies also.

6. Formal Notings

6.1 The papers presented were noted without further discussion.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Professor Griggs asked if there was any indication when the Department will know its final budget allocation. Mr Hamilton said that the Northern Ireland Block Grant will be announced by the UK Government on 20th October; to date there is no indication of when Departmental budgets will be finalised.