

**DEPARTMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING**  
**SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM MEETING**  
**Thursday 26 February 2009**  
**Galgorm Manor**

**Present:** Dr Aideen McGinley (Chair)  
Mr Greg McConnell  
Mrs Catherine Bell  
Mr Trevor Connolly  
Mrs June Ingram  
Mr Paul McAlister  
Mr Hugh McPoland  
Mrs Lucy Marten  
Mr Fergus Devitt  
Mr Richard Kenny  
Mrs Patricia McAuley

**Apologies:** Mrs Bernie O'Hare  
Mrs Nuala Kerr

**In Attendance:** Mr Victor Dukelow, Tertiary Education Analytical Services  
Ms Wendy Lecky, Tertiary Education Analytical Services  
Mr Alan Ramsey, Tertiary Education Analytical Services  
Mrs Anne-Marie O'Kane, DEL Secretariat

At the outset of the meeting Dr McGinley thanked all involved in organising a very successful Celebrating Success Event.

## **1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Summary Action Sheet**

1.1 The Minutes of the previous SMT meeting held on 29 January 2009 were agreed subject to the following amendment.

1.1.1 Item 5.2 should read “Mrs Ingram gave an update on Transitions and Bamford and a discussion followed on the wide range of inputs required as a result of extensive sub-group activity, and efforts to streamline and rationalise the related processes”.

1.2 Summary Action Sheet – Structured to Deliver – Dr McGinley informed the meeting that another G7 event will be organised, preferably before Easter and there will be discussion prior to the event at the next Senior Management Team Meeting on the economic context and Balanced Scorecard.

1.2.1 All other actions have been actioned appropriately.

## **2. Policy**

### **2.1 Cross-Divisional Strategy – Evaluation of DEL Research Agenda**

2.1.1 Mr Dukelow presented a paper outlining the background, key issues and recommendations for the Senior Management Team to consider.

2.1.2 A discussion followed on interface with other Departments to avoid duplication. Mr Dukelow informed the meeting that there are regular liaison meetings with DETI and that officials from other Departments participate in working groups for some of the projects. He went on to outline how information was shared.

2.1.3 Mr McConnell suggested that our research papers should be cited in Board and Senior Management Team Papers.

2.1.4 Mr Dukelow was commended for the service he and his team provide and the value which it adds to the work of the Department. The recommendations contained in Mr Dukelow's paper were endorsed by the Senior Management Team.

## **2.2 Quality and Performance Report**

2.2.1 Mrs Bell outlined the rationale for the proposal, explaining the role of the Board and the Senior Management Team in the oversight of performance in relation to quality improvement. Where the reporting structure was currently fragmented it was proposed that the Board considers the ETI Annual Report, a performance report on our programmes and sectors and a new Annual Report from the Quality Improvement Unit on the performance of our Providers in one document.

2.2.2 The proposal was welcomed and Mr McConnell stated that the key advantage was to have the three Reports together. A discussion followed on whether this should be included in the Department's Scorecard, Dr McGinley suggested that a Quality Scorecard could be developed which would align to the Department's Scorecard. It was agreed that the proposal was a good starting point and should be developed more.

## **2.3 Learning and Development Priorities**

Mr McPoland presented a paper outlining the corporate development priorities and the departmental priorities. He explained that 'Research' needs were to be included and developed.

2.3.1 Mr Connolly informed the meeting that there would be a seminar on Managing Public Money on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2009, directed at staff at DP level and above.

2.3.2 Mrs McAuley raised the need for core skills training which is essential for Preparation for Work Division and suggested some amendments to the existing list of priorities. It was agreed that the list would reflect these amendments. **(Action: Mr McPoland)**

### **3. Finance and Corporate Services**

#### **3.1 Finance Report**

3.1.1 Risk Register – A discussion took place on whether HR Connect should be added to the Risk Register. It was agreed that Mr McPoland would prepare a Report for next months meeting outlining all the issues arising, similar to the Report detailing issues with Account NI, we would then be in a position to add HR Connect to the Risk Register if appropriate. **(Action: Mr McPoland)**

3.1.2 The Senior Management Team commended the work of Departmental HR during this transition period.

3.1.3 The Contents of the Issues Log, the Account NI Issues Log, the January Management Accounts and February Monitoring were noted.

#### **3.2 Corporate Services Report**

3.2.1 Managing Attendance – The Senior Management Team noted the absence of data due to ongoing difficulties with HR Connect.

3.2.2 Vacancy Position – The contents were noted and inaccuracies will be discussed with Mr McPoland. **(Action: Mr McPoland)**

3.2.3 Personnel Update Report – noted.

3.2.4 Calendar of Changes – Mr McPoland informed the meeting that he intended to amend the format of this paper. NI Direct will be added to the Calendar and Workplace NI amended appropriately. **(Action: Mr McPoland)**

3.2.5 The Senior Management Team noted the contents of the Calendar of Events and the Media Analysis Paper. A discussion followed on the NTA Ceremony and the need to ensure that the event is consistent with the current economic climate.

3.2.6 A discussion took place on the high volume of media coverage the Department has had and Mrs Marten passed on her thanks to staff in Divisions for their help. Dr McGinley also thanked Mrs Marten's team.

#### **4. Papers and Formal Notings**

4.1 Economic and Labour Market Brief – Dr McGinley informed the Senior Management Team that this paper would be scheduled for substantive discussion at the next meeting and would also help to inform the planned G7 day. Content was noted.

#### **5. Any Other Business**

5.1 Dr McGinley informed the meeting that OFMDFM had collated a paper for BIC on how the Regions were placed to deal with the current economic climate. Dr McGinley stated that paper which the Department produce on a monthly basis in response to the downturn was more informative and she would investigate how to ensure that this information was incorporated into any further reports to BIC. **(Action: Dr McGinley)**

5.2 IIP Feedback – Dr McGinley briefed the meeting on positive feedback which she had received from the assessor, including the commitment and loyalty of staff, good line management structures and a continuous learning culture. Areas for development were also discussed including communicating with staff and evaluating the value. Mr McPoland stated that he was considering ways to ensure that information for staff was current and cited the Core Brief as an area which needed to be reviewed.

- 5.3 Dr McGinley raised the issue of quality of Departmental responses to, for example cross departmental strategies, requests from Committees, etc. A discussion followed on the high volume of work recently and the pressures being felt by all. It was agreed that it was important to respond to ensure a comprehensive and quality response from the Department.
- 5.4 Mrs McAuley highlighted the need for clarity in the Departments response to companies facing redundancies to avoid the potential for confusion. Mrs Bell clarified the role of Skills and Industry Division and outlined the ongoing work with InvestNI on upskilling. It was agreed that this subject be considered further at divisional level.
- 5.5 Mr Devitt sought clarification on communication of the new Structure to Deliver. Dr McGinley explained that she would issue a note to G5s on 9<sup>th</sup> March, who would in turn discuss with their G7s and then she would issue a note to all staff. **(Action: Dr McGinley)**
- 5.6 PSA Monitoring Framework – Mr Connolly tabled this paper and stated that it was important that it is formally discussed and approved at the next Senior Management Team Meeting. Mrs Bell suggested that it be included in the agenda for forthcoming DEL/DETI/InvestNI and DEL/DE Liaison meetings. **(Action: DEL Secretariat)**

