

Department for Employment and Learning
Senior Management Team Meeting
Thursday 29 April 2010
Boardroom, Adelaide House

Present: Andrew Hamilton (Chair)
Catherine Bell
Beverley Harrison
John Baird
Patricia McAuley
June Ingram
Trevor Connolly
Mary McIvor
Nuala Kerr

Apologies: Fergus Devitt
Lucy Marten

In Attendance: John McKeown (for items 2.2 – 2.5 only)
Roger Arneill (Minutes)

1. Minutes and Summary Action Sheet from the Senior Management Meeting held on 25 March 2010

1.1 Mrs. Bell proposed one amendment to item 2.2.1 of the minutes. The minutes were agreed subject to this amendment.

1.2 The update on actions arising from the previous meeting was noted.

Action: DEL Secretariat to update the March Minutes as agreed.

2. Finance and Corporate Services

2.1 Finance Overview (2009/10 & 2010/11)

2.1.1 Mr. Connolly informed the Senior Management Team that he is working to finalise the 2009/10 budget position, some information is outstanding but he is hopeful that the Department will be on target.

2.1.2 Mr. Connolly highlighted the need for Directors to review capital planning for the 2010/11 financial year. A discussion followed on capital budgets for this period.

2.2 Draft Departmental People Strategy

2.2.1 Ms. Harrison outlined the People Vision and Strategic HR Themes as set out in the Draft Strategy and noted that the delivery of such a Strategy was dependant on Departmental HR, the Senior Management Team and managers across the Department working in partnership. Ms. Harrison highlighted that she intends to present the Draft Strategy to the Board at its meeting in June and to this end, she would appreciate feedback from other members of the Senior Management Team.

2.2.2 Through discussion of the Draft Strategy, it was agreed that it should be changed from a three year to a four year Strategy as this would allow it to sit comfortably with end of the next CSR period.

2.2.3 Several Directors raised specific points and, following discussion of these, it was agreed that all feedback should be communicated to Ms. Harrison by 14 May.

2.2.4 Mr. Hamilton asked Ms. Harrison to pass on his thanks to all involved in the development of this Strategy.

Action: Directors to provide feedback on the Draft Departmental People Strategy to Ms. Harrison by 14 May.

2.3 Key Learning Priorities for DEL 2010/11

2.3.1 Mr. McKeown gave an overview of the recommended key learning priorities for 2010/11. He highlighted that the priorities have been structured to ensure each member of staff's development is linked to the achievement of Departmental priorities. Mr. McKeown also noted that the delivery of learning priorities will have to be considered in the context of future budgets.

2.3.2 The Senior Management Team discussed the recommendation and the following amendments were agreed:

- Key Learning Priority 5, "Policy" should be amended to "Policy and Legislation" to reflect the Department's work in this area;
- making better use of Information Technology should be incorporated into the learning priorities;
- Departmental HR would consider how an additional table could be developed to reflect the key learning priorities which are specific to a particular division;

2.4 Managing Attendance Action Plan 2010/11

2.4.1 Mr. McKeown gave an overview of the key points, highlighted that this paper will go to the Board in the near future and, following approval, further information will be disseminated to staff.

2.4.2 Senior Management discussed the nature of interaction between the Occupational Health Service and the Department and also the sickness management process. It was agreed that it would be helpful if a presentation could be organised for the Senior Management Team with a view to clarifying the inefficiency process and the role the Occupational

Health Service in it. Ms Harrison undertook to arrange once the new sickness absence inefficiency policy was finalised.

Action: Ms. Harrison to organise a presentation to the Senior Management Team on the inefficiency process and OHS's role in its application.

2.5 Corporate Services Report

2.5.1 Mr. McKeown noted that , on the basis of the information currently available, the Department is on target to achieve its absence target for 09/10. He went on to suggest that management should stress the importance of closing sickness cases on HRConnect to ensure sickness levels can be accurately monitored.

2.5.2 Mr. McKeown gave an overview of workforce planning issues. The Senior Management Team discussed staff levels for 2010/11 and the financial implications of this. It was agreed that the monthly Senior Management meeting would be the appropriate forum to discuss staff resources in the future.

2.6 Departmental Information Security and Assurance Committee

2.6.1 The DEL Information Security and Assurance Framework was introduced by Ms. Harrison and noted without further discussion. This paper will be submitted to the Departmental Board meeting on 6 May.

2.7 Central Management Branch Update on Departmental Performance

2.7.1 The statistics on Ministerial cases were noted. It was suggested that this update should reflect not only the response times but the amount of work carried out across the Department to achieve these results. Furthermore, it was proposed that the same analysis should be provided on the correspondence between the Department and the Committee and orals.

Action: Ms. Harrison to examine the possibility of including analysis of the amount of work put in to achieving the response times set out in this paper and furthermore, including information on liaison with the DEL Committee.

2.8 Customer Service Standards - Departmental Performance

2.8.1 This paper was noted without further discussion.

2.9 Freedom of Information and Data Protection Requests 2009/10

2.9.1 This paper was noted. It was suggested that the next report should include an indication of the number of requests received by other Departments. This was agreed. It was also agreed that this update should include a statistic on the Department's performance in meeting the requisite response deadlines in respect of both DPA and FOI requests. Mrs Bell thanked the staff in Information Management Branch for their excellent advice and support in dealing with recent FOI appeal case.

Action: Next report on information access requests to include an indication of the level of requests received by other Departments and a statistic on the Department's performance on response deadlines.

3. Papers and Formal Notings

3.1 All papers were noted without further discussion.

4. Any Other Business

4.1 Mrs. Bell and Mrs. Kerr gave an update on the latest discussions with CPD on the procurement of Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI providers.