

Department for Employment and Learning
Senior Management Team Meeting
Thursday 26 August 2010
Boardroom, Adelaide House

Present: Catherine Bell (Chair)
Patricia McAuley
Fergus Devitt
Nuala Kerr
Beverley Harrison
John Baird
Trevor Connolly
June Ingram
Lucy Marten

Apologies: Andrew Hamilton
Mary McIvor

In Attendance: Owen Gillespie (Item 2 only)
Raymond Kelly (Minutes)

1. Minutes and Summary Action Sheet from SMT Meeting, 29 July 2010.

- 1.1 The minutes of the previous meetings were agreed.
- 1.2 The summary actions of the previous meetings were agreed.

2. ESF Second Call – the process.

- 2.1 Mr. Gillespie thanked SMT for their comments on the draft ESF Second Call submission and proceeded to address the issues raised.

- 2.2 With regard to variation of the current ESF intervention rate, it would not be possible to implement a change before the Second Call is issued due to time required to meet necessary administrative and European regulatory requirements.
- 2.3 While there is little capacity to fund Departmental Programmes through Priority 2 of the NIESF, there remains some scope within the Priority 1 strand. This could involve current providers applying for ESF funding, which could be match funded by the Department. It must be emphasised that most output-related-funding models are not compatible with the ESF programme. It was agreed that SEERD would liaise with colleagues to ensure that other divisions have an opportunity for input to the selection of Priority 1 projects to help avoid potential duplication of activities with Departmental programmes and to ensure value for money.
- 2.4 It was also agreed that applicants will be requested to confirm that they had sought prior agreement from organisations nominated as their intended public match-funders. This measure is intended to provide additional assurance for the Department. Mrs. Bell thanked Mr. Gillespie for a very informative update.

Action: Mrs. Ingram to liaise with senior colleagues regarding selection of Priority 1 ESF projects.

3. Finance Update

- 3.1 Mr. Connolly began by giving a brief update on September Monitoring. The main pressure remains the £20m for Higher Education Student support. The Minister met the Finance Minister to raise his concerns. Mrs. Bell noted that contingency plans should be made in the event the bid is unsuccessful.

- 3.2 Mr. Connolly thanked Senior Management for the work over the summer on Budget 2010. The review has been complete and a draft paper on the strategic options is being finalised.
- 3.3 CPD have changed the procurement regulations, and have offered to conduct a presentation for Senior Management. This will be arranged for around the next SMT.

Action: Mr. Kelly to arrange details with CPD for a presentation on the changes to the procurement regulations.

4. Update Report on the Scoping Study into Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and strategic options.

- 4.1 Mrs. Bell commented that the update report was a first class piece of work, and asked for the action plan to be broken down by Departments.

5. Any Other Buisness

- 5.1 Mr. Devitt provided a brief update on the Higher Education Strategy, which he noted was still a work in progress. Feedback thus far has been positive, with the main issues around formatting.
- 5.2 Mrs. Bell thanked Mr. Devitt and noted that this was a major piece of work which had high importance within the Department.