

**Report of the Finance and Personnel Committee Meeting
held on 27 November 2023 at 10.00am**

Present: Geraldine Alexander (Chair)
Elizabeth Armstrong
Kevin McCabe
John Taylor
Lee Wilson

In attendance: Don Leeson (Chief Executive)
Anne Dorbie (Interim Director of Corporate Services)
Angela Bryans (Joint HR Manager)
Patricia Coulter (Knowledge Manager)
Diane Edgington (Transformation Project Manager)
Jim McAllister (IT Project Manager)
Paul Martin (Interim Communications Manager)
Oliver Murray (Executive Assistant)
Patrick Quigley (Business Support Manager)
Claire Webb (EDI Manager)

Apologies: Vicky Aldana (Boardroom Apprentice)
Elaine Clarke (Joint HR Manager)
Paul Herink (ICT Manager)

Key points to note:

- A number of new attendees were welcomed to the Committee: new Committee members Elizabeth Armstrong and Kevin McCabe; and interim managers Anne Dorbie, Paul Martin and Jim McAllister
- Special thanks were noted for Paul Herink who is retiring from the Agency in December 2023.

Finance Matters

- The Interim Director of Corporate Services reported the financial position to date, which is on track to achieve budget outturn in March.
- The Committee noted that the Agency has bid for additional funding to cover dilapidation costs from the previous premises in Gordon Street.

HR Matters

- An update was provided on progress against the HR Work Plan for 2023-24.

- The current HR priority is EOI appointments, which will be following by a recruitment exercise for Employment Relations Officers for holiday pay conciliation.
- Evaluation of the hybrid working pilot is underway. Feedback from this has been positive and therefore the draft policy is unlikely to change when it is finalised. Staff networks will be consulted on the results of the evaluation exercise to identify any equity, diversity or inclusion issues.
- The current HR IT System is under review with the intention of an upgrade or new system facilitating the full suite of functionality required by HR.
- The HR Metrics for the period ending 31 October were noted.

ICT Matters

- An update was provided on progress against the IT Work Plan for 2023-24.
- The IT Project Manager outlined work to date on the handover from the outgoing IT Manager and priority work to be carried out to support holiday pay conciliation.

Communication Matters

- An update was provided on progress against the Communications Work Plan for 2023-24.
- Recent media coverage that the Agency has received across a range of channels was noted, with plans to maintain these high levels as a way of raising the Agency's profile.
- The Committee noted the risks to the Agency's reputation regarding demand for holiday pay conciliation.
- An update was provided on social media engagement statistics and plans for future outreach campaigns, with recent content receiving between 850-1,000 **views** per post.
- It was noted that the Pride Panel report was published and shared via social media to mark the Trans Day of Remembrance.
- Plans for the 'flexible working' conference were noted. This is likely to take place in March 2024.

Business Support Matters

- The Committee received an update on the work of the Business Support Team.
- It was noted that staff training on holiday pay case processing has been a recent priority.
- Necessary CMRS fixes are required to support holiday pay conciliation.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- An update was provided on progress against the EDI Plan for 2023-24.
- The work of various staff networks was noted.
- Draft guidance on sexual harassment in the workplace is being reviewed by the Equality Commission. The guidance has been endorsed by Women in Business.
- The annual EDI Staff Survey will shortly be circulated to staff for completion.
- Report to Diversity Mark regarding gender diversity objectives is being compiled to demonstrate continuing compliance with the Bronze Award's requirements. The Agency will seek Silver Award accreditation in early 2024. This requires setting objectives in other equality categories: disability and race and ethnicity are likely to be the focus.
- It was noted that the Agency is a finalist in the EDI category at this year's Business Eye awards, which will take place on 30 November 2023 at ICC Belfast.

Knowledge Management

- The Committee received an update on the work of the Knowledge Manager.
- The Committee thanked the Knowledge Manager for the regular Knowledge Updates, which are now shared with Board members as well as staff.
- Staff have been briefed on the implications for employers and employees of the recent Supreme Court judgement on holiday pay.

Accommodation/Transformation Programme

- The Transformation Project Manager provided an update on Accommodation and Transformation projects.

- The Accommodation project will be formally closed once outstanding matters in respect of the Regional Office and an updated Business Continuity Plan have concluded.
- In respect of transformation, a training needs analysis has been recently completed for the cohort of Employment Relations Managers.
- A procurement exercise is underway to identify a provider for coaching training, which will be trialled with the Senior Leadership Team.

Any Other Business

- It was noted that oversight of the implementation of recommendations emanating from of a recent grievance has been remitted by the Board to the Committee. One of the Joint HR Managers is preparing an action plan to progress the recommendations. The action plan and progress report will be presented to the next and subsequent meetings of the Committee.

Date of Next Meeting

- The next Committee meeting will take place on 6 February 2024.