

## **Quarterly Review Meeting – Monday 30<sup>th</sup> August at 10.30pm**

Attending: Mark Batho (Chair)  
David Stephen  
Graham Gunn  
Donald Wood  
Audrey Heatlie  
Stephen Blyth  
Chris McCrone  
Linda Pender (Secretary)

### **Minutes of the previous meeting**

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> May were agreed except for the following change:-

Finance Section, para 3:-

“according to his figures” should be changed to “according to the SEAS ledger”.

### **Matters Arising**

2. The following were discussed:-

- It was hoped that capital funding for new telephony equipment might be made available in October.
- The Finance Minister, Andy Kerr, was expected to make an announcement on the spending review on 15 September.
- David and John Rigg had interviewed a candidate for the Non Executive Board Member vacancy. A submission had been sent to the Minister to ask him to approve the appointment. If approved, the new member had indicated a willingness to chair the Audit Committee.

### **Quarterly Report**

#### CSU

3. The session was going well although CSU continued to have problems with the Saughton House printing service and the call scan telephony system had broken down. Telephone statistics were accurate until end May but thereafter, data were either non-existent or could not be relied on. However, service to customers had not been disrupted.

4. Acknowledgement letters had been suspended due to the printing problems but as award letters were being issued so quickly it had been decided not to issue postcards to students as suggested earlier in the year. This had led to a few, but not many, extra telephone calls from students. Provided that award letters could

continue to issue within 10 – 12 days, it should be possible to dispense with acknowledgements altogether in 2005.

5. CSU were beating targets and 98.5% of applications had been processed within 21 days. Of 80,000 applications received to date, 92% had been processed.

### Finance

6. Annex B of the report showed the Agency's budget for 2004/05 as notified by Finance ETLLD on 2 August. The Finance Team were now profiling budgets.

7. Chris McCrone said budget figures shown in Annex B were £1,784 less than figures provided by ETLLD finance (total budget was £7,118,811). He suggested that budget figures on annex C could be shown on a separate page and column headings still had to be revised. Additional notes to provide information on reasons for any under/overspends would also be useful. Finance ETLLD had to report any underspends to the centre to provide the head of ETLLD with a central unallocated provision (CUP).

8. It was noted that the Debt Recovery team had again exceeded their targets.

### Personnel

9. The Agency was piloting a Special Bonus Scheme which offered staff managed time off (up to 5 days per person) and/or cash payments. The TUS had not agreed the scheme (but nor did they agree the SE scheme). Annualised hours had been granted to one member of staff and the arrangement would be kept under close review.

### IS Systems

10. It was hoped to have the new ICT development contract in place by Christmas.

11. There had been an increase in hits on the Agency's website. It was agreed that web based marketing would be reconsidered in 2004/05. DfES were trying to attract a major bank to sponsor their 'student support direct' website.

12. John Rigg had sent a paper to the First Minister in July proposing changes to learner funding recommended by the recent review. There had been no response to date but decisions would be required by mid-September/early October to allow the Agency to change IT systems, guidance booklets, forms etc.

13. The Agency were continuing to offer staff training for ECDL. Several members of staff had completed all seven tests successfully.

14. The Agency had achieved a Bronze award for SHAW and Eddie Frizzell had agreed to present the award to the Agency in September.

## **Personnel Report**

15. The Personnel team were examining reasons for increased sick leave among Band A staff and would look for any trends or patterns emerging. Eight members of staff were now on sick absence monitoring.

## **Any other Business**

16. All new work would be dual compatible for Euros or sterling. Agency staff would meet with the ETLLED Euro co-ordinator in September to produce a joint report. The existing GRASS system could be converted to deal with Euro transactions.

## **Date of next meeting**

17. The date of the next meeting would be arranged in due course.

Chief Executive's Office  
31 August 2004