# ULSTER SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT LTD

(Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital)

Minutes of a Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday 22nd February 2023 at 10.30am Cambrai Street

# Present

Mr W Leatham Chairman

Mr D O’Hara Director

Ms J Cowan Director

Mrs S Wakfer Director

Mr S Jackson Head of Manufacturing & Recycling

Mr D Cowan Head of Employment Services

Mr R Donnelly Director

Ms M Hegarty Head of Finance

Mr D Duffy Director

Mr R Havlin Director

1. **Welcome and Apologies**
   1. No apologies noted.
2. **Conflicts of Interest**
   1. SMT in relation to update of the Pension scheme.
3. **Minutes of the previous meetings held on 25th January 2023**
   1. **Approval** – add wording re closed session to minutes.
   2. **Matters Arising** – within action log or agenda.
   3. **Action Log** – action log reviewed and updated accordingly. Increase EE turnover rate from 5% to 15%.
   4. **Proposed pay scale for review** – discussed at POD on 22/02/23, see below.
4. **Chairman’s Report**
   1. Went into committee with SMT present and Chairman updated ongoing HR issue and interim governance arrangements and M Hegarty now company secretary.
   2. April 22 honorarium paper discussed, it had been recommended by board, as their was a gap with head of finance off sick and new head of finance not started yet. Chairman seeking advice and will update board on the situation.
   3. J Cowan provided update on **POD committee held on 22/02/23** during which draft employee engagement strategy was approved by POD. There was a discussion on the proposed amendments to the managing attendance policy – POD recommending an amended policy to be submitted to board next month. The POD also reviewed and discussed the amended pay scales and are recommending to board these are implementation if USEL get the new contracts. Eyecare scheme recommended by POD with 1 amendment around cost of glasses, to be presented to board in March 23. J Cowan noted that the POD had achieved their objectives for 22/23 and are going to set new objectives for 23/24 at the next POD.

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1. **Written procedures**
   1. Raising a Concern policy presented and discussed. Chairman to show to head of governance. Board agreed if head of governance approves can be issued to staff.
   2. Board had special meeting on Monday 13/02/23 and discussed paying an honorarium to acting CEO’s. Agreed honorarium to be back dated to 18/01/23 and noted it was timebound.
2. **Chief Executive's Report**
   1. S Jackson updated board on legal letter received from Wilson Nesbitt re incident involving wooden cladding on top of USEL wall. USEL staff removed wood on ground and a contractor removed loose cladding from wall. S Jackson noted he contacted CPD, who were unable to help as part of wall is on private property. Procurement exercise contacted 4 survey companies to get someone to survey the wall. S Jackson arranged with Radius for USEL to remove the remaining timber to reduce the risk. USEL solicitors have issued a response. S Jackson noted that he contacted an ex SM of USEL and he confirmed no one ever asked permission to put up the cladding on the boundary wall. S Jackson confirmed cladding all down on side that faces social housing to remove the risk. Part of cladding fenced in unable to get access at present, S Jackson to contact social club to gain access.
   2. S Jackson provided update on legal letter re incident on forklift accident. The plaintiff hasn’t lodged an official claim yet. USEL would be happy to welcome plaintiff back to employment and get retrained into a job as USEL is a disability organisation. Plaintiff has been paid his full sick pay entitlement and S Jackson confirmed he has been off since the accident occurred. Health & Safety executive found no wrong doing on USEL part. S Jackson confirmed insurers kept informed, won’t know the impact on insurance until settlement of any claim.
   3. S Jackson confirmed USEL has now completed and submitted the tender for the recycling of office furniture. 3 years with an option to extend. RLW will apply to this contract which is expected to start 1 April 23.
   4. S Jackson noted that USEL have completed the pre market engagement for the potential DMR contract which may be reserved. Business case submitted for the purchase bins, DfC central procurement team will be doing the procurement, noted lead time on bins is 12 weeks. S Jackson offered a derogation but he said no as he has conflicts of interest. S Jackson noted potential risks around contract, including if we procure this FY before tendering for the contract.
   5. S Jackson provided update on confidential shredding, and noted he had asked for a price increase. In contract the tender price is to drop at £0 per bag from next year. Volumes were meant to be 189k in tender specification, actual volumes however are way lower than this. CPD taking advice from DSO, S Jackson to provide update when a decision has been reached.
   6. S Jackson provided update on mattress recycling contract for LCCC which has ended. Tender hasn’t come out on time, envisages 6 month extension.
   7. S Jackson noted that USEL is waiting on Dust impact assessment results. All staff issued with P3 masks for the dust.
   8. S Jackson noted the Time to talk day that was delivered with staff went really well, and feedback from staff at other offices was very positive.
   9. S Jackson provided update on Belfast City Generation Fund – economic appraisal to be completed end of April/May at no cost to USEL. Presented to area working group in May, expect final decision in June. S Jackson noted that he does not foresee any hold up as planning permission is approved. If Belfast council approve they manage the project. S Jackson has asked to sit on steering committee.
   10. D Cowan confirmed ETI inspection on Stride, achieved highest level you can get. USEL received the highest they could get on safeguarding. Noted a recommendation was that all board members complete safeguarding training and recommended a safeguarding champion on the board. D Cowan now USEL safeguarding champion with M McCann Leaving. End of year update on safeguarding to be added to board agenda.
   11. S Wakfer requested two operational heads to provide update on business themselves in agenda going forward, rather than CEO.
   12. D Cowan provided update on Staff Survey, NIRSA said they couldn’t run a staff survey for USEL. £20k to be included for external survey budget for FY23.24.
   13. D Cowan provided update on shared prosperity bid, still waiting to find out if successful.
   14. D Cowan provided update on Belfast Castle, delayed opening to 27th February due to machinery not available. Agreed to hold next board meeting at Castle, technology allowing.
   15. Dermot requested ARAC meeting to start at 9am rather than 9.30am.
   16. D Cowan provided update on labour market partnerships, USEL were successful with LCCC, starting 1st March, money to be spent 31st March 23 up to £60k. Noted this would be good for USEL as would be able to use some of existing staff. Noted USEL have to recruit 24 people and get 12 into employment. D Cowan also noted good opportunity for USEL if don’t get shared prosperity with LMP for FY23/24 as we will have a testimonial to work off.
   17. D Cowan provided update on Job Start, USEL will have a brokerage role to get 200 clients into work. Start 1st April runs until 2025 though clients have to be on by July 2024. £80k over 15 month period. Noted not in budget for next year yet.
   18. Staff survey was briefly discussed but due to time constraints it was agreed to leave to next month.
3. **Pension scheme update**
   1. D Cowan provided update on pension business case and the importance of getting the additional GIA. If we don’t get, will affect USELs ability to balance budget, it was always part of the closure of the DB scheme.
   2. USEL Pension is poor in comparison to other ALBs, chairman to contact sponsor branch.
4. **Finance report**
   1. M Hegarty provides the Directors with a summary of January’s performance, YTD performance and forecasted position for March 23.
   2. S Jackson noted CPD have noted that procurement of vans should be done with DAC.
5. **HR KPIs**
   1. KPIs noted and reviewed by board.
6. **Risk Register/Management**
   1. Risk register presented and reviewed post updates.
   2. IT risk to be amended to amber based on internal audit, will be discussed in detail at ARAC.
7. **Health & safety update**
   1. S Jackson provided an update on Health & Safety - No health and safety issues noted.
   2. S Jackson has provided an update to the department on H&S and accidents and a proposed matrix that should be used to report to the board.Chairman wants an update every month via reporting mechanism and scrutinised at quarterly ARAC meetings.
8. **Any Other Business**
   1. Internal Audit completed in February 23, ratings satisfactory.
   2. Cash handling – bring back to ARAC and come back to board post that.
9. **Update from department**
   1. S McGlew provided an update to USEL board on Disability in the NI Labour Market and the Disability & Work Strategy.
   2. D Ward provided an update on the current environment and 23.24 for USEL.
10. **Date of next meeting**
    1. Date of next meeting 29th March 10.30am. ARAC 29th March 9.00am.