

**PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

**BOARD MEETING – THURSDAY 21 MAY 2026**

**9.30 AM – CONFERENCE ROOM, PBNI HEADQUARTERS**

**ATTENDANCE**

**BOARD MEMBERS**

Mr Glenn Houston, Board Chair  
Ms B Mongan, Deputy Chair  
Ms K Anthony  
Mr D Bowden  
Mr M Mawhinney  
Ms E Patterson  
Ms M Brunt  
Ms D Hunt  
Mr K Cameron  
Dr B Payne

**OFFICIALS**

Ms A Stewart, Chief Executive  
Mr S Hamilton, Director of Operations  
Ms G Montgomery, Director of Operations  
Ms G McGreevy, Head of Communications  
Mr P King, Head of Finance & Estates  
Ms C Sweeney, Head of HR and L&OD  
Ms J Fitzsimons, Board Secretary  
Mrs A Abraham, Business Support Manager (Minutes)

**1. WELCOME, OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The Board Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no conflicts of interest. A quorum was confirmed.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Mr Johnston, Mr Ingram and Ms McKeown.

**3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 23 APRIL 2026 (PAPER)**

The minutes of the Board Meeting held on Thursday 23 April 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record.

The Board approved the paper.

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES – THURSDAY 23 APRIL 2026 (PAPER)**

There were four actions from the April 2026 Board meeting, two of which had been completed. An update on Causeway On-boarding Phase 1 will be provided to the June Board meeting. A paper will be brought to a future Committee/Board meeting outlining the implications of new work and financial and wider demands.

The Board noted the paper.

**5. CHAIR'S UPDATE (PAPER)**

The Board Chair referred Members to the paper and highlighted various visits which had taken place since the April 2026 Board meeting. No scheduled visits will take place in July.

All Board Member appraisals are now complete.

The Board noted the paper.

## **5.1 Reports from Board Visits and Events (Paper)**

Dr Payne reported on the visit to Magilligan which was also attended by Mr Johnston and the Chief Executive. Whilst not raised during the visit, it was suggested that the Board be provided with short briefings: the proposed action by PBNI on the findings of the CJINI report on pre-release services; and the current/potential action/influence which PBNI could initiate to strengthen addiction and psychology services, despite current budget restraints. It was suggested that an invitation to a future Board meeting/workshop be extended to Beverley Wall, Director General, NI Prison Service.

The Board Chair and Ms Patterson visited the Victims Unit in PBNI HQ. Ms Patterson presented her report to Members.

**Action: A future Board Workshop to be planned focusing on Victims and Restorative Justice.**

Mr Cameron and Ms Anthony visited the Probation prison-based team at the prisoner working out unit at Burren House. Mr Cameron highlighted the key issues raised by staff in respect of limited availability of approved accommodation, need for increased level of trauma support for lifers, the challenges associated with foreign nationals who are in prison and have no permission to reside, and access to legal support for Probation Officers at Parole hearings.

The Board noted both reports.

## **6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE (PAPER)**

The Chief Executive asked Members to note the key internal and external engagement meetings since the April 2026 Board meeting.

Internal engagements included a Townhall meeting with a presentation on PBNI well-being, the Incremental Pay Framework, the new appraisal process and an input from Lena by Inspire.

Key external engagements included a meeting at the High Sheriff AGM with Ms Montgomery and a meeting with the Board Chair and Mr Mark Goodfellow to discuss future developments in DoJ and PBNI.

### **Key Issues**

The DoJ confirmed that neither the 3-year draft Corporate Plan nor the draft annual Business Plan have been submitted to the Minister for approval until there is confirmation of final budget. Engagement is ongoing with DoJ on a timeline for when PBNI could expect a final budget.

The Chief Executive advised that there were no specific recommendations for PBNI in the independent review report into the death of Katie Simpson. The senior leadership team have agreed organisational learning points from the review to build into PBNI practice development seminars going forward.

An update was provided to the Board on the written submission to the Justice Committee on the Criminal Justice (Sentencing etc.) Bill. Members noted that PBNI has been

invited to provide evidence to the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Justice on the Bill.

The Chief Executive updated the Board on a series of engagements with staff in the Shipquay Street Office.

**Action: The Board Secretary to schedule a Board visit to the Shipquay Street office during the Autumn.**

The Causeway Project Board met on 15 May 2026, and approved onboarding to Causeway Phase 1 with a Go-Live date for 1 June 2026. An update from the Head of IT will be provided at the June Board meeting.

The Chief Executive also acknowledged the work of the Communications Team and staff and senior leadership team in the Doubleband documentary – Carl Frampton On Probation.

The Board noted the paper.

## **BOARD BUSINESS**

### **7. BOARD SECRETARY'S BUSINESS (VERBAL)**

#### **7.1 Board Work Plan 2026-27 (Paper)**

Members were asked to note the Board Work Plan 2026-27.

The Board noted the paper.

### **8. COMMUNICATIONS DASHBOARD (PAPER)**

Members were asked to note the key events that took place in May, detailed in the paper.

There had been extremely positive feedback on the Doubleband documentary from stakeholders and the media. Ms McGreevy outlined the actions taken in respect of victims. Participating staff had been offered counselling support from the PBNI Psychology team. Discussion took place around commending those who participated including Carl Frampton and Doubleband. It was suggested that a recognition event could be organised following the Board meeting in June. How to measure the impact of the documentary in raising awareness of PBNI was considered, through surveys, viewing figures and BBC iPlayer figures.

The Board Chair extended thanks to the Communications team, and all involved in the production.

**Action: Board Secretariat to circulate PBNI's response to the DoJ Consultation on Measures to Improve Victim Engagement in the Parole Process to Members when submitted.**

The Board noted the paper.

## **AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

### **9. COMMITTEE CHAIR'S UPDATE (PAPER)**

Ms Patterson presented the summary of the ARAC meeting held on 7 May 2026 to Members on behalf of Mr Ingram.

### **9.1 Draft Strategic Risk Register 2026-27 including Board Risk Appetite (Paper)**

The draft Strategic Risk Register 2026-27 had been considered at the ARAC meeting. Five Risk Areas had been identified for 2026-27. Previous risks 'Staff Resources and Capability' and 'Programmes and Interventions' had been de-escalated to the HR and Operations Departmental Risk Registers. It was agreed that a new 'Budget Allocation' Risk be added. Of the five Corporate Risk Areas, three are Red and two Amber. Following discussion, Members agreed that Risk Appetite for each risk should be categorised as 'Open'.

The Board approved the paper.

### **9.2 End of Year Stewardship Statement (Paper)**

Ms Stewart, Chief Executive, provided Members with a copy of the Year End Stewardship Statement that is issued to the DoJ Accounting Officer. No exceptions were reported.

The Board noted the paper.

### **9.3 Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion (Paper)**

The Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion was presented to Members. No significant issues were identified and, overall, the report showed a satisfactory system of governance, risk management and control.

The Board noted the paper.

### **9.4 Draft Annual Report and Accounts (Paper)**

Mr King advised that the external auditors are currently reviewing the draft Annual Report and Accounts and PBNi is currently awaiting initial feedback. Mr King took Members through the report which is of similar layout to the previous year and is based on the final year of the Corporate Plan. The update on the Business Plan 2025-26 will be brought to the next Board meeting.

One change was noted in respect of the first year of Sustainability Reporting. Mr King referred Members to the supporting documents: Governance statements, Stewardship statements, ARAC internal audit reports, Remuneration, staff numbers and reported sickness absence figures. One new requirement of gender reporting has now been included.

The Board noted the paper.

### **9.5 Pension Valuations and Assumptions (Paper)**

Mr King provided Members with a short summary of the Pension Valuations and Assumptions as of 31 March 2026.

The Board noted the paper.

#### **9.6 PBNI Internal Audit Plan 2026-27 (Paper)**

Audits to be undertaken in 2026-27 had been confirmed: Attendance Management, Procurement and Estates and Facilities.

The Board noted the paper.

#### **9.7 ARAC Terms of Reference Review (Paper)**

The Terms of Reference had been reviewed at the ARAC meeting on 7 May 2026. It was agreed that these would be reviewed every two years going forward. Board's attention was drawn to the amendment to co-opting additional external members for one year, to include an option to extend any such membership for a further two years.

The Board approved the paper.

### **CORPORATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

#### **10. COMMITTEE CHAIR'S UPDATE (VERBAL)**

The Committee Chair confirmed that the next meeting would take place on 26 May 2026.

The Board noted the update.

##### **10.1 Financial Outturn Report – April 2026 (Verbal)**

Mr King advised that the greatest risk in 2026/27 is availability of Capital. Currently, the Estates Department is working on proposals for HQ development. However, the opening allocation is insufficient to address any improvements and will be fully committed to renewals of existing leases.

The Board noted the paper.

### **POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE**

#### **11. COMMITTEE CHAIR'S UPDATE (PAPER)**

The Committee Chair confirmed that the next meeting would take place on 4 June 2026.

The Board noted the update.

#### **12. CORRESPONDENCE (PAPER)**

There were five items of correspondence to note, which were self-explanatory. The Chief Executive confirmed that these had been covered in other reports on the agenda.

##### **12.1 Board Chair to Permanent Secretary, DoJ - Letter of Thanks**

- 12.2 Chair, High Sheriff's Association NI to Chief Executive – Letter of Thanks**
- 12.3 Finance Director, DoJ to Chief Executive - Integr8 Programme Update**
- 12.4 Chief Executive to Clerk to the Justice Committee, NI Assembly – Criminal Justice (Sentencing etc) Bill**
- 12.5 Board Chair to Minister of Justice - Thompson House Approved Premises**

The Board noted the correspondence.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (VERBAL)**

There was no other business.

The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday 18 June 2026 at 9.30 am in PBNI HQ, Conference Room.

The meeting ended at 11.01 am.

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Mr Glenn Houston  
Board Chair

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Date