

## PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

**BOARD MEETING – 16 OCTOBER 2015****9.30 AM – CONFERENCE ROOM, PBNI****367th MEETING – 38th of TENTH TERM OF OFFICE**ATTENDANCE

Mrs Vilma Patterson (Chairman)	Mr R Mullan (Deputy Chairman)
Mr D Brown	Mrs J Erskine
Mr E Jardine	Mrs L Jennett
Mr T O'Hanlon (Items 1 – 8)	Mrs M O'Rourke
Mr D Rose	Mrs P Shepherd
Dr M Wardlow	

Ms C Lamont, (Acting) Director  
Mr P Doran, Deputy Director  
Mrs G Robinson, Head of HR  
Mrs C Teggart, Head of Finance  
Mr M Cox, Board Secretary  
Mrs W Rodgers, Personal Secretary (Minutes)

**PRESENTATION BY T/ACC C NOBLE – REDUCING OFFENDING IN NORTHERN IRELAND – PRIORITIES AND HIGH LEVEL VIEWS ON REDUCING OFFENDING**

The Chairman welcomed T/ACC Chis Noble to the meeting. The (Acting) Director advised Members that Mr Noble and she sit on the Criminal Justice Board and the contact is mutually beneficial.

Mr Noble gave the Members background to his role within the PSNI as ACC for Service Improvement. It focuses on partnership working with Health and Education, the headline being positive engagement with agencies around reducing offending particularly with PBNI on ROP and PPANI. He also has responsibility for Change and Performance. He gave a brief overview of how he sees the future with the challenges of reducing budgets and increasing expectations from the public and their representatives.

A question and answer session followed where Mr Noble answered questions from Members on mental health issues, addiction and online crime. There were questions on equality of staffing, training and career paths within PSNI.

The Chairman thanked Mr Noble for attending the Board Meeting and stated, the challenges facing PSNI and PBNI are similar in legislative terms together with reducing budgets. PBNI value the relationship with the Police, with offender management and public safety being critical. Working across agencies and sharing knowledge and opportunities would be of great value. Mr Noble thanked the Chairman and offered to attend the Board again, if that would be helpful. He then left the meeting.

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

The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting and confirmed that the meeting would have a strategic focus with a smaller agenda to ensure governance obligations were met. Some papers would be taken by exception only and a number of papers would be referred to the Committees for more detailed review.

No Conflicts of Interest were declared.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Dr R Wilson and Mr H Hamill, (Acting) Deputy Director.

### **3. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES**

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 18 September 2015 were accepted as an accurate account of the meeting with a number of agreed amendments.

### **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Paper 128/15)**

The Board noted the Matters Arising.

### **5. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE – VERBAL**

The Chairman advised Members that she had attended a meeting with Anthony Harbinson, Director of Safer Communities, on 29 September 2015 when a number of items were covered including the Transformation Reform Programme (including when PBNI would be realigned under the Reducing Offending Directorate), and the proposed review of PBNI's status and its Terms of Reference.

The Chairman thanked those Members who were available to attend the Accountability Review meeting with the Minister on 7 October 2015. The Minister understood that more Members were available to attend the original scheduled time but he had to move the meeting time due to diary pressures. It had been a positive meeting with a number of issues stated including the challenge of budget reductions and ongoing structural reforms. The Minister was given assurance that PBNI will work with the Department on structural reform.

The Chairman is currently meeting with newly appointed Board Members, returning Members and hopes to meet with the Members who have come to the end their term and are leaving the Board.

Members were advised that the Chairman had met the Chief Parole Commissioner for dinner and the informal conversation had been useful.

Members were also reminded of the Members' lunch that is due to take place on 13 November 2015, after the Board meeting, at the Academy College.

The Board noted the update.

### **6. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE – VERBAL**

The (Acting) Director updated Members on a number of areas:

- She had attended a budget meeting, chaired by Nick Perry, which Glyn Capper presented to the Accounting Officers and Minister Ford was present.
- The (Acting) Director and Deputy Director had attended a meeting at the Centre for Cross Border Studies and advised that briefings will be jointly presented by PBNI and the Probation Service to the NI Assembly Justice Committee on the 18 November and the Oireachteas in Dublin on the 25 November 2015 regarding joint work on Probation Services North/South co-operation.
- The Board will receive any future updates on the Workforce Modernisation Programme via the Programme and Project update paper.

The Board noted the update

**7. CORRESPONDENCE (Paper 129/15)**

Members were requested to note two items of correspondence; letter from Glyn Capper of FSD to the Accounting Officers and a letter from the Chairman to Nick Perry requesting a meeting.

The Board noted the paper

**The meeting was suspended at 10.25 am to allow for a presentation by Mr Glyn Capper of FSD at agenda item 8 of the meeting**

**8. BRIEFING BY GLYN CAPPER – DOJ – FUTURE FINANCE PLANNING FOR 2016-17 AND THROUGH TO 2021**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Capper and thanked him for attending the Board Meeting.

Mr Capper advised that he had presented to the Justice Committee and Accounting Officers recently and gave the Members an overview of the scale and scope of the DOJ.

Members were taken through the slides and explanations were given on the numbers and graphs.

Discussion ensued around protected budgets and the Executive's view on frontline budgets. Presentation of front line services is a priority for the Minister and therefore PBNI should be placed up the list. Governance issues on late notice of cuts were discussed and the uncertainty of this year and in year cuts. Members expressed their concern in the difficulty of planning ahead when there had not been a monitoring round in June or October.

The Chairman thanked Mr Capper for his presentation and stated that PBNI needs to manage the risks, however she also advised that it was difficult for an organisation such as PBNI to absorb additional cuts from others and affirmed that PBNI was a priority for front line services.

The Board noted the presentation.

**9. POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE UPDATE – (VERBAL – 2 OCTOBER 2015)**

Following a request from the Chair of the Committee, it was agreed by Members that going forward any policies being presented to the Board for approval that have been through the Committee would be dealt with under Committee business as 'for decision'.

The Chair of the Committee advised that he would update the Members under three headings, Procedure, Practice and Policy.

- Procedure – Members were advised that the Committee was content with the Terms of Reference given by the Board. It was agreed at the Committee meeting that they would meet 4 to 5 times a year with a quorum being 3.
- Practice – At the inaugural meeting of the Committee there had been an interesting presentation on IDAP Research which gave reassurance to the Committee and the Board of the professional practice being used and that it was up to date with international standards. The findings of the research will be presented to the Board in November for noting.

There was also a presentation on Breach Rates and Community Service, this was a useful piece of work which highlighted the vulnerability of young people and offenders with a long criminal record. The presentation demonstrated that research is used to improve PBNI's practice.

- Policy – The Policy Schedule was reviewed by the Committee with two policies being brought to the Board in November for decision. It was deemed that there was no longer a requirement for PBNI to have standalone policies on Victims and Adult Safeguarding.

There were two policies presented to the Committee for review (Agenda items 11 and 12 of this agenda).

The Community and Voluntary Funding Policy had been amended to take account of the Appeal Panel's recommendation on communication of funding to partners and stakeholders. The Committee agreed to recommend approval of the amendment to the Board.

The Board approved the recommended amendments to the communication section of the Policy.

The Statement of Employer Policy on Discretionary Provisions under NILGOSC Regulations had been through the General Purposes Committee in June and approved by the Board at its August Meeting. The Committee had been advised that NILGOSC had proposed some technical amendments and the Chair of the Committee brought attention to these. The Committee agreed to recommend approval of the amendments to the Board.

The Board approved the recommended technical changes suggested by NILGOSC.

The Board noted the update.

#### **10. ESTATES BUSINESS CASES (PAPER 130/15)**

The Head of Finance advised Members that there were two Business Cases to consider; Andersonstown Road (lease expires 31 October 2015) and Magherafelt (lease expires 30 November 2015).

Members were informed that PBNI do not have any delegated authority to approve leases. Work had commenced on both cases over a year ago with all avenues being investigated for alternative properties. It was confirmed that there were no other DOJ or NICS properties that PBNI could use. Negotiations are currently ongoing with LPS and the landlords, this is normal process as landlords tend to leave negotiations until close to the expiry of a lease. LPS is happy to proceed with a five year lease with a three year break and the same current rent for both properties applying.

After discussion the Board agreed to recommend both Business Cases to DOJ and SIB.

#### **11 POLICY ON COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING (PAPER 131/15)**

Policy approved by the Board under agenda item 9 of this meeting.

#### **12. STATEMENT OF EMPLOYER POLICY ON DISCRETIONARY PROVISIONS UNDER NILGOSC REGULATIONS (PAPER 132/15)**

Policy approved by the Board under agenda item 9 of this meeting.

#### **13. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER – QUARTER 1 UPDATE (PAPER 133/15)**

Members were advised that the Audit Committee had discussed the Quarter 1 Update in some depth at their meeting on 11 September 2015 with a recommendation to bring the Strategic Risk Register to the October Board for noting.

The Board noted the paper.

**14. QUARTER 2 BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE (PAPER 134/15)**

The Deputy Director advised that as of 30 September 2015, seven of the Business Objectives had a 'Green' status and were on target to be achieved by the end of the year. Three Objectives had an 'Amber' status but were assessed to be achievable by the end of the year.

The Chairman congratulated the Executive Team on progress to date.

The Board noted the paper.

**15. FINANCE (PAPER 135/15)****15.1 September 2015 Outturn Paper**

The Chairman made reference to the very good narrative of the paper and advised that the paper should be referred to the Corporate Resources Committee for an in-depth discussion on the underspend. The Head of Finance advised that the underspend had reduced considerably with plans for the underspend to reduce to anticipated break even point. Part of the reason for the underspend was that there had not been a 'monitoring round' in June or October.

The Board noted the paper

**15.2 2016 – 17 Scenario Planning**

The Head of Finance gave the Members background into the papers presented and scenarios of a reduction in budget of 5% and 10%. The impact and risks were laid out in Annex D, Members were advised of the Health and Safety impact of properties not being maintained going forward and in future years. Discussion ensued with Members raising a number of issues of concern. Members were asked to email the Head of Finance if they had any narrative suggestions by close of play on Monday 19 October 2015 as the deadline for submission was Wednesday 21 October 2015.

The Board noted the paper.

**15.3 Finance Delegations Update**

Members were advised that there was a change of wording on grants for the Voluntary and Community Sector section of the delegations limits paper.

**Action: Change to be made to the Governance Paper, Board Secretary**

The Board noted the paper.

**16. PROGRAMME AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT UPDATE PAPER 136/15)**

Items were taken by exception only. Reference was made that all items were either 'Green', 'Completed' or 'On Track'. The paper was referred to the Corporate Resources Committee for discussion.

The Board noted the paper.

**17. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION REPORT (Paper 137/15)**

Items were taken by exception only. Attention was drawn to the table on 'age profile' of staff which was referred to the Corporate Resources Committee together with Legal Cases and IT. Caseload was referred to the next Policy & Practice Committee. Members were advised that a meeting of the Phase 2 sub-committee for MinutePad will meet on 6 November 2015 and will feedback to the Board at a later stage. The Deputy Director and Head of HR accompanied the

Retired Associates Group (RAP) for what was a successful visit to the Probation Service in Dublin and a paper will be brought to the November Board for decision on the Retired Associates' Memorandum of Understanding.

The Head of HR advised Members of the outcome of a legal case which had been settled in the last week. A Member raised the issue of Public Liability Insurance in relation to the court case; Members were advised that advice from Internal Audit had been received and that there was no requirement for this type of insurance and the matter had been closed.

The Board noted the paper.

#### **18. PROGRAMME OF VISITS AND BUSINESS (PAPER 138/15)**

The Board noted the paper.

#### **19. BOARD WORK PLAN 2015-2016 (Paper 139/15)**

The Board noted the paper

### **STRATEGIC BOARD DISCUSSION**

The Chairman introduced the Strategic Board discussion stating that time had been agreed for the October meeting to look at some of the main issues to be factored into the Board's work going forward and she invited the Board Secretary to set out the challenges and his impressions of these since taking up his role.

#### **20. WHAT CHALLENGES ARE AHEAD FOR THE BOARD?**

The Board Secretary set out to the Members his observations on the key strategic issues facing PBNI. His starting point was the 1982 Order with stated that PBNI was to provide an 'adequate and effective probation service'. The Board Secretary laid out a number of key questions to the Members including the risk of change and the consequences together with budget cuts, departmental reviews and relationships with other organisations.

#### **21. INPUT / FEEDBACK FROM MEMBERS**

Useful discussion took place among the Members on a variety of issues with discussion on budget and monies available together with defining 'adequate'. Action points from the discussion were:

**Action: Policy & Practice Committee to discuss 'adequate' service**

**Action: The Executive Team to offer points to the Board for discussion**

**Action: The Board Meeting on 13 November 2015 to commence at 9.15l am.**

#### **22. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

One Member asked that when there was a strategic meeting that the agenda be limited to only urgent business to ensure governance. The Chairman agreed with this request.

#### **23. BOARD SECRETARY'S BUSINESS**

The Board Secretary presented a paper on proposed meeting dates for Board and Committees for the year 2016. Members agreed to the suggested dates.

Members were reminded about submission of expenses.

**24. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would take place on Friday 13 November 2015 at 9.15 am, PBNI Headquarters, Conference Room.

**25. CLOSED SESSION**

Minutes from the closed session held on 18 September 2015 were agreed as accurate.

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Vilma Patterson  
Chairman

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Date