

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

BOARD MEETING – 18 JANUARY 2013

332ND MEETING – 2ND OF ELEVENTH TERM OF OFFICE

1. ATTENDANCE

1.1 Present

Mrs V Patterson (Chairman)

Mr D Brown

Mrs J Erskine

Mr E Jardine

Mr B McAllister

Mr T O’Hanlon

Mrs M O’Rourke

Mr D Rose

Ms P Shepherd

Dr R Wilson

Mrs L Jennett

Officials

Mr B McCaughey (Director)

Mr P Doran (Deputy Director Operations)

Ms C Lamont (Deputy Director Operations)

Ms L Cooper (Head of Business Planning and Development)

Mrs S Glenn (Acting Head of Finance)

Mr P Moss (Board Secretary)

Mrs A Abraham (Personal Secretary Manager)

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr Mooney, Mr Wardlow, Ms McGreevy, Ms Forrester and the Deputy Director Finance and Corporate Services.

3. OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the newly constituted Board.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Board, thanked PBNI staff involved in organising the Board Induction days.

The Chairman informed Members of the resignation of Mr Brendan Mooney due to pressure of business. She recorded the appreciation of the Board for the contribution Mr Mooney had made to the work of the Board and the knowledge he had brought in being a member of the Audit Committee and a number of panels during his term of office. An appointment would be made by the Minister in the near future.

There were no conflicts of interest.

4. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2012 (M10/12)

The minutes were approved as a correct record.

5. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2012 (M11/12)

The minutes were approved as a correct record.

6. MATTERS ARISING (Paper 1/13) (tabled)

Members were advised that a presentation in relation to groups funded by Community Grants would be made at a future meeting early in the new financial year.

Action: Director

The executive summary template would be used for each new business case in future.

Action: Acting Head of Finance

Members were advised that a presentation on the changes to the types of orders and offenders under PBNI supervision would be made to a future meeting.

Action: Head of Business Planning and Development

The Board noted the remaining matters arising and the actions taken.

7. CORRESPONDENCE (Paper 2/13) (tabled)

Members noted the CEP Newsletter December 2012.

The Director drew the attention of Members to the letter from the Rt Hon Sir Alan Beith MP, Chairman of the House of Commons Justice Committee, thanking the Probation Board for facilitating its visit.

FOR NOTING

8. Business Plan Quarter 3 Update (Paper 4/13)

The Head of Business Planning and Development provided a summary to date (end of Quarter 3) against the ten corporate Business Plan objectives set for 2012-13 as well as an overall 'RAG' rating of progress to date. With the exception of objective 10 all business plan objectives had a Green rating to the end of Quarter 3 and were on course to be achieved by the end of the year.

The Chairman queried whether Objective 2 should be Green, given the delay caused by the DoJ. The Director commented that on previous occasions the Board had asked staff not to understate their achievements down where key matters were outside PBNI's control.

A discussion took place regarding the colour rating for objectives not achieved but beyond PBNI's control. It was agreed that guidance on this matter be sought from the Internal Auditors.

**Action: Head of Business Planning
and Development**

The Board noted the paper.

9. Financial Outturn – November 2012 (Paper 5/13)

The Chairman extended the Board's welcome to Mrs Glenn, the Acting Head of Finance, who had commenced her post on 2 January 2013.

The Acting Head of Finance presented the paper, explaining that the November figures included year to date information. The figures were based on budget allocations agreed at October monitoring. Details of the outcomes of January monitoring were also contained in the paper. The budget had been re-profiled for the Department of Justice and internal re-profiling would be completed in January.

The Acting Head of Finance reported that to date there had been no confirmation of the expected NNC pay settlement, but £10k per month was being accrued in anticipation of the increase. There was also an accrual of £330k to date in respect of the expected costs of the assimilation of administrative staff to NICS terms and conditions.

In Other Revenue spend against budget stood at 78%. There had been significant pre-payments (e.g. rates in May representing 6% of the budget) but there were pressures in a number of areas. £350k would be reallocated to Other Revenue from Staff Costs to help meet these pressures.

Capital expenditure to date was £115k. Capital receipts were unlikely to be realised due to the offer of only £73k which had been made for Ramoan. There would be changes to the capital allocation from January monitoring as a result of this.

The Acting Head of Finance gave a summary of the January monitoring exercise.

Prompt Payment results for PBNI for November stood at 85% against a public sector target of 95%.

The Chairman thanked the Acting Head of Finance for the paper and commented on the clear explanation of variances.

The Chairman requested a breakdown of the hospitality budget be provided at the next Board meeting.

Action: Acting Head of Finance

The Board noted the paper.

10. Business Cases update (Verbal)

The Acting Head of Finance outlined the current position with the business cases for the Downpatrick, Andersonstown and Magherafelt sites.

11. Management Information (Paper 6/13)

Ms Lamont introduced the paper. She drew attention to the additional sections of the paper ie Complaints, Assembly Questions and Data Protection Act/Freedom of Information enquiries some of which would be reported on quarterly and some monthly. Consideration would be given to including further heads of information following the review of Board papers.

Action: Deputy Directors

Members noted the summary table on Workforce figures and the new sub-section on Grievances and Tribunals.

Ms Lamont highlighted the sickness absence figures where the average number of days per employee (year to date) was 12.79 against a target of 10. The average number of days per employee in 2011/12 had been 11 days so there was now evidence of an upward creep in the figures. Long term absences equated to 74% of absence. The sickness absence policy and procedure was currently being reviewed by Human Resources.

Ms Lamont drew attention to the Health and Safety statistics and updated Members on the progress of the new case management system.

Secure briefcases were issued to Members. A guidance document was being prepared for circulation.

Members were informed that re-accreditation of the PBNI network should be complete by the end of January 2013 and changes to the facilitation of video-conferencing service provided by NIPS were in hand with plans to migrate this service from NIPS to IT Assist.

Ms Lamont drew attention to the new section on Complaints together with the Appendix - Quarterly Complaints Bulletin, Q2 July – September 2012. Members also noted the new sections on Assembly Questions and Data Protection/ Freedom of Information.

Mr Doran talked through the caseload statistics, explaining that the total number of orders and total number of people being supervised by PBNI were 4,795 and 4,422 respectively at the end of December 2012. Total orders were 2% up and total number of people 1% up on the corresponding figures for December 2011. The number of reports completed appeared to be leveling off, with the number of PSRs decreasing and the number of short PSRs continuing to rise.

Mr Doran informed Members that Susan Glenn had taken up post as Acting Head of Finance on 2 January 2013 and Paul Thompson would take up post as Assistant Director on 1 February 2013.

Mr Doran reported that, while there were no Serious Further Offences to report, there had been an Assembly Question about a recent court appearance which had attracted media attention – both the Chairman and the DoJ had been informed.

The Chairman welcomed the additional, comprehensive information provided in the Management Information paper.

The Board noted the paper.

12. Programme of Visits and Business (Paper 7/13)

The Director presented the paper and drew attention to a number of events.

The Director agreed to provide a short brief on any strategic issues arising from senior management meetings at future Board meetings.

Action: Director

It was agreed to circulate a list of PBNI sites for future Member visits.

Action: Secretariat

The Board noted the paper.

13. Political and Public Affairs: update (Verbal)

Mr Doran informed Members that December had been a quiet month in respect of Political and Public Affairs. Press releases had been circulated by the Communications Department. There were plans to engage with all the political parties in the coming months. Mr Doran stated that most Councils welcomed PBNI's involvement in the newly formed Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs).

OTHER BUSINESS

14. Chairman's Business

(i) The Chairman explained that the date of the October meeting (previously agreed as 11 October) might have to be changed due to a potential clash with the CEP Congress in London. The date of this Conference still had to be confirmed.

(ii) The Chairman confirmed that the appointment of the Board Deputy Chairman would be after the appointment of a new Member.

(iii) The Chairman advised Members that the Governance and Accountability Training Seminar would be held in February or March – date to be confirmed.

(iv) The Chairman advised Members that the Board Appeal Panel dealing with the HR matter would meet in mid-February and would take a final decision on behalf of the Board.

15. Director's/Secretary's Business

The Director reported that the Chairman and he would attend the "Reforming Probation Conference in England in Wales", in London in February.

The Secretary thanked Mrs Abraham and Ms Forrester for their work on the arrangements for the Board Induction.

16. Any Other Business

It was agreed that the General Purposes Committee would meet on 1 February 2013 to discuss the Strategic Framework for Reducing Offending.

17. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 15 February 2013.

The meeting closed at 12:55pm.