

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

BOARD MEETING – 2 NOVEMBER 2012

329TH MEETING – 32ND OF TENTH TERM OF OFFICE

1. ATTENDANCE

1.1 Present

Mr R Spence (Chairman)
Mr J Quinn (Deputy Chair)

Mrs L Jennett	Mrs V Patterson
Mr J McKeever	Mr D Rose
Mr B Mooney	Mr M Wardlow
Mrs M O'Rourke	Dr R Wilson

1.2 Officials

Mr B McCaughey (Director) (from item 3)
Mr P Doran (Deputy Director Operations) (from item 3)
Ms C Lamont (Deputy Director Operations) (from item 3)
Mr P Moss (Board Secretary) (from item 3)
Ms S Forrester (Secretariat) (from item 3)
Ms L Cooper (Head of Business Planning and Development) (items 3-11)
Mrs M Canavan (Head of Finance) (items 3-13)
Mr M Ferguson (Probation Officer) (from item 3)

2. CLOSED SESSION

The Chairman updated Members on an HR matter.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mrs McCartan, Mr McNeill, Mr Osborne, the Deputy Director Finance and Corporate Services and the Head of Communications.

4. OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the last regular meeting of the Board.

He congratulated Vilma Patterson on her appointment as Chairman and wished her every success in her new role. Members joined with the Chairman in expressing these sentiments.

The Chairman reported that the Minister of Justice was expected to announce the appointment of new Board Members within a week.

5. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2012 (M8/12)

The minutes were signed as a correct record.

6. MATTERS ARISING (Paper 78/12) (tabled)

The Head of Business Planning and Development reported that the Volunteering and Mentoring Policy had been amended and the scheme was now available. Six individuals had undergone training the previous weekend and there had been a steady flow of interest. The Coordinator would start work the following Monday and the SENDA team was coordinating the pilot scheme which would be reviewed in line with the Business Plan towards the end of the year. It was noted that publicity might be obtained in the New Year.

The Director tabled a letter which he had emailed to the Presbyterian Board of Social Witness about the Thompson House hostel. Members were informed that the Minister had underlined the fact that the partner bodies were working effectively together, carrying out an essential role. PBNI staff had been available to meet Cavehill and Antrim Road Residents (CARR) and the local community to provide the opportunity for them to see the re-furbished house and meet the staff.

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

7. CORRESPONDENCE (Paper 79/12) (tabled)

The Director pointed out that the letter from HMRC discharged the penalty previously imposed and represented a satisfactory outcome.

FOR DECISION

8. Continuation of Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (Paper 85/12)

The Head of Finance introduced the paper and explained the proposal.

The Board approved the continuation of the PSA09 Microsoft Enterprise Agreement for a fourth year at a cost of £72,706 including VAT.

Action: Head of IT

FOR NOTING

9. Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (Paper 86/12)

The Secretary presented the paper. He explained that virtually all PBNI's comments had been incorporated.

He drew attention to the two boxes of text on page 43 relating to individual compensation claims. There was considerable uncertainty about the wording of these two sections, but DoJ had advised that the wording could not be changed.

The Board noted the final draft which would be signed and dated by DoJ and the Director.

Action: Secretary

10. Code of Practice for Members (Paper 87/12)

The Secretary presented the paper which had been updated for terminology and accuracy including post-devolution changes. Paragraph 35 had been updated to include Board decisions.

The Board noted the paper.

Action: Secretary

11. Performance against 2012-13 Business Plan objectives: Quarter 2 Summary Progress Report (Paper 88/12)

The Head of Business Planning and Development presented the paper, outlining progress against the ten objectives. Eight of the ten objectives had a green “RAG” status.

The Section 75 Objective (objective 2) was amber/green as there was a risk that the Learning and Communications Difficulties Screening Pilot which was dependent on an agreed approach being adopted across all justice agencies might not be achieved.

Objective ten relating to the new case management system was amber/red. Members were advised that the business case in respect of the new case management system had been accepted, but that the sponsoring Department had issues around the affordability of the project in the medium to long term.

The Chairman expressed concern about the wording of objectives in such a way as to render them outside PBNI control. He suggested the use of a fourth colour in addition to red/amber/green to indicate elements which were outside PBNI control. It was agreed that further detail about the two objectives at risk would be included in the version of the paper to be discussed at the Overview meeting.

Action: Head of Business Planning and Development

The Chairman thanked the Head of Business Planning and Development.

The Board noted the paper.

12. Update on Business Cases submitted at October 2012 (Paper 89/12)

The Head of Finance presented the paper.

She referred to the issue of administrative staff: assimilation of terms and conditions to NICS and Mr Doran clarified that this affected 120 administrative staff.

She explained that the amended business case for the replacement delivery site at Downpatrick had now been returned to DoJ for consideration.

Approval had now been received to renew the Andersonstown service delivery site lease for three years.

The business case for the renewal of the lease for the Magherafelt service delivery site was ready to be submitted to DoJ. The lease expired at the end of November 2012 and, if approval had not been received by then, it would be possible to continue to operate on a short term quarterly lease.

The Chairman stated that the new Board should consider the amount of detail which it wished to have in this paper which was now a standing Board agenda item.

Action: Mrs Patterson

The Head of Finance also updated Members on the situation regarding Ramoan for which an offer had now been received. She explained the impact of the current situation on the budget and advised that she had informed DoJ of the possibility of another pressure.

The Board noted the paper.

13. Financial Outturn: September 2012 (Paper 90/12)

The Head of Finance presented the paper. She explained that, due to IT compatibility issues with Account NI, there had been some manual work involved in providing the budgets and profile figures.

Spend against budget for salary costs stood at 49%. This was on target at the half year stage. Monthly accruals were being made for the expected NNC pay settlement and the assimilation of administrative staff to NICS terms and conditions. A figure of £694k had been accepted by DoJ for NILGOSC pension strain. There was a sum of £8-9k in salary costs which needed to be moved to Board costs.

For other revenue the spend against budget was 54%. The rates had been paid in May and represented 6% of the budget overall and there had been a number of significant pre-payments. Payment of grants to the community sector was now back on profile and a supplementary funding round was being planned.

Capital expenditure at time of writing was £65k. The Downpatrick business case was on-going and laptops had been purchased for staff involved in PCSP meetings.

The Head of Finance talked through the changes which would be made to the budget as a result of the October monitoring outcome. Members noted that additional funding of £350k was available for 2012-13 and £700k had been offered for 2013-14, but this latter sum required a further business case.

The Head of Finance reported that the Prompt Payment result for September 2012 had been 88% as the new Account NI process was still settling in.

The Board noted the paper.

14. Management Information (Paper 91/12)

Ms Lamont talked through the various elements of the IS Strategy update.

She reported on workload trends, explaining that the total number of orders being supervised by PBNI at the end of September 2012 was 20% higher than at the end of September 2011. The overall number of reports completed in the 12 months to the end of September 2012 was 1% higher than the total completed in the 12 months to the end of September 2011. The number of PSRs had fallen by 11% between September 2011 and September 2012, while the number of short PSRs had increased by 87%.

Ms Lamont referred to the two Global Corporate Challenge Celebration events. She reported on the uptake by staff of the flu vaccination. She explained that 27 new Probation Officers had now been recruited along with a new Deputy Head of Human Resources. A recruitment/promotion exercise was also underway following the receipt of the additional funding. PBNI had also hosted a range of visits, including one from Hazelwood College.

Ms Lamont also mentioned one Serious Further Offence.

She spoke about an initiative led by the Head of Psychology and Interventions which was exploring opportunities to deliver a Domestic Violence Programme for one of the Health Trusts.

In response to a query, Ms Lamont noted the extensive discussion on sickness absence at the October Board meeting and agreed that the next Management Information paper would include sickness absence information.

Action: Ms Lamont

The Board noted the paper.

15. Programme of Visits and Business (Paper 92/12)

It was agreed that in future staff referred to in this paper would be mentioned by name rather than title.

Action: Secretariat

The Board noted the paper.

16. Political and Public Affairs: update (Verbal)

Mr Doran outlined PBNI's contribution to the current debate around hostels.

He referred to the launch of the Public Protection Arrangements NI Annual Report and the PBNI DVD which was now on the PBNI website.

He highlighted the appointment of the new Chairman about which all staff had been advised.

He commented on the attendance of the Director at a Human Trafficking Seminar.

He drew attention to the recently published Criminal Justice Inspection report on the Management of Life and Indeterminate Sentence Prisoners. Many of the recommendations of this report involved PBNI directly or indirectly. A number of strengths had been highlighted with regard to PBNI practice.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

17. Report from the Committee (Paper 93/12)

The Committee Deputy Chair presented the paper. He explained that the Committee Chair had resigned before the business of the meeting commenced and he had assumed the chair for the meeting.

He drew attention to the KPMG presentation on the Bribery Act 2012. This presentation was to be made to the full Board.

Action: Director/Secretary

A presentation was to be made to the next meeting of the Committee on the Assurance Model.

Action: Director/Head of Business Planning and Development

He updated Members regarding the Internal Audit contract.

He explained that an HMRC error in calculating staff mileage expenses had now been resolved.

The Chairman highlighted the significant briefing note which the former Committee Chair had prepared following her attendance at a meeting of the DoJ Audit Committee Chairs' Forum.

The Board noted the paper.

OTHER BUSINESS

18. Chairman's Business

(i) The Chairman outlined arrangements for the Accountability Review and dinner on 21 November.

(ii) The Chairman advised that the Board meeting on 30 November would take place from 12 noon to 2pm and would provide an opportunity for outgoing, re-appointed and new Members to meet.

19. Director's/Secretary's Business

(i) The Director reported that PBNI would the following week host the Chief Executives' Learning Set.

(ii) The Director advised that Ms Lamont was to attend the Czech Mediation Service's Conference on Restorative Practices at no cost to PBNI.

(iii) The Secretary reminded outgoing Members to return their passes and advised them that they could return papers for confidential shredding.

He reminded all Members that they should submit travel claims at least every three months and asked outgoing Members to submit outstanding claims as a matter of urgency.

(iv) The Director reported that he had extended PBNI's sympathy to the colleagues of murdered prison officer David Black.

18. Any Other Business

It was confirmed that the General Purposes Committee would meet on 16 November 2012 when the main topic of discussion would be the Strategic Alliances and Issues paper.

19. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 30 November 2012 at 12 noon.

20. Closing Remarks

The Chairman extended his best wishes to Mrs Patterson and the Board Members who were to be re-appointed.

He thanked the excellent staff team with whom he had enjoyed working during his tenure.

The meeting closed at 11:10pm.