

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

BOARD MEETING – 17 APRIL 2015**9.30 AM – CONFERENCE ROOM, PBNI****361st MEETING – 32nd of TENTH TERM OF OFFICE****ATTENDANCE**

Mrs Vilma Patterson (Chairman)	Mr R Mullan (Deputy Chairman)
Mr D Brown	Mrs J Erskine (Items 8-27)
Mr E Jardine	Mrs L Jennett
Mr T O'Hanlon	Mrs M O'Rourke (Item 5-27)
Mr D Rose	Mrs P Shepherd
Dr M Wardlow (Items 12- 32)	Dr R Wilson

Ms C Lamont, (Acting) Director
 Mr P Doran, Deputy Director
 Mrs G Robinson, (Acting) Board Secretary/Head of Human Resources
 Ms C McCann, Head of Finance
 Ms G O'Hare, Head of Psychology and Interventions (items 7-8)
 Mrs W Rodgers, Personal Secretary (Minutes)

11 am – Minister of Justice launched the PBNI Business Plan

The Minister of Justice, David Ford, and Anthony Harbinson, Director of Safer Communities, attended the Board meeting to launch PBNI's 2015-16 Business Plan. The Chairman briefed the Minister on the contents of the Plan and thanked him for attending the Board Meeting.

The Minister thanked the Board for the work of the Organisation, which, despite the financial situation had achieved so much. Reference was made to PBNI's effective and collaborative work with PCSPs and the associated benefits.

The Minister was interested to hear from Board members and take their views. Several discussions ensued. The (Acting) Director thanked the Minister for his attendance and thanked him, and his officials, for their contribution to the work of Probation, and in particular thanked Anthony Harbinson for his continuing support.

The Minister thanked the Members and looked forward to an update later in the year at the Accountability Review.

1. OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chairman welcomed all Members to the meeting and advised that the agenda will be amended to facilitate the attendance of the Minister for Justice and the Director of Safer Communities who would launch the Probation Board for Northern Ireland's 2015-16 Business Plan at approximately 11 am.

Mr O'Hanlon declared an interest for item 7 of the agenda (NICTS – Consultation on Court Estates) and Mrs Erskine declared an interest for Item 8 of the agenda (PBNI Substance Misuse Strategy 2014-2017).

2. APOLOGIES

No apologies.

3. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

The Minutes from the Board Meeting held on 13 March 2015 were agreed as an accurate account of the meeting.

Minutes of the Closed Session held on 13 March 2015 were agreed during the Closed Session held 17 April 2015.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Paper 49/15)

Members were asked to note the Matters Arising, with all actions either in progress or completed.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

There were five pieces of correspondence for the Members' attention. The Chairman briefed the Members on the content of the correspondence with fuller discussion on correspondence items 5.3 and 5.4 (Memo from Mike Brennan to Accounting Officers and Memo from Nick Perry re Modernising the Department).

The (Acting) Director highlighted a number of points with reference to correspondence item 5.4 (Memo from Nick Perry) to the Members. After discussion it was agreed that the Chairman would prepare key points of relevance to PBNI that the Board would wish to be considered. In turn, the Chairman and the (Acting) Director would arrange a meeting with Nick Perry (Permanent Secretary) to discuss.

Action: The Chairman to prepare key points in response to Nick Perry's memo and arrange a meeting with Nick Perry.

All other correspondence would be presented during the closed session at this meeting.

6. BUSINESS PLAN 2014-15 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (Paper 51/15)

The (Acting) Deputy Director briefed the Members on the final update for the year just completed (2014-2015).

The Members were advised that of the 14 objectives set for the year, 11 had been fully achieved and two had an 'amber' rating – partially delivered. It was also confirmed that the Minister had been advised by the Chairman in November 2014 that due to budgetary cuts, objectives 4 and 13 would be partially delivered and objective 3 would not be delivered.

The Chairman commented that at the Accountability Review with the Minister later in the year, it should be noted, despite budgetary pressures PBNI had made significant progress in achieving its objectives; however, in the case of particular objectives, PBNI was dependant on input from other agencies/organisations over which PBNI did not have

influence. It was noted that the Change Fund will enable PBNI to carry forward some of its work with the Community and Voluntary Sector into the new financial year. The (Acting) Deputy Director also confirmed that the three objectives in question will be carried over for action in the 2015 -16 Business Plan. The Head of Finance confirmed that achievement of the objectives would be published in the annual accounts.

The Chairman wished to put on record the thanks of the Board to the staff for achieving so much of the PBNI Business Plan in a difficult financial year.

The Board approved the paper.

7. NICTS CONSULTATION ON COURT ESTATES (Paper 52/15)

Mr O'Hanlon abstained from the discussion as he had declared a conflict of interest regarding this agenda item.

The Deputy Director briefed Members on the background to the Consultation and advised that this was one of five projects being undertaken by the Courts at present. Members were advised that as the response is being sent on behalf of the Chairman, Members' approval was required.

8. PBNI SUBSTANCE MISUSE STRATEGY 2014-2017 (Paper 53/15)

The Chairman welcomed Geraldine O'Hare, Head Psychology and Interventions, to the meeting. Mrs Erskine abstained from the discussion as she had declared a conflict of interest on this item.

The Head of Psychology and Interventions put into context the document presented to Members and gave background to the Strategy with details of the research conducted.

Members were briefed on the involvement of PBNI with Public Health Agency (PHA) and Members were advised that PBNI had been the only agency from Criminal Justice who consistently attended and therefore PBNI were able to build awareness and contribute to the Strategy. Mrs Erskine entered the meeting at this point, stated a conflict of interest and did not participate in the discussion and decision process. Members were advised that the PHA had been successful in a tender process to commission services throughout Northern Ireland and were developing the priority referral process; this was at no cost to PBNI. PBNI have been linking with DOJ and NIPS on commission of services.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Psychology and Interventions for her briefing and commented that it was a significant piece of work for PBNI with such a high volume of clients who needed intervention for alcohol misuse. Members raised points for clarification and after the discussion, the Board approved the Strategy.

The Board approved the Strategy.

9. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda items 9 and 10 – Verbal)

Members were advised that the latest minutes from General Purposes Committee had been tabled at the Board meeting on 13 March 2015 as a meeting had not been held

since 27 February 2015. The Chair of General Purposes Committee advised Members that the next meeting was on 1 May 2015 and that there would be a presentation on PCSPs and Probation working in the rural areas. Members were advised that although there would be no policies for consideration, there were a number of papers for the attention of the Committee to advise on policies that were no longer required.

The Board noted the update.

11. AUDIT COMMITTEE – ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda items 11 and 12 - Minutes)

The Chair of the Audit Committee highlighted a number of items contained in the draft minutes presented for the Members' attention.

Reference was made to page 2 of the minutes where the rating on Administration of Grants had been changed by Internal Audit to 'substantial'. It was noted that Internal Audit have no concerns on the Credit Payments Report and that the Management Accounts would meet the deadline in May. Members were advised that there was one incident of Fraud which was minor.

It was confirmed that Mrs Jennett would be joining the Committee until the end of this term of office due to the resignation of Mr McAllister.

The next meeting will be on the 12 May 2015 with the following meeting taking place on the 29 May 2015, after the General Purposes Committee.

The Chairman asked for clarification of the name of the Committee and was advised that it was still to be named as Audit Committee, although this may be included in a review at a later stage.

The Board noted the update and minutes.

Action: Review of Name included in Review of TOR

13. REPORT ON INSPIRE – (Verbal)

The (Acting) Deputy Director updated Members on the current situation with Inspire. The Model continues noting that within the Rural area staff are based in different offices.

The Board noted the update.

14. CASE MANAGEMENT REPORT (Paper 54/15)

The Deputy Director stated that following the update to the Board in February in relation to linking to the prison's system, he wished to advise Members of the progress made since that meeting.

It had been noted that there was a good case for the YJA and PBNI to be supported under the Prison platform. A Project Board has been set up with Max Murray (NIPS) being the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO), and with PBNI representation. The Deputy Director explained to Members that the Prism application is hosted on the IT Assist confidential (ITAC) network at IL4 whereas PBNI works off IL3; the consequence of this is that PBNI could lose some of its current facilities for example Blackberry and Laptop

access (remote access) as these are not available on ITAC at present. A meeting has been arranged for early May to continue discussions and Members were advised that the Prison Service is sympathetic to this issue.

The Deputy Director assured Members that this was the appropriate option to follow but wished to highlight that it will be a challenging piece of work and will perhaps not be available until 2017/2018.

The Board noted the paper.

15. MARCH FINANCIAL OUTTURN AND COST REDUCTION (Paper 55/15)

The Head of Finance updated Members on the figures for March and advised that the figures presented were provisional outturn figures as of 10 April 2015.

Members were advised that an offer had been received for Antrim office and having checked with DOJ they advised that the sum offered was within the 10% approval tolerance with the (Acting) Director able to sign off on this offer as it was within her delegated limits – Members were also advised that there was no Capital Gains liability on the property.

The Head of Finance advised that the year-end audit has a tight timeline with the close date being 6 May and the Audit commencing on the 11 May.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Board, thanked the Head of Finance for the finance report. Members noted that Ms McCann has now been with PBNI for one year and in that time it was evidenced the hard work she had put in to resolve issues and the level of detail now supplied with the accounts.

The Board noted the paper.

16. BUDGET 2015-16 (Verbal)

The Head of Finance advised Members that a paper had been presented to Members at the Board meeting held on 13 March 2015 and this had given detail on how PBNI would live within its budget which had been reduced by 9.2% for the 2015/16 financial year. Members were advised that there are still a number of unknowns. The June Monitoring Round has been commissioned which requires all internal pressures to be met and easements to be declared to meet pressures within the DOJ. A Member requested further clarification on this from the DOJ. It was agreed that the (Acting) Director would meet with Anthony Harbinson to discuss.

Action: The (Acting) Director to meet with Anthony Harbinson to discuss.

The Board noted the update.

17. PROGRAMME AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT UPDATE (Paper 57/15)

The Head of Finance briefed Members on the paper presented highlighting INSPIRE and briefed the Board Members on discussions currently taking place with the YJA in respect of using space in their Headquarters as a base for the Belfast Inspire.

The Chairman stated that the paper presented to the Board was very informative with the RAG status and narrative demonstrating sound governance arrangements for the Board.

The Board noted the paper.

18. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION REPORT (Paper 58/15)

The Chairman advised Members that the Management of Information Report was scheduled for quarterly discussion at this Board Meeting.

The Head of Human Resources briefed the Members on staffing, noting that the workforce figures had not changed significantly. Members were advised that sickness absence had been discussed at General Purposes in February 2015 at some length and also that an audit had been carried out recently on Sickness Absence Procedures, noting that the draft report was ready and that the feedback had been favourable; the findings would be referred to the Audit Committee. The Head of Human Resources advised that HR was currently in discussion with NISRA on how they calculate sickness absence figures.

The (Acting) Deputy Director drew Members' attention to page 10 and noted that Community Service Orders were down by 13% on the previous year but Determinate Custodial Sentences had increased. There was a 15% reduction of reports completed in the 12 months to February 2015 than that of the 12 months to February 2014. Over the same period the number of Short Pre-sentence Reports (SPSRs) fell by 30%.

The Head of Human Resources advised that a Well Being Survey and Investor in People Report will be coming to the Board.

Action: The (Acting) Board Secretary to ensure that the Well Being Survey and Investor in People Reports are an agenda item for the Board in June 2015.

Members were advised that a server had been purchased to run the Minute Pads and that the Head of IT was to meet with the Chairman to go through the system and process.

Action: The Chairman, (Acting) Board Secretary and Head of IT to meet to discuss Minute Pad.

The Board noted the paper.

19. PROGRAMME OF VISITS AND BUSINESS (Paper 59/15)

The (Acting) Director advised Members of the attendance of herself, Geraldine O'Hare – Head of Psychology and Interventions and Michael Winnington, Probation Officer – Assessment Unit, at the Butler Trust Awards on 1 April 2015 in London where Michael was awarded a Commendation. They were later entertained at St James Palace for afternoon tea.

The Chairman advised Members that both she and the (Acting) Director attended the Social Work Awards. Margaret Wylie, Probation Officer was one of three finalists in her category and was unfortunate not to win; this was a tremendous achievement for her and

PBNI. It was noted that PBNI should be entered into the awards every year, if appropriate, and staff had taken away learning for future submissions.

The Board noted the update.

20. BOARD WORK PLAN 2015-2016 (Paper 60/15)

The Board noted the paper.

21. BOARD EFFECTIVENESS AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE (Paper 61/15)

The Chairman advised Members of the background to the presented paper which was authored by Mr Jardine. Following the Board performance session with Eileen Mullan and the session with David Nichol on Standing Orders and structures, the Chairman wished for the Members to be updated. A Task and Finish Group has been set up for one meeting on the 24 April 2015 to draft the recommendations for committee strategy and they will bring these to Members at the next Board Meeting. Mr Jardine suggested that there could be other ways that the General Purposes Committee could work more effectively to support the (Acting) Director and her team. Board Members and the Executive Team were asked to email any comments they have to the Chairman prior to the meeting on 24 April 2015.

Action: Board Effectiveness and Performance recommendations to be presented to the Board at May's meeting.

Action: Board Members and the Executive Team to email any comments on Board Effectiveness to the Chairman prior to 24 April 2015.

The Board noted the paper.

22. CLOSURE OF OD PROGRAMME (Paper 62/15)

The Head of Human Resources advised Members that they had been kept updated throughout the time of the Programme and now it had come to a close with all areas completed and recommendations being transferred to the Work Force Management Programme which will follow a different process to the OD Programme.

The Chairman in thanking them, highlighted the input of each staff member and advised that the final OD Programme Board had taken place. The Chairman also thanked the (Acting) Director as Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and the Head of Human Resources for her management of the Programme. The Chairman thanked Members of the Sub-group and acknowledged that it had turned out to be a larger piece of work than first anticipated. The Chairman advised that she had written to all members of the Senior Management Team enclosing a copy of the Final Report. A summary version will be published on the Intranet to ensure openness and transparency. She drew attention to the fact that this was an example of good practice in how the project had been managed and with a final closure meeting and with the establishment of the new project to take forward the action points along with Workforce Management.

The (Acting) Director as Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) thanked the Deputy Directors for their input to Estates and Practice projects, and also the Head of Communications and the Head of IT for their input via their projects of work.

The Head of Human Resources asked the Members to note the closure of the OD Project.

The Board noted the paper.

23. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Verbal)

The Chairman congratulated Mr Jardine on his appointment to the Education Authority; and Mr Rose and Mr Mullan on their appointment to the Equality Commission.

A Memorandum from the Learning and Development Department was brought to the Members' attention reference the Further Educational Scheme funding. This allows for staff to apply for funding to study or receive training which is relevant to their job. The Chairman congratulated the (Acting) Director and her team for proceeding with this initiative in challenging financial times and recognised the importance of continuing with development opportunities.

24. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS (Paper 63/15)

24.1 The Chairman briefed Members on her, (Acting) Director and the Head of Human Resources visit to London. The purpose of the visit was to discuss NOM's position on NNC terms and conditions as with the closure of the Probation Association, lines of communication had closed and the organisational structures had significantly changed. The Chairman advised that it proved to be a useful visit.

The (Acting) Director reported that she had found the visit very informative and that she had established ongoing contact which would prove useful for Operations and HR.

The Head of Human Resources advised that she attended to assist with understanding on how NNC terms and conditions had been, or would be, affected in the future.

A further paper would be brought to the Board on this matter in due course.

The Board noted the paper

25. (ACTING) DIRECTOR'S / BOARD SECRETARY'S BUSINESS (Verbal)

25.1 The (Acting) Director advised members that Mr Hamill and Mr Doran were leading on the new business operating model for NIPS and that there had been three meetings. A paper will be presented at May's Board Meeting.

Action: Paper on the NIPS Business Operating Model to be presented at May's Board meeting.

- 25.2 The (Acting) Board Secretary reminded members to submit any outstanding expenses for the year 2014 – 2015.

The Meeting closed at 12.45 pm followed by a closed session.

26. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Friday 15 May 2015 at 9.30 am, PBNI Headquarters, Conference Room.

Vilma Patterson
Chairman

Date