

**PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

**BOARD MEETING – 12 APRIL 2013**

**335<sup>TH</sup> MEETING – 5<sup>TH</sup> OF TENTH TERM OF OFFICE**

1. ATTENDANCE

1.1 Present

Mrs V Patterson (Chairman)

Mr D Brown

Mr T O’Hanlon

Mrs J Erskine

Mrs M O’Rourke

Mr E Jardine

Mr D Rose (from item 6)

Mrs L Jennett (to item 23)

Mr M Wardlow

Mr R Mullan

Dr R Wilson (from item 6)

1.2 Officials

Mr B McCaughey (Director) (to item 27)

Mr P Doran (Deputy Director Operations) (to item 27)

Ms C Lamont (Deputy Director Operations) (to item 27)

Mr P Moss (Board Secretary)

Ms G McGreevy (Head of Communications) (to item 23)

Ms L Cooper (Head of Business Planning and Development) (to item 27)

Ms S Glenn (Acting Head of Finance) (to item 27)

Ms S Forrester (Secretariat) (to item 27)

Mr P Thompson (Assistant Director) (items 8-14)

Mr T Doherty (Assistant Director) (items 8-10)

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Ms Shepherd, Mr McAllister and the Deputy Director Finance and Corporate Services.

3. OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chairman welcomed everyone.

She advised Members that the Deputy Director Finance and Corporate Services would return to work on 15 April.

No Conflicts of Interest were recorded.

4. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 MARCH 2013 (M3/13)

The minutes were signed as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING (Paper 31/13) (tabled)

Members were advised that the pension strain monies had been paid before 31 March 2013 (page 5, paragraph 16).

It was reported that the Director had written to KPMG extending the Internal Audit Contract (page 7, paragraph 22).

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

6. CORRESPONDENCE (Paper 32/13) (tabled)

Members noted the Criminal Justice Board Communiqué March 2013 which was for internal use only.

FOR DECISION

7. Policy on the Development and Review of Organisational Policy Documents (Paper 33/13)

The Head of Business Planning and Development presented the paper, explaining that there had been a commitment to review the new approach to organisational policy documents which had been introduced in February 2011.

The current draft document defined certain key concepts and set out six stages in the process of policy development.

The draft Policy was supported by a Procedures document which could be made available to Members on request. A slide was displayed which illustrated the levels of approval for different types of document and the role of the Board in the process.

Members discussed the importance of training in this area and the Head of Business Planning and Development explained that SMT would discuss training and communication requirements.

The Chairman acknowledged the contribution made by Dr Wilson in promoting the importance of clear and consistent policy-making for several years and his assistance to staff in the formation of this document.

One Member stressed the need to make it clear that PBNI would make provision for anyone whose first language was not English or who was visually impaired. It was also suggested that the Consultation Institute was a useful source on current developments.

The Board approved the draft Policy on the Development and Review of Organisational Policy documents.

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

8. Suggestions for Speakers (Paper 37/13)

The Chairman introduced the paper, highlighting a variety of approaches which might be taken: these approaches needed to be scoped and costed.

Members stressed the need for clarity on the objectives of the exercise.

The Chairman expressed the view that this exercise could help broaden the Board's perspectives for corporate planning and explained that she was seeking approval to take the matter forward in terms of planning.

Members agreed to an incremental approach whereby a number of speakers would be invited to speak to the Board and staff before consideration was given to the possibility of an event with a wider audience.

It was agreed that this matter would be discussed further at the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee.

**Action: Chairman**

9. Background Briefing on PBNI's Community Grants Scheme and Proposal for Evaluation of Community Grants 2012-13 (Paper 34/13)

Mr Thompson outlined the background and context to the Grants Scheme and talked through the various stages of the Scheme.

The Head of Business Planning and Development explained that it was now hoped to carry out an evaluation of the 2012-13 Grants Scheme and outlined the proposed three phases of work. She explained that this evaluation could be conducted in one of two ways - by commissioning the work or by recruiting on a fixed term basis - and that SMT were recommending the second option.

The Chairman commended the three phases, but expressed the view that they might be enhanced in terms of the impact for Probation in respect of outputs. She suggested that it might be possible to accommodate the production of both an evaluation report which would inform the Board's corporate planning and a longer term evaluation.

The Board agreed in principle that PBNI's Community Grants Scheme 2012-13 should be evaluated.

It was further agreed that a revised paper which rescoped the research and reconsidered the mechanics of the evaluation should be brought to the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee.

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

## FOR NOTING

10. Criminal Justice Inspection Report on Community Supervision by PBNI  
(Paper 35/12)

Mr Doherty outlined the methodology of the Inspection and explained that the format of the Inspection had been designed to benchmark PBNI with Probation Trusts in England and Wales.

He referred to the initial draft report which PBNI Senior Management had received. Indications were that this was going to be an extremely positive report for PBNI and plans were in hand to mark its launch accordingly. It was anticipated that the final report would be published at the end of April 2013.

The Board noted the paper.

## FOR DECISION

11. Production of 2014-2017 PBNI Corporate Plan: Outline Project Timeline  
(Paper 36/13)

The Head of Business Planning and Development talked through the proposed timeline.

The Chairman said that she was proposing to form a subgroup of Board Members to deal with this piece of work.

Dr Wilson, Mr Brown, Mr Jardine, Mr Rose and Mrs Jennett volunteered to sit on this sub-group.

The Director emphasised the Board's role in giving strategic direction to this process. He suggested the possibility of holding the scripting workshop prior to the consultation period. Members endorsed this suggestion.

The Board approved the outline timings for the formulation of the Corporate Plan 2014-17.

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

12. Appointment of General Purposes Committee Chair and Deputy Chair  
(Verbal)

The Chairman said that, after consideration of the nominations, she wished to propose Mr Jardine for the position of General Purposes Committee Chair.

The Board agreed to this proposal.

The Chairman advised that she had decided to delay the appointment of a Deputy Chair of the General Purposes Committee until the DoJ had concluded the process for the appointment of the Board Deputy Chairman.

13. Appointment of Community Grants Appeal Panel (Verbal)

The Chairman explained that it might be necessary to appoint a Community Grants Appeal Panel.

Mrs Jennett, Mr Brown and Mr Mullan agreed to sit on the panel if it was required.

The Board endorsed these appointments.

FOR NOTING

14. Strategic Risk Register – Risk 2 (Paper 38/13)

Mr Thompson introduced the discussion which centred around the risk of current approved accommodation becoming unavailable. He explained the situation with a number of providers and the arrangements which existed with them.

The Director emphasised that PBNI did not own, run or manage hostels or approved premises. There were wider issues around the governance of hostels which required clarification. It was agreed that a further update on the provision of accommodation would be brought to the Board later in the year.

The Board noted the paper.

15. Board Objectives and Workplan 2013/14 (Paper 40/13)

The Chairman explained that this was the first draft of the Board's Workplan and that it might change every month.

The Board noted the paper.

16. Appointment of Deputy Chairman: update on progress (Verbal)

The Chairman said that this appointment would be conducted as a paper exercise led by the DoJ. The Panel would be chaired by an official from DoJ and comprised an independent person from the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland and the PBNI Chairman.

The panel would meet at the end of the month, after which its recommendation would be submitted to the Minister of Justice who would take the decision.

17. Annual Performance Report: PBNI Business Plan 2012-13 (Paper 39/13)

The Head of Business Planning and Development presented the paper. She reported that eight out of ten business plan objectives had been fully achieved. One objective (Objective 2) had been partially achieved, and the element of that objective not achieved was beyond PBNI control. One objective (Objective 10) had not been achieved due to circumstances beyond PBNI control.

It had been agreed at the Overview meeting that Objective 10 would be recorded in the Annual Report as lavender meaning "beyond PBNI control".

It was suggested that the narrative in the Annual Report should state that there had been 100% achievement on all objectives over which PBNI had control.

The Chairman congratulated staff and SMT on this excellent achievement.

The Board noted the paper.

18. Financial Outturn: February 2013 (Paper 42/13)

The Acting Head of Finance presented the paper and highlighted a number of items.

The NICS pay remit had been formally re-submitted to DoJ.

Pension strain monies had been paid before the end of March 2013.

Other revenue costs remained under pressure. Spend against budget to date was 94%. Taking into consideration payments in advance, the figure would come down to 91%

The sale of Ramoan had not completed by the end of the financial year. DoJ had confirmed that the anticipated loss on disposal of £107k would not be clawed back from PBNI budget as previously indicated. The property would be revalued at year end by Land and Property Service. The 2012/13 capital budget would be £70k lower as a result of the delay in the sale of Ramoan.

The Acting Head of Finance referred to discussion of the hospitality figures at the previous Board meeting and advised that the hospitality budget would be split in line with DoJ guidelines.

The Acting Head of Finance stated that the anticipated year end position was expected to be very close but within budget.

The Board noted the paper.

19. Business Cases update (Verbal)

The Acting Head of Finance updated Members regarding Downpatrick, Omagh and Coleraine, the potential move of PDU to new premises and the refurbishment at Limavady Road.

20. Management Information (Paper 41/13)

Ms Lamont reported that figures on the allocation of Probation Officers had been provided as discussed at the previous Board meeting.

She highlighted the sickness absence figures.

She reported on a PIMS application failure and added that, since the paper had been drafted, there had been a further failure.

She updated Members on the purchase of secure remote laptops which had been affected by the delay in the sale of Ramoan.

Mr Doran reported on the organisational workload figures, the Data Protection/Freedom of Information figures and the Assembly Question statistics. There were no Serious Further Offences to report.

The Chairman referred to the sickness absence figures and the Director noted that action to reduce the level of sickness absence was a Business Plan objective for the subsequent year.

The question of electronic Board provision was raised. It was agreed that the Head of IT would provide an update on PIMS, the new case management system and electronic Board provision to the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee.

**Action: Head of IT**

The Board noted the paper.

21. Programme of Visits and Business (Paper 43/13)

The Chairman and Director drew attention to a number of events.

The report which Mr Hamill had written on the visit to the London Probation Service would be provided to Members.

**Action: Secretariat**

The Chairman reported on the Overview meeting at which PBNI had been advised that there would be further financial pressures and cuts to the budget. PBNI had been asked to re-profile its figures on a higher percentage cut.

The Director said that the demands which the production of business cases was placing on PBNI had been raised at the Overview meeting.

The Director advised Members that the PBNI Savings Plan for 2013/14 had identified cumulative savings of £2.7m. However this Plan had been predicated on selling buildings which was now unlikely in the current economic climate. Consequently there was a £700k shortfall about which he had already made the DoJ aware. DoJ had indicated that over the next 12 months they wished to undertake a project to benchmark PBNI in terms of outputs, outcomes, costs and value for money.

Members discussed how this situation might be addressed.

It was agreed that it should be the subject of further discussion at the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee.

**Action: Director**

22. Political and Public Affairs: update (Verbal)

The Head of Communications tabled a media coverage paper.

The Chairman welcomed the positive coverage which was being achieved.

## AUDIT COMMITTEE

### 23. Report from the Committee (January 2013) (Paper 44/13)

The Committee Chair highlighted the DoJ internal audit presentation, the internal audit report on records management, the NIAO Audit Strategy and the paper on Direct Award Contracts and De Minimis Levels.

The Board noted the paper.

### 24. Report from the Committee (March 2013) (Paper 45/13)

The Committee Chair referred to the internal audit report on Review of summary reporting of financial outturn (for 2011/12) which would be considered further at the April Audit Committee meeting.

The Committee Chair advised Members that the Director had written to KPMG to extend the internal audit contract for a further year.

The Board noted the paper.

## OTHER BUSINESS

### 25. Director's/Secretary's Business

#### (i) Review of DoJ Information Needs – Proposal for a Strategic Information Framework

Further to a review by Debbie Donnelly the Director had received correspondence from Mark McGuckin proposing a strategic information framework for the DoJ and securing joined up delivery through a shared services approach. A meeting had been arranged for 10 May 2013 and he would share the paper with the Chairman.

**Action: Director**

(ii) The Director thanked the Deputy Directors (Operations) and the senior team for their contribution during the absence of a colleague.

(iii) The Secretary asked Members to reply to the invitations to Board visits.

### 26. Any other business

It was agreed that the General Purposes Committee would meet on 26 April 2013.

### 27. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was confirmed for 10 May 2013.

28. CLOSED SESSION

Remuneration Committee

The Board agreed the minutes of the Remuneration Committee subject to a correction to Mr O'Hanlon's name.

The Board then approved the minute of its consideration of the Remuneration Committee's report.

Human Resources Matter

The Chairman reported on meetings which had followed the report of the Board appeal panel and on the actions which were being implemented. It had been agreed that the Director would meet the Chair of the Audit Committee on a monthly basis to report on progress.

The meeting closed at 1:15pm.

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**Vilma Patterson**  
**Chairman**

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**Date**