

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

BOARD MEETING – 15 MARCH 2013

334TH MEETING – 4TH OF TENTH TERM OF OFFICE

1. ATTENDANCE

1.1 Present

Mrs V Patterson (Chairman)

Mr D Brown

Mr R Mullan

Mrs J Erskine

Mr T O’Hanlon

Mr E Jardine

Mr D Rose

Mrs L Jennett

Mr M Wardlow

Mr B McAllister

Dr R Wilson

1.2 Officials

Mr P Doran (Deputy Director Operations) (from item 6)

Ms C Lamont (Deputy Director Operations) (from item 6)

Mr P Moss (Board Secretary)

Ms G McGreevy (Head of Communications) (items 6-22)

Ms L Cooper (Head of Business Planning and Development) (from item 6)

Ms S Forrester (Secretariat) (from item 6)

Ms S Glenn (Acting Head of Finance) (from item 6)

1.3 Also in attendance

Mr B O’Hara (KPMG) (item 6)

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Ms Shepherd, Mrs O’Rourke, the Director and the Deputy Director Finance and Corporate Services.

3. OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chairman welcomed everyone and stated that she needed to call an immediate meeting of the Remuneration Committee to discuss two important matters related to salary.

The Remuneration Committee would then report to the Board.

This would be followed by a report from the Board Appeal Panel on the HR matter mentioned at previous Board meetings.

The Board agreed to appoint all Members present to constitute the Remuneration Committee except for members of the Audit Committee.

No Conflicts of Interest were recorded.

CLOSED SESSION

Items 4 and 5. See separate minute.

6. PRESENTATION: BRIBERY ACT 2010

The Chairman welcomed Mr O'Hara who explained that this presentation had previously been made to the Senior Management Team and the Audit Committee.

Mr O'Hara set out the background to the 2010 Bribery Act. He explained what the offence was, who the Act applied to and what the penalties were. He addressed the key risk areas and highlighted areas of focus for PBNi within procurement, grants and funding and provision of services. He talked through a number of elements in the principles-based guidance which the Ministry of Justice had released to assist organisations in the implementation of anti-bribery and corruption procedures. He concluded by drawing attention to ten key actions which organisations could consider in adopting a "Prevention, Detection, Response" approach.

There was discussion around the respective roles of the Board, Audit Committee and Accounting Officer.

The Dear Accounting Officer letter relating to the Bribery Act 2010 (DAO (DFP) 09/11) and the Ministry of Justice Quick Start Guide were tabled. It was agreed that Members would be provided with a copy of the presentation.

Action: Secretariat

7. Anti-Fraud and Anti-Bribery Policy and Response Plan (Paper 24/13)

The Acting Head of Finance presented the paper, advising that a risk assessment would be brought to the April 2013 meeting of the Audit Committee.

Action: Acting Head of Finance

She explained that, although the draft Policy had not yet been approved, it had been decided to include relevant details and requirements in the correspondence sent to organisations which were being offered funding under the 2013-14 Community Grants scheme.

She added that arrangements were in place to communicate the Policy to staff and a detailed training plan would be prepared.

Members commented that it was good practice for the Chair of the Audit Committee to be informed of all cases of suspected or proven fraud and it was agreed that the paper should be amended to reflect this.

Action: Acting Head of Finance

The Acting Head of Finance pointed out that the Unions had not yet been consulted about this draft.

The Board approved the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Bribery Policy and Response Plan with the inclusion of the reference to the Chair of the Audit Committee, subject to consultation with the Unions.

Action: Acting Head of Finance

8. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 FEBRUARY 2013 (M2/13)

The minutes were signed as a correct record.

9. MATTERS ARISING (Paper 21/13) (tabled)

The Acting Head of Finance said that she would give an update on the ISU Laptops (page 5, paragraph 12) as part of the Business Cases update agenda item

The Acting Head of Finance confirmed that the training budget for 2013-14 would be reviewed (page 6, paragraph 13).

Action: Acting Head of Finance

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

The possibility of the Board engaging with NIACRO and Extern was raised (page 3, paragraph 8). The Chairman indicated that it was her intention to invite Members to put forward suggestions for speakers who might contribute to future meetings.

Action: Chairman

10. CORRESPONDENCE (Paper 22/13) (tabled)

The Board noted a letter to the Director from the Chief Constable following the former's letter of condolence on the death of Constable Philippa Reynolds, the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland 2013-14 Inspection Programme and an exchange of emails between the Director and DoJ regarding the Internal Audit Business Case.

A letter to the Chairman from DHSS&PS and DSD on the consultation on draft Inter-Departmental Review of Housing Adaptations Services was tabled.

FOR DECISION

11. Business Plan 2013-13 (Paper 23/13)

The Head of Business Planning and Development presented the paper, explaining that approval as being sought from the Board prior to submission of the draft to the Minister of Justice for his approval.

A number of amendments were agreed:

- the possibility should be considered of including reference to Human Resources or Finance in Strategic Theme 5

- the word “funding” in the paragraph on the final page relating to NIPS should read “payment”
- Objective 1 should be more tightly defined to eliminate the use of “to contribute” which lacked clarity.

It was noted that there would be an opportunity to review PBNI’s purpose (Making local communities safer by challenging and changing offenders’ behaviour) during the drafting of the new Corporate Plan.

Subject to amendments to reflect the above discussion, the Board approved the draft Business Plan 2013-14 prior to its submission to the Minister of Justice for approval.

Action: Head of Business Planning and Development

FOR NOTING

12. Strategic Risk – Risk 1 (Paper 29/13)

The Chairman introduced the topic, explaining that it was her intention that the Board would have a series of discussions around the various risks in the Strategic Risk Register.

Ms Lamont presented the item, explaining that the risk owner (Mr Hamill) was on leave. She talked through the various measures which were in place to manage this risk, namely the Best Practice Framework, Risk of Serious Harm procedures, notification of Serious Further Offence procedures and oversight of staff. She drew particular attention to the Best Practice Framework which was a possible topic for a fuller presentation.

The Chairman thanked Ms Lamont for a very comprehensive presentation.

13. Audit of Skills of Members (Verbal)

The Chairman thanked those Members who had made a return and asked Members who had not yet done so to respond as soon as possible.

14. General Purposes Committee: Expression of interest for role of Chairman and Deputy Chairman (Paper 25/12)

The Chairman presented the paper, explaining that she would bring a proposal to the Board for approval.

Action: Chairman

The Board endorsed this approach.

The Board agreed that it was not necessary for the General Purposes Committee to meet on 28 March 2013.

15. Board agenda planning (Verbal)

The Chairman reported that work was in hand on a Board Workplan for the financial year.

16. Financial Outturn: January 2013 (Paper 26/13)

The Acting Head of Finance presented the paper, explaining that the figures had been updated to reflect budget allocation agreed at January monitoring.

Spend against budget to date for salary costs stood at 83% which was consistent with anticipated figures for this point in the year.

The NICS pay assimilation was still in hand and there was likely to be an issue with pension strain. Clarification would be sought as to whether pension strain monies could be paid before the end of the financial year.

Action: Acting Head of Finance

In Other Revenue Costs spend against budget stood at 88%. After the deduction of pre-payments, the figure still stood at 84%.

The capital budget for 2012/13 had been reduced to reflect the anticipated lower sales proceeds of Ramoan. DoJ had not allocated budget cover for the anticipated loss on disposal of Ramoan of £107k. However, it was now possible that the sale of Ramoan might not go through by the end of March 2013, in which case a revaluation of the property at year end might ease the situation.

Significant capital IT expenditure was anticipated before year end.

Prompt Payment Results over the period January 2013 had gone down to 75%. Accommodation and Supplies were seeking ways to improve this figure.

In response to a query, the Acting Head of Finance explained that accruals were done on an annual basis and it was anticipated that there would be a negative accrual at the end of the year as a significant amount of TOIL had been paid out.

The Chairman drew attention to the figures for hospitality. The Acting Head of Finance explained that this heading would be split in the next financial year to provide greater clarity.

Action: Acting Head of Finance

In response to a query as to whether the budget would be on target at the end of the year, the Acting Head of Finance indicated that this would depend on accruals and payments at year end. She anticipated that balancing the budget at the end of the year would be tight.

The Board noted the paper.

17. Business Cases update (Verbal)

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

She advised that secure laptops for ISU Probation Officers had now been ordered. PBNI had been obliged to obtain these using the NICS Framework.

18. Management Information (Paper 27/13)

The Chairman reminded Members that reporting would be on an exceptions basis and thanked staff for a very clear report. Members were informed that a start had been made on options for the provision of papers electronically. Variations in caseload and reports figures were noted.

Mr Doran reported on one Serious Further Offence.

Members were advised of two data loss incidents about which the DoJ had also been notified.

Members asked that the organisational workload figures should include the number of whole time equivalent Probation Officers alongside the type of supervision.

Action: Deputy Directors

The Board noted the paper.

19. Programme of Visits and Business (Paper 28/13)

The Chairman and Ms Lamont (on behalf of the Director) drew attention to a number of events.

The Board noted the paper.

20. Political and Public Affairs: update (Verbal)

The Head of Communications tabled papers relating to March media coverage and a social media update. Members welcomed the media coverage and asked that this would be provided on an on-going basis.

Action: Head of Communications

The Head of Communications reported that she hoped to bring the three year Communications Strategy to the May 2013 Board meeting and updated Members on a number of meetings with MLAs.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

21. Report from the Committee (March 2013) (Verbal)

The Chair of the Audit Committee reported on the meeting which the Committee had held that morning.

The Committee had considered an Internal Audit Report on “Review of summary reporting of financial outturn (for 2011/12)” and the draft management response.

It had been agreed that the Report would be considered further with the final management response at the April 2013 Committee meeting.

22. Internal Audit Contract Extension (Verbal)

The Chair of the Audit Committee explained that this was the second item which the Committee had discussed at its meeting that morning. He reminded Members of the background to this item and referred to the exchange of emails in the Correspondence paper (Paper 22/13).

The Audit Committee was now proposing to the Board that the contract with KPMG should be extended for a further year during which time clarification should be sought as to the type of provision the DoJ internal audit service could provide.

The Board approved the proposal.

Action: Director

OTHER BUSINESS

23. Chairman’s Business

The Chairman said that the link which CIPFA had provided for evaluation of the Governance Training would be forwarded to Members.

Action: Secretariat

24. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 12 April 2013.

The meeting closed at 1:15pm.

Vilma Patterson
Chairman

Date