

## PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

**BOARD MEETING – 15 JANUARY 2016****9.30 AM – PARK AVENUE HOTEL, BELFAST****370th MEETING – 2nd of ELEVENTH TERM OF OFFICE****ATTENDANCE**

Mrs Vilma Patterson (Chairman)	Mr R Mullan (Deputy Chairman)
Mr D Brown	Mrs J Erskine
Mrs J Gillespie	Mr E Jardine
Mr I Jeffers	Ms A Matthews
Mr T O'Hanlon	Mrs B Stuart
Mr D Wall	

Ms C Lamont, (Acting) Director  
Mr P Doran, Deputy Director  
Mr H Hamill, (Acting) Deputy Director  
Mrs G Robinson, Head of HR  
Mrs C Teggart, Head of Finance  
Mr M Cox, Board Secretary  
Mrs W Rodgers, Personal Secretary (Minutes)

**1. OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting and thanked them for attending the two day Induction Event. Members were requested to complete the 'feedback' forms on the Induction Event to allow Secretariat to take account of comments for the future. Visits to PBNI offices will be followed up at a future date.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

**Action: Mrs Rodgers to email out feedback forms to Members.**

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mrs P Shepherd, Member and Mr G OhEara, Member.

**3. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES**

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 11 December 2015 were accepted as an accurate account of the meeting.

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Paper 1/16)**

The Board noted the matters arising.

## **5. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE – VERBAL**

The Chairman briefed the Members on a paper sent in late December to the (Acting) Director on the DOJ Transformation Programme. One of the work streams was 'how PBNI and YJA could work more closely together' with conclusions drawn on a preferred option. The Chairman advised that she has since written to Nick Perry, the Permanent Secretary, expressing concern as to why the Board had not been consulted. As Nick Perry is currently on annual leave, Anthony Harbinson, the Director of Safer Communities, met with the Chairman and the (Acting) Director on 14 January 2016. They discussed the proposal during which assurances were given by Mr Harbinson that no actions will be taken which would fall outside of due process.

The Chairman advised that she had met with Stewart Dickson and Stephen Farry of the Alliance Party. Meetings have been arranged with Sinn Fein and dates are being proposed for a meeting with the DUP. There had also been a meeting with the Children's Commissioner, Koulla Yiasouma, also Eva Grossman and Conor Houston from the Centre for Democracy and Peace Building.

The Board noted the update.

## **6. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE – VERBAL**

The (Acting) Director advised Members that Mr Terry Doherty, Assistant Director - Risk, had been awarded a British Empire Medal in the New Year's Honours for his work in community safety and public protection. Terry will be retiring in March of this year; he has been an excellent member of staff having worked across most areas of the Organisation. Liz Arthur has been appointed to act up to the role of (Acting) Assistant Director – Risk, following Mr Doherty's retirement.

Members were advised that Mr John O'Kane, Area Manager, will be receiving a certificate from the Butler Trust for his work in Londonderry, following the incident at Crawford Square office, with staff and local residents.

The (Acting) Director has met with her counterpart from the YJA this week to discuss closer collaborative working. She will keep the Chairman updated of any developments.

Mrs Erskine expressed her delight that Mr O'Kane had received the award as she had witnessed his work in Derry with the residents and staff first hand. The Chairman confirmed that she had written to both Mr O'Kane and Mr Doherty, on behalf of the Board, congratulating them on their awards.

The Board noted the update.

## **7. COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR POLICY (Paper 2/16)**

The Chairman introduced the Policy to the Members, advising that the Community and Voluntary Sector Policy had not been through the normal process of going to the Policy and Practice Committee (PPC) prior to consideration by the Board as there were time constraints. The Head of Finance took Members through the minor changes that had been made to reflect the change in the Code of Practice for Reducing Bureaucracy in Grant Funding to the Voluntary and Community Sector, prepared by the Department of Social Development (DSD) with 'track changes' shown on the procedures and annex.

There was discussion around the level of sign off and the funding over a year. It was advised that any monies under £30k would be grant aid and any monies to be allocated over £30k will go through CPD procurement processes. There was a query about the clarity of 12.1, it was advised that this was lifted directly from legislation. Mr Mullan asked if there was any change in procedure for appeals and was advised that there was not with Members being directed to point 4.3 of the procedures. During the discussion which followed, it was explained that the equality screening had been done when the Policy had initially been presented to the Board for approval and as such there was no requirement to place the outcome on paper.

The Chairman commented on PBNI's good governance on allocating public money and that under the new code governance was proportionate and a rigorous approach will be maintained.

The Board approved the amendments to the Community and Voluntary Sector Policy.

## **8. Q3 BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE 2015-16 (Paper 3/16)**

The (Acting) Deputy Director gave the Members an overview of the current position with regard to the 2015-16 Business Plan Objectives, advising that the three objectives sitting currently on 'amber' should be achieved by the year end. Seven of the objectives had a 'green' rating.

A Member asked if there had been any issues raised by the unions on the use of volunteers and was advised that there had not been as the volunteers were not replacing staff. A Member asked what the volunteers did and was advised that they work face to face with offenders. Quite often they are students, seeking relevant experience in terms of a career pathway.

A Member was concerned that objective nine was showing as 'green' as there was still work to be carried out. Members were advised that a considerable amount of work had already been completed and reported on in respect of this objective. The overall work will be evident in the final quarter summary report.

In respect of the next year's Business Plan, the Chairman advised that by the next Board meeting there should be a clearer idea of what the budget will be and therefore allowing for targets to be set. Dependency on third parties will be taken out to allow for achievability of the targets set.

The Board noted the paper.

## **9. MEMBERS' VISITS TO PBNI OFFICES (PAPER 4/16)**

Members' attention was brought to the list of PBNI offices and they were asked to nominate their preferences to visit. The visits will take place over the next 12 months with a minimum of two Members and a maximum of three for each visit. Secretariat will co-ordinate the visits once Members' preferences have been received. It was suggested that a geographical spread to the visits would be useful and the Management Executive Team were asked to give input to where they suggest visits should take place. The duration of each visit should be approximately one and half hours.

**Action: Board Members to return their preference forms to Secretariat by 19 February 2016.**

The Board noted the paper.

#### **10. FINANCE OUTTURN – DECEMBER 2015 (PAPER 5/16)**

The Head of Finance introduced the paper which contained the financial information up to the end of December 2015. The Members were briefed on the information contained within the paper. It was explained that normal profiling had not been possible due to the usual monitoring rounds not taking place. Therefore the forecast column gives a clearer picture of the current financial position. The final year end position is heavily dependent on the maintenance schedule being fully carried out by Properties Division, this is being closely monitored. A schedule for capital bids is awaiting the January monitoring round. An update on VAT registration was given.

The Board noted the paper

#### **11. BUDGET SCENARIO PLANNING (VERBAL)**

The Head of Finance explained that the 2016-17 budget preparation began with the Department's request to provide scenario plans for the 2016-17 year with 5% and 10% cuts. The Department has now informed PBNI of an indicative cut of 2.9% which equates to a reduction of £485k. The Department are to confirm the final 2016-17 budget by the end of January. A balanced budget will be brought to the Board for approval. There will be pressures on the budget including National Insurance employee contributions and cuts to PBNI's prison budget.

There was discussion on moving to the Reducing Offending Directorate in April and how would this impact on PBNI's budget. Discussion ensued around applications for funding and looking for other funding streams, PBNI have been successful this year in respect of the tapping into funding streams including the Change Fund.

The Board noted the update.

#### **12. PROGRAMME AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT UPDATE (PAPER 6/16)**

Members were advised that two business cases had been added to the schedule since last reported, the graffiti removal van and a new server.

Members were given a brief description of the graffiti removal van and how it will be used in the community by offenders taking part in community service. Belfast City Council has offered to part fund the project.

A Member suggested that to increase income generation, it would be useful to look at the social economy model ie 'we can sell a service'. Members agreed that this was a good idea.

The Board noted the paper.

### **13. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION (PAPER 7/16)**

The Chairman advised that the report covering HR, IT, Communications and Estates will all be remitted to the Corporate Resources Committee (CRC). Any issues arising will be brought to the Board's attention.

The Head of HR introduced the HR section of the paper and gave Members an update on staffing issues. Members were advised that 13% of staff were temporary; this is partly as a consequence to a recruitment embargo in place since 2011. Once the budget is known for 16/17 succession planning will be an important requirement.

The Deputy Director advised Members that the Case Management System (CMS) had received a 'limited assurance' rating from Internal Audit. This risk has now been placed on the Department's Risk Register. Attention was drawn to page 12 of the paper where PBNI and YJA are looking at a joint system but it was advised that although the Department supports the need for a new CMS they did not have the money at this time.

The Board noted the paper.

### **14. PROGRAMME OF VISITS AND BUSINESS (PAPER 8/16)**

The Chairman introduced the paper to the Members, advising that the format had changed. The purpose of the paper was to give an understanding of the range of people and organisations the Senior Management Team met with and to identify any areas of common interest to Board Members. The (Acting) Director highlighted a meeting she had on 18 December 2015 with a service user whom she had met in prison who was due for release.

The Board noted the paper.

### **15. BOARD WORK PLAN 2015-2016 (PAPER 166/15)**

The Members were advised of the purpose of the paper and how it informs Members of the forward plan of work for the Board. It is updated each month as required, giving substantive items as well as the standing and quarterly items. The Chairman would like to hold a strategic planning day and suggested that this take place on the 11 March 2016 after the Governance training which will take place in Ballymena.

It was suggested that an invitation be sent to Sue McAllister, Director General of Prisons, to attend the March Board meeting.

**Action: Chairman to invite Sue McAllister to attend the March Board meeting.**

**Action: Board Secretary to send Members an email reference 11 March 2016 – governance training and strategic planning.**

The Board noted the paper.

### **16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman asked that Members return their feedback forms to Secretariat.

Committee Business - The Chairman thanked members for their returns and asked the Members to endorse the Membership, Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the Audit Committee (AC), Corporate Recourses Committee (CRC) and Policy & Practice Committee (PPC) - Members endorsed as laid out in the paper tabled.

The minutes of the closed session held on 11 December 2015 were agreed by Members only.

#### **17. BOARD SECRETARY'S BUSINESS**

The Board Secretary advised Members that Register of Interest forms will be sent for completion. There is a requirement for all Members to complete this exercise to allow the interests to be published. The purpose is to ensure good governance and promote public confidence.

Members were reminded that the Audit Committee will take place on 22 January 2016 at 9.30 am and the Corporate Resources Committee will be on 29 January 2016 at 9.30 am.

#### **18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will take place on Friday 19 February 2016 at PBNI HQ, Conference Room at 9.30 am.

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Vilma Patterson  
Chairman

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Date