

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

BOARD MEETING – 15 APRIL 2016**9.30 AM – PBNI HQ****373rd MEETING – 5th of THE ELEVENTH TERM OF OFFICE****ATTENDANCE**

Mrs Vilma Patterson (Chairman)	Mrs J Erskine (Deputy Chairman)
Mr D Brown	Mrs J Gillespie
Mr E Jardine	Mr I Jeffers
Ms A Matthews	Mr R Mullan
Mr G OhEara	Mrs P Shepherd
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
Ms G McGreevy, Head of Communications (Item 11)
Mr M Cox, Board Secretary
Mrs W Rodgers, Personal Secretary (Minutes)

Observer – Ms G Montgomery, Area Manager

1. OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. She welcomed Gillian Montgomery, Area Manager (AM), to the meeting as an observer and advised Members of Gillian's current position as AM in Maghaberry.

A time table for the session was set out for the Members. The formal Board Meeting will ensure that governance requirements were met. After the formal Board meeting had concluded, the Board Members would then have a discussion on strategy.

Items will be taken by exception only whilst other items will be deferred to the committees as appropriate.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Mr T O'Hanlon, Member.

3. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 18 March 2016 were accepted as an accurate account of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Paper 19/16)

The Chairman drew attention to items 10 and 13. Item 10 – the printed version of the Business Plan 2016/17 was distributed to Members during the meeting. Item 13 – the Chairman confirmed that the (Acting) Director had written to Anthony Harbinson, Director of Safer Communities, in reference to the risks around the current Case Management System (CMS).

The Board noted the matters arising.

5. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE – VERBAL

The Chairman advised Members that the Minutepad 'certificate' issue experienced at the last Board meeting had now been corrected. There were six Members who still required an update to their tablet.

The members of the newly formed Corporate Planning Sub-group were confirmed as the Chairman, Mr Brown, Mr Jardine, Ms Matthews, Mr O'Hanlon and Mr Wall. Dates are currently being scheduled and these will be advised as soon as possible. It is hoped to have the first meeting on 6 May 2016.

Twitter training took place on 6 April and it proved a very useful session. The Chairman advised that the Communications Department will be driving this going forward and Members were asked to support the strategy. Full training will be given to all Members at a later date.

Following discussion at the Corporate Resources Committee, held on 8 April 2016, it was agreed to recommend to the Board piloting the use of video conferencing and 'Skype'. It was explained when it would be appropriate to use digital communications. Board meetings would not be appropriate for such use. However committee meetings, when there is to be no presentation, could use video conferencing. There might be occasion when it would be reasonable for one to one meetings to use Skype. Following discussion it was agreed by the Members that piloting of digital communications should take place.

Action: Each committee is to look at piloting digital communications, Committee Chairs.

The Chairman requested that returning members return their annual assessment forms as soon as possible.

The Board noted the update.

6. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE – VERBAL

The (Acting) Director advised that the findings of an ombudsman's report will be going to the next Audit & Risk Assurance Committee for review (4 May 2016) and then will be brought to the Board.

The Board noted the update.

7. CORRESPONDENCE (Paper 32/16)

The Chairman briefed Members on each item of correspondence received:

- Letter from Glyn Capper on Budget 2016/174
- Letter from Marie Anderson on NI Public Services Ombudsman
- Letter from Nick Perry on Sponsorship Arrangements.

Also under correspondence was a briefing note which had previously been requested by Members from the Deputy Director on Problem Solving Courts.

There were also two items of correspondence received to note for the minutes. One, a letter received from the Director General of the Prison Service requesting an extension to the secondment of the Director. Secondly, the Director had written to the Chairman advising of his intention to retire on 31 December 2016 at the end of his secondment to the Prison Service. The Chairman had responded to the Director thanking him, in the interim, for his work in Probation. The extension to the secondment will be notified to PBNI staff after the Board Meeting today.

The Chairman acknowledged and thanked the (Acting) Director for her ongoing work and commitment and advised that she had agreed to carry on in post through to the end of the Director's secondment. A recruitment process will take place for a replacement, for the Director, to be in post in January 2017.

Members noted the correspondence and update.

8. CORPORATE RESOURCE COMMITTEE UPDATE (Verbal)

The Committee Chair updated Members on the work of the Corporate Resources Committee. Draft minutes will be available at the next Board meeting for Members' information. The Chair highlighted a number of areas which were discussed.

Finance – Members were advised that there had been discussion on the projected end of year underspend which the Head of Finance confirmed as 0.3% at this meeting and on the balanced budget, taking account of the 2.9% cut. An important area to note was the cut in the prison budget also of 2.9% and the concerns raised on the impact of the cut and risks that this posed. It was advised that there are regular meetings with the Director of Rehabilitation, NIPS, to address any issues that may arise. The current VAT position was explained and the Head of Finance is currently carrying out a 'finance modelling' exercise.

The Case Management System – the significant risk to the Organisation if the CMS failed was discussed at Committee and a paper will be brought to the Committee in May clarifying the issues.

The Committee were updated on the Shared HQ workstream of the DOJ Estates Strategy. Members were advised that an Outline Business Case 2 (OBC2) is due for submission at the end of June. Following discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Board that the DOJ SRO should attend the Board meeting in either May or June 2016 to brief the Members.

Action: SRO of the Shared HQ project to be invited to attend May or June 2016 Board Meeting, Board Secretary.

The Board noted the update.

9. BUSINESS PLAN 2015-16 QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT (PAPER 34/16)

The (Acting) Deputy Director presented the paper to the Members and updated them on the final report of the 2015-16 Business Plan.

Of the 10 objectives, eight received a 'green' rating and were fully delivered. Two objectives received 'amber' rating (partially delivered). The (Acting) Director advised Members that, in respect of the 'amber' rating, this referred to one action under each objective not being met. The actions not delivered were referred to. Firstly, that due to contractual issues, information security requirements and financial pressures a preferred option for the replacement of the Case Management System has yet to be agreed by all parties. Secondly PBNI were not in a position to

update the Case Management System to record equality information due to the costs and value for money concerns.

However Members noted that the vast majority of objectives and supporting actions had been achieved.

The Board approved the paper.

10. BOARD DIVERSITY CHAMPION (PAPER 35/16)

The Chairman gave Members background into the role of the Board Diversity Champion and what was involved in such a role. She asked for a volunteer to take up this post. Mrs Stuart volunteered. The Chairman advised that she will send more information to Mrs Stuart and thanked her for taking up the role.

The Board noted the paper.

11. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY (PAPER 36/16)

The Chairman welcomed Ms McGreevy, Head of Communications to the meeting.

Members were advised that the Strategy was being brought to the Board for an initial discussion and will then revert to the Policy & Practice Committee for in-depth discussion.

The Head of Communications took the Members through the paper which was followed by discussion. Points of note made were:

It was suggested to do a survey of the incoming MLAs. Not to concentrate on detail but to build relationships with stakeholders, media and other organisation was more important than detail. This should remain a live document.

Action: Any comments on the Communications Strategy could be forwarded to the Board Secretary for discussion at the PPC, All Members.

The Board noted the update.

13. FINANCE OUTTURN – MARCH 2016 (PAPER 37/16)

The Head of Finance took Members through the paper, giving a verbal update on the 2016/17 budget and highlighted that there were two pressures that would not be funded. The Department were aware of this and the Head of Finance will present again at the June monitoring round. Members were also advised that there is 0% budget for capital spend at present. There is a comprehensive spending review being undertaken and the FSD have written to the (Acting) Director. In reality the budget has been cut by 15% since 2010, staff reduced by 14% since 2012 but caseload, especially in the community, has remained static since 2011. Estates have been reduced by 33% in the last two years and work is continuing on the Organisational Development project and Work Force Management project. The (Acting) Director advised Members that she and her team will be making personal representation to the Department with reference to what Probation does and the monetary value of this.

The Board noted the paper.

14. PROGRAMME AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT UPDATE (PAPER 38/16)

Items taken by exception, none.

The Board noted the paper.

15. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION REPORT (PAPER 39/16)

Items taken by exception. Mrs Robinson advised Members of an HR issue and gave some background into it.

Paper deferred to the committees.

The Board noted the paper.

16. PROGRAMME OF VISITS AND BUSINESS (PAPER 40/16)

The Board noted the paper.

17. BOARD WORK PLAN 2016 – 2017 (PAPER 41/16)

The Board noted the paper.

18. SUPERVISED ACTIVITY ORDERS (PAPER 42/16)

The Deputy Director presented the paper by way of an update and background to Members. It was noted that PBNI could not carry out this activity without funding and Members were advised that funding will be provided from 2017. The Deputy Director put on record his thanks to Stephen Hamilton, (Acting) Assistant Director, for his work in this area.

The Board noted the paper.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman advised that she wished to have a Board meeting outside of Belfast and the only office that could accommodate the Board would be Ballymena. This is likely to be in September.

As part of the Board Induction, the Chairman would like a walkthrough of HQ to be arranged for after the May Board meeting.

Action: Board Secretary to agree with the (Acting) Director, Board Secretary

20. BOARD SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

The Board Secretary advised Members that he was going to trial a new sitting layout for the May Board. Members' views will be asked for.

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Friday 20 May 2016 at PBNI HQ, Conference Room at 9.30 am.

Vilma Patterson
Chairman

Date