

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

BOARD MEETING – 16 JUNE 2017

9.30 AM – PBNI HQ

386th MEETING – 18th of THE ELEVENTH TERM OF OFFICE

ATTENDANCE

Mrs J Erskine (Deputy Chair)	Mr D Brown
Mrs J Gillespie	Mr E Jardine
Mr I Jeffers	Mr R Mullan
Mr G OhEara	

Officials

Ms C Lamont, Chief Executive
Mr P Doran, Director of Rehabilitation
Mr H Hamill, Director of Operations
Mrs G Robinson, Head of HR
Mrs C Teggart, Head of Finance
Dr G O'Hare, Head of Psychology and Intervention (Presentations)
Mr M Cox, Board Secretary

Mrs W Rodgers, Personal Secretary (Minutes)

The Deputy Chair welcomed Dr O'Hare to the meeting and advised members that there would be two presentations by Dr O'Hare, one on Psychotraumatology and another on Problem Solving Justice.

Dr O'Hare described the context of Psychotraumatology and what it is. PBNI will have two PhD students linked to the Horizon 2020 project who will be carrying out the research. It was advised that PBNI had been able to pick the subject for the research. The Board will be updated regularly on progress.

Dr O'Hare presented to the Members on Problem Solving Justice: Problem Solving Courts: An Alternative to Prison? The Members were taken through the objectives, the principles of Problem Solving Courts and the desired outcomes. Dr O'Hare, as part of her Churchill Fellowship, has seen the courts working in American and the success that they have achieved. There are specially trained judges running the courts.

A pilot on Domestic Violence Courts is commencing in Derry in September and it will be a year before results are seen. It is hoped that in a year a significant reduction in those going to prison will be seen. The Lord Chief Justice is supportive of pilot and if it is successful the pilot will be rolled out throughout the court estate. Discussion ensued on resources, early intervention, change in attitude and change in culture.

The Chief Executive advised that Justice is looked upon as being progressive with social policies which are structured towards poverty and mental health. Dr O'Hare and Mr Doran are leading on this with key stakeholders who are the LCJ, the Director of Safer Communities and David Lavery, Director for Access to Justice.

The Deputy Chair thanked Dr O'Hare for her presentations which were most informative and the Board will look forward to receiving updates on the pilot.

1. OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Deputy Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members were advised that in the absence of the Chairman, the Deputy Chair would be chairing the meeting. It was noted that agenda item 11 had been removed from the agenda. Members were advised that an additional meeting of the PPC had been scheduled for 28 July 2017. The Remuneration Committee would meet directly after the Board meeting today.

Items will be deferred to committees as appropriate.

No conflicts of interest were declared

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies received from: Mrs V Patterson, Chairman; Ms A Matthews, Member; Mr T O'Hanlon, Member; Mrs P Shepherd, Member and Mr D Wall, Member.

3. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES (M05/17)

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 19 May 2017 were accepted as an accurate account of the meeting, with amendments agreed.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (PAPER 61/17)

It was noted that there were no actions from the last meeting and no outstanding actions.

The Board noted the position.

5. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE – VERBAL

The Deputy Chair presented the Chairman's update. Members were advised of the resignation of Mrs B Stuart from the Board, effective of 31 May 2017; Mrs Stuart's resignation had been accepted. Following Mrs Stuart's resignation the Board has been reduced to its minimum quota as per the legislation and therefore it is important that members advise of any apologies as early as possible to ensure a quorum is met.

The Board was advised that Ms G McGreevy, Head of Communication, and her team won the 'App of the Year' for the PBNI 'Changing Lives' App at the Digital DNA awards. This shows that PBNI is at the fore of embracing technology and forward thinking. The Chairman has written to Ms McGreevy to congratulate her and her team on behalf of the Board.

The Board Apprentice scheme is being launched on 20 June 2017 in the Long Galley, Stormont. The Board, at a previous meeting, had agreed to take part in the scheme. Members were asked for a volunteer to mentor the apprentice. Any member willing to act as a mentor should contact the Board Secretary.

Action: Any member willing to mentor the Board Apprentice to contact the Board Secretary.

Members were advised that Mr A Harbinson, Director of Safer Communities, had been invited to attend the August Board meeting and he had accepted the invitation. The Chairman and Deputy Chair had attended the Overview meeting with the Department on 14 June 2017 on behalf of the Board.

The Board noted the update.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE – VERBAL

The Chief Executive advised that the Overview meeting with the Department had taken place on 14 June 2017 with the Executive Team in attendance together with the Chairman and Deputy Chair representing the Board. The purpose of the meeting is to hold the Probation Service's work to account. At the meeting the Probation Service had been complimented on its performance in 2016/17. There will be a meeting of the Strategic Resources Committee on 22 June 2017 and it is hoped that they will look favourably on PBNI financial pressures in light of the budget cuts and the impact that this will have on service delivery and budgetary pressures. Sickness absence was covered at the Overview Meeting and it was noted the work that the Organisation had done to try and reduce this. It was recognized that sickness absence has gone up across Criminal Justice. The Chief Executive advised members that it had been a positive meeting.

PBNI have been invited to present to the NIPS Management Board in the autumn. Ronnie Armour, Director of Reducing Offending Directorate, leads on Indicator 39 of the Programme for Government and has invited Executive and Senior colleagues from NIPS, ROD, YJA and PBNI to a workshop to identify how we might work better together. The Chief Executive will lead on innovation in these discussions.

The Chief Executive and Head of HR will be attending a Confederation of European Probation (CEP) Conference in Norway, week commencing 19 June 2017. Mrs Robinson will be presenting at two workshops, 'Digital Learning and Training Innovations' and 'Staff Recruitment Innovation and Good Practice'.

The Board noted the update.

7. CORRESPONDENCE (Paper 62/17)

The Deputy Chair advised members that there was one item of correspondence for members to note.

7.1 Letter from the Chairman to Anthony Harbinson reference sign off of the Corporate Plan.

The Board Secretary advised that a response had been received. In light of the ongoing political uncertainties the advice was to publish the Corporate Plan still in draft but not to print it in hard copy until a new minister was appointed and the Plan may be formally considered.

The Board noted the correspondence.

8 AUDIT & RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE – 26 MAY 2017

8.1 Update from Committee Chair

The Chair of the Committee advised that the main business of the meeting was to sign off the Annual Report and Accounts. There were two external reports to be received but the Committee were happy to sign off on the accounts at the meeting. The Head of Finance confirmed that both reports had now been received.

The Committee had its annual meeting with the Internal and External Auditors in closed session. Both sets of auditors were pleased with the controls and governance within PBNI. The Chair advised that the Committee was well placed in terms of governance and this is reflected in terms of the good relationships with the Internal and External Auditors.

The Board noted the update.

8.2 Final Annual Report and Accounts 2016/17 (Paper 63/17)

The Head of Finance advised that the Accounting Officer had signed the Accounts on 9 June 2017 and they are now with the DOJ ready to be laid before the Assembly.

The Chair of the Committee thanked the Head of Finance and her team for their work.

The Board noted the paper.

8.3 Report on Those Charged with Governance (Paper 64/17)

The Head of Finance reported that the Report had been produced by PWC and approved by the NIAO. The Accounts were unqualified with no recommendations. The Chair of the Committee thanked the Head of Finance and her team for their work.

The Board noted the paper.

8.4 Draft Strategic Risk Register 2017/18

The Director of Operations presented the paper to the Members. It was advised that the ARAC had discussed the Register at its meeting on 26 May 2017 and agreed to recommend approval to the Board. The risks had reduced from 7 to 6. The risk re-assessed as low refers to 'information is lost or handled inappropriately'. This risk will be managed within the Departmental Risk Registers of Communications and IT respectively. There are now 3 risks assessed as high. The additional one is the budget situation 2017/18 and its impact on PBNI's ability to carry out core statutory responsibilities.

The Board approved the Strategic Risk Register.

8.5 Minutes of the meeting on 26 May 2017

The draft minutes from 26 May 2017 were provided for members' information. The next meeting of the Committee will be on 27 October 2017.

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting.

9 POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE

9.1 Update from the Committee Chair

The Chair provided an update on the meeting held on 2 June 2017. The Members were advised that the planned presentation by Analytical Service Group had been postponed and has been rescheduled for July's meeting. The meeting spent time analysing the caseload statistics. There were some interesting points to note. The numbers going through the courts had decreased by 24% but the PBNI's caseload had remained static. There had been a decrease in the numbers of offenders on Community Service and it would be useful to examine why this would be. There was also a change in the age group of offending, there has been an increase of 20% in the 30 – 39 age group.

The Board noted the update.

9.2 Managing Attendance Policy & Procedures (Paper 66/17)

The Head of HR explained the background and aims of the Policy to the Members. The Policy was presented to the PPC on 2 June 2017. Following a full discussion the Committee requested that there be more emphasis on the impact of absence on other staff, it was advised that this had been done. The Committee agreed to recommend approval of the Policy to the Board. The Head of HR advised members of the approval process required in relation to Terms & Conditions of staff. Following approval by the Board, approval will be sought by the DOJ and DOF. The Board approved the Policy and agreed that the Head of HR should write to the DOJ and DOF on behalf of the Board.

Action: The Head of HR to write to the DOJ and DOF on behalf of the Board.

The Board approved the Managing Attendance Policy and it to be forwarded to DOJ and DOF.

9.3 Code of Courtesy (Paper 67/17)

The Head of HR provided background into why a Code was required. The basis of the Code is equality and to give staff guidance on ensuring that English, Irish and Ulster Scots languages are treated equally whenever possible and practical to do so. The PPC discussed the Code at

its meeting on 2 June 2017 and suggested a minor change which has been done. The Committee agreed to recommend approval of the Code of Courtesy to the Board. A member complimented staff on the progressive way in which the Code of Courtesy had been presented.

The Board approved the Code of Courtesy.

9.4 Child Protection Policy (Paper 68/17)

The Director of Operations presented the paper to members. It was noted that the Policy has been renamed as the Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy so it is in line with the Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young People Northern Ireland Policy. PBNI are revising their procedures in line with the Safeguarding Board who will not be publishing their procedures until September 2017. The Committee discussed the Policy at its meeting on 2 June 2017. It was requested that the procedures and policy be brought to the Committee once the procedures have been finalised to gain a greater insight into the Policy. There were some minor changes to the Policy suggested by the Committee which have been done. The Director of Operations provided clarity on the definition of 'a child'. It remains as 17 however it was noted that pending legislation may alter the definition of a young person. The Director of Operations will provide clarification at the next PPC meeting.

The Board approved the Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy.

9.5 SFO Annual Report (Paper 69/17)

The Director of Operations talked to the paper. There has been a slight decrease in SFOs since 2014. Of the 7 SFOs committed in the year 2016/17 and those charged with SFOs, 3 were assessed as high risk and 4 were assessed as medium risk. There was one independent review undertaken.

The Board noted the paper.

9.6 Draft Minutes from 2 June 2017

The draft minutes from 2 June 2017 were provided for information to the Members. The next meeting of the Committee will be on 28 July 2017.

The Board noted the minutes.

10. OMAGH BUSINESS CASE (PAPER 70/17)

The Head of Finance presented the Business Case for the relocation of premises in Omagh. Members were given background into the need for new premises in Omagh. The Head of Finance took the Members through the preferred option and the costs involved.

Following discussion the Board agreed to approve the Business Case for the Omagh Office to relocate to Sperrin House. As PBNI has a nil delegation limit to approve leases, approval is required from the Board, DOJ and DOF.

The Board approved the Business Case for Omagh and for it to be forwarded to the DOJ and DOF for approval.

11. MANAGING BOARD MEETING BUSINESS (PAPER 72/17)

The Board Secretary talked to the paper. The purpose of the paper was to ensure governance arrangements are appropriate and removing any unnecessary work. The Board Secretary advised that he had consulted with the Chairs of Committees and the Chief Executive and their comments were reflected in the paper.

The new format of Work Plan shows the flow of work and the sequence from committees to Board. This should allow for the Board agenda to be easily identified in advance. The Members were asked to note points 9 and 10 of the presented paper. The new arrangements will take effect as of August 2017.

There was a question on including all working groups and other types of meetings in the Work Plan. The Board Secretary agreed to look at this. A member stated that it was important to stick to the Work Plan as laid out. Following discussion the Board agreed to approve the paper.

Action: Board Secretary to look at including all meetings and committee members on the Work Plan.

The Board approved the paper.

12. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION REPORT (PAPER 73/17)

The Management Information Report was due its quarterly update. The Director of Rehabilitation advised that the caseload remained as it was reported to the PPC on 2 June 2017. The Director of Operations provided an update on IT as laid out in the presented paper. Under Current Developments, it was advised that the 'Changing Lives' App had won an award as previously referred to in the meeting. Commencement of the underpinning legislation requires ministerial approval for Supervised Activity Orders (SAOs) and due to the political uncertainty the project has been delayed until at least November 2017. This has therefore delayed the starting of staff to staff the project. It is projected that staff will be required in December 2017.

There were no SFOs to report.

The Head of HR advised on the current sick absence statics. Assurance was given to the Board that the figures on absence are being looked at daily.

The Board noted the paper.

13. CULTURE SURVEY (PAPER 74/17)

The Chief Executive introduced the paper, advising that it was an operational survey with two governance questions. The last survey was completed in 2011 and she was very pleased with the level of engagement of staff to this survey with a response rate of 58%. The Head of HR advised that the outcomes were generally positive but there were areas, as one would expect, to look at. The next steps will be to consult on key areas and producing a detailed action plan. The action plan will be brought to the Board in the Autumn for a members' update.

The Board Secretary advised that the Chairman had reviewed the two Board related questions and advised of the benefit of having Board observers. She also suggested having Board roadshows, perhaps in five venues, to engage with staff. The Board Secretary suggested that the response should be co-ordinated with the wider survey results and then the Board input reviewed at that time.

Discussion ensued, communication with staff was agreed as being important. The need to address those grades that were less positive in their responses was discussed.

Assurance was given to the Board that the learning points from the survey will be addressed and reported to the Board in the Autumn however the Head of HR gave assurance that whilst the Board would be updated in the Autumn there would be much work carried out over the summertime.

The Board noted the paper.

14. FINANCIAL OUTTURN – MAY 2017

The Head of Finance presented the paper to members. It was advised that there was an overspend of £58k after 2 months of the 2017/18 year. The overspend is against the indicative budget of a 3 % cut and a pressure of £454k. The forecast figures reflect funding for 'Fresh Start' which has not been allocated to the budget at this point. The Chief Executive and Head of

Finance met with FSD who are aware that PBNI cannot fund the pressures. FSD agreed to support the in year pressures at the DOJ Strategic Resources Committee on 22 June 2017. The Head of Finance advised of her concerns with the pressures on the baseline rolling from year to year.

Discussion ensued on meeting the cut in budget. A member asked if the Voluntary Exit Scheme had been considered. It was advised that this did not go ahead last year but may have to be considered in the future. Another member asked if recruitment was still taking place. The Head of HR advised that there are no future plans for further recruitment however there will be some recruitment of PSOs which on-going funding will be provided. The Chief Executive advised that there may be a need for a triangulation model and there will be a need to look at practice standards. There was discussion around the Work Force Management project and it was advised that there would be a presentation to the Board at its August meeting.

The Board noted the paper.

15. PROGRAMME OF PROJECTS AND BUSINESS CASES (PAPER 76/17)

The Head of Finance advised members of the current status of each project. An update was provided on the relocation of the Derry offices to Shipquay Street. It was advised that it was highly likely that the identified property in Shipquay Street will not go ahead as there is still an issue with a second egress point. There are three other properties that are currently being investigated for their suitability. Members were advised that the Area Manager in Derry had met a leading member of the residents group of Crawford Square. The Area Manager had suggested a further meeting with the residents but he was advised that this was not required at this time.

The Board noted the paper.

16. PROGRAMME OF VISITS AND BUSINESS (PAPER 77/17)

The Board noted the paper.

17. BOARD WORK PLAN 2016 – 2017 (PAPER 78/17)

The Board Secretary advised that the Board Work Plan continues to evolve and is updated each month.

The Board noted the paper.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (VERBAL)

On behalf of the Board the Deputy Chair will send the Chairman the Board's good wishes and a speedy recovery.

19. BOARD SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

The Board Secretary suggested that the Board Evaluation day be the February 2018 Board meeting. Members were asked if a full day would be suitable, it was agreed that it would be. The date and venue will be confirmed.

Action: The Board Secretary will arrange for the Board Evaluation event to be on the same day as the Board Meeting.

As forward notice, members were advised that the Self-Assessment forms will be sent out in November with a return of December and the Register of Interests will be sent in December with a return in January. Both papers will be required for the Board Evaluation day.

Action: The Committee Chairs are to provide meeting dates for the fourth quarter.

The Board Secretary thanked members for their feedback on the use of the 'tablets'. The responses will be sent to IT.

The Board noted the update.

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Friday 18 August 2017, PBNI HQ, Conference Room, 9.30 am.

Julie Erskine
Deputy Chair

Date