

## PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

**BOARD MEETING – 18 November 2016****9.30 AM – PBNI HQ****379th MEETING – 11th of THE ELEVENTH TERM OF OFFICE****ATTENDANCE**

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

**Officials**

Ms C Lamont, Chief Executive  
 Mr P Doran, Deputy Director  
 Mr Hugh Hamill, (Acting) Deputy Director  
 Mrs G Robinson, Head of HR  
 Mr T Gilliland, (Acting) Head of Finance (Items 1 - 10)  
 Ms G McGreevy, Head of Communications (Items 14 - 16)  
 Mr M Cox, Board Secretary  
 Mrs W Rodgers, Personal Secretary (Minutes)

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

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chairman recorded the Board's congratulations to Cheryl Lamont on her appointment as Chief Executive following the robust recruitment competition. On behalf of the Board Members she stated they were delighted with the appointment and have every confidence in Ms Lamont in her new role and wished her every success in the future. Ms Lamont thanked the Board for their kind words and advised that she was delighted with the appointment and acknowledged her Executive Team colleagues for their support over the last three years in her role as (Acting) Director.

No conflicts of interests were declared.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies received from: Mrs B Stuart, Member; Mr D Wall, Member.

**3. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES (M09/16)**

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 21 October 2016 were accepted as an accurate account of the meeting.

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Paper 119/16)**

The Chairman drew attention to outstanding actions for members and asked that these be completed as soon as possible. Action 3 (a) is now complete but will be revisited during the launch of the Corporate Plan 2017 – 2020. All actions from the 16 September 2016 were noted as being completed.

**Action: Members to respond to actions, Board Members.**

The Board noted the Matters Arising.

**5. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE – VERBAL**

The Chairman provided a summary on the annual Accountability Review with the Minister and thanked the Members for attending. A number of members gave their views on how the meeting went and all comments were positive. It was agreed that the case for Probation was well put and received. The Chairman thanked the Board Secretary, the Head of Communications, the (Acting) Deputy Director and all those involved in the preparation for the meeting.

The Chairman advised that the Programme for Government (PfG) consultation has been launched with a response due by the 23 December 2016. This will be discussed under a separate agenda item of this meeting.

The Chairman advised the Members of a jointly hosted event with CO3 at PBNI HQ (Chief Officers 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector). This was the first occasion that such an event had been held. There was a good turnout of CO3 members who were given a presentation on the work of Probation and then there was a question session. It proved to be a good networking opportunity and contact has been received post the event from CO3 members who are interested in working with Probation in the future.

Engagement with MLAs continues. The Chairman and Chief Executive met with Paul Givan, Minister for Communities as well as Mike Nesbitt MLA. An event arranged in partnership with the IFA 'Stay Onside' launch was well attended and received good social media coverage.

The Chairman and Deputy Chair met with Mr McCaughey prior to his retirement in December.

The Board noted the update.

**6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE – VERBAL**

The Chief Executive advised that she was working with the Head of HR to put in place more permanent staffing arrangements following her appointment as Chief Executive. The Chairman will be kept informed of progress. Members were advised that two staff members have been nominated for Social Work awards at the ceremony being held today. This was a positive endorsement of the staff and they were wished well.

It was advised that PBNI had won the Onus Gold Award for the third year running. The Head of HR advised members of the award and that PBNI HR had won the award for its Employer Domestic Violence Policy.

The IFA's launch of 'Stay Onside' programme on 17 November 2016 was in partnership with the Reducing Offending Partnership, which Mr Doran chairs. The idea behind the initiative was to use football to work with prolific offenders to change their offending behaviour. The Chief Executive advised that it was a successful event with a number of MLAs attending, including Paul Frew, the Chair of the Justice Committee. The work of those involved in the event was acknowledged.

The Board noted the update.

**7. CORRESPONDENCE (Paper 120/16)**

The Chairman advised members that there was one piece of correspondence for members to note.

**7.1 Letter received from Margaret Ritchie, MP**

The Members were advised that Ms Ritchie will be visiting the Downpatrick office on 25 November 2016 and that the Chairman and Chief Executive will be meeting Ms Ritchie at a later date.

The Board noted the correspondence

## **8. POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE**

### **8.1 Committee Update**

The Chair of the Committee gave members an update on the Committee meeting held on 28 October 2016. The main areas of business were two research reports and the Terms of Reference for the Committee.

A report on Breach of Orders was presented to the Committee by Mrs Hewitt of the Statistical and Research Branch. The research showed that 25% of orders resulted in breach proceedings being taken. Age and ACE scores were relevant factors in this number. It was requested by the Committee that ACE scores of those in prison and those on probation be compared. The 'Ruth Flood' research – Evidencing the Effectiveness of Probation – was reviewed and its outcomes in relation to PfG by the Committee. Dr O'Hare advised that Programmes do specific research on their work and this is ongoing. It was agreed that research and the collection of data is not low cost but it is needed to provide evidence of PBNI's work.

The Deputy Director brought a paper on Sudden Deaths and Shooting Incidents of offenders who were subject to licence or orders. In the eight months (January to August 2016) of the report there were 24 deaths, the Committee discussed the impact that this would have on front line staff and how they were supported. With the agreement of the Chairman, Dr O'Hare has been asked to bring a paper on psychotraumatology to the March Board on how people deal with trauma.

The Terms of Reference for the Committee were agreed as being adequate for purpose although it was suggested that the Committee should commit to meeting on four occasions in a year and not five. This would require approval of the Board.

With the agreement of the Chairman, it was suggested that Dr Nicola Carr's research on 'young people's (16 – 25) experience of paramilitary violence' should be brought to the attention of the Board. It was noted that Dr Carr and colleagues will present to the Board at its December meeting. Also a meeting has been arranged for a discussion with the Prince's Trust around research and preventative work and how different agencies can collaborate.

The Committee suggested more events such as the launch of the Corporate Plan 2017-2020 held in March 2016 be arranged as this was successful and well attended.

The Board noted the update.

### **8.2 Code of Conduct for Staff (Paper 121/16)**

The Head of HR presented the Policy to the Members advising that there were no substantial changes. One section had been added on 'dress code'. The Unions have been fully consulted. The Policy & Practice Committee agreed to recommend approval to the Board at its meeting on 28 October 2016. Following discussion the Board approved the policy with no amendments.

The Board approved the policy on Code of Conduct for Staff.

### **8.3 Employers Code of Practice (Paper 122/16)**

The Head of HR presented the Policy to the Members advising of no major changes. Section 1 had been amended to take account of agency workers, Section 3 amended to include reference to domestic abuse policy and Section 4, points added referencing induction and commitment to mandatory training and access to Learning & Development. The Policy & Practice Committee agreed to recommend approval to the Board at its

meeting on 28 October 2016. Following discussion the Board approved the policy with no amendments.

The Board approved the policy on PBNI Employers Code Practice.

#### 8.4 **Gifts and Hospitality, Policy and Procedures (Paper 123/16)**

The (Acting) Head of Finance presented the Policy and Procedures to the Board. The Members were advised that there are no changes to the current policy and that it followed the DOJ policy. The Policy & Practice Committee discussed the policy at its meeting on 28 October 2016 and requested two wording changes which have been made. The Committee recommended approval of the policy to the Board. Discussion ensued on the issue of alcohol being provided at events. It was agreed that the Chief Executive would check the policy against the DOJ's and report back through the Chairman.

**Action: The Gifts and Hospitality Policy to be checked against the DOJ policy to ensure the issue of providing alcohol is consistent with the DOJ Policy, Chief Executive.**

There was discussion around speaking at events and the issue that many of these events are profit making. It was agreed to discuss this at a later stage.

The Board agreed to defer approval of the Gifts and Hospitality, Policy and Procedures until the issue of accepting alcohol was checked against the DOJ policy.

**Action: Policy to be brought back to the December Board, (Acting) Head of Finance**

#### 8.5 **Draft Minutes – 28 October 2016 (Paper 124/16)**

The Chair of the Committee advised that draft minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2016 were included for members' information and these would be agreed at the next Committee meeting on 3 February 2017.

The Board noted the draft minutes.

### 9. **FINANCIAL OUTTURN – OCTOBER REPORT (Paper 127/16)**

The year to date underspend is £164k or 1.72% of the budget as of 31 October 2016. The main drivers of underspend relate to the timing of non-regular expenditure such as legal fees and maintenance which is expected in later months.

The (Acting) Deputy Director briefed the Members on the issues with the Antrim Road building and that it needed urgent repair. The repairs require the redeployment of 23 staff, members discussed the cost and logistics of this. It was confirmed that due to Health & Safety concerns, the move will take place before Christmas. The (Acting) Deputy Director apprised the Members that one of the short term solutions referred to the old Inspire office at 72 North Street. The changing demographics in the Antrim Road area were discussed in the context of alternative premises. It was advised that long term solutions would take 18 months to complete. The Chairman commented that this is the third building of the PBNI estate that is now in poor repair and the challenges and costs to the Organisation were a growing concern.

In response to a question on whether the Organisation will have the money to carry out the repairs, the Chief Executive advised that she could give assurance that money will be available. However, the medium to longer term issues will require discussion with the Department.

The Board agreed to defer the Finance Outturn paper to the Corporate Resources Committee for in-depth discussion.

**10. PROGRAMME AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT UPDATE (Paper 128/16)**

The (Acting) Head of Finance advised that the current Business Cases and Programme and Projects log has been updated by adding Managed Print Service Replacement to the list. The Board had approved the business case on the 21 October 2016. The business case has now been forwarded to the DOJ.

The Board noted the paper.

**11. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION PAPER (Paper 129/16)**

The Deputy Director advised members of one Serious Further Offence (SFO). The case has been reviewed and he is content with the supervision of the Order. Due to the seriousness of the offence an independent review will be carried out. Although the victim was previously known to PBNI, they were not currently under PBNI supervision.

The (Acting) Deputy Director advised of the number of AQs coming from Lord Morrow and these tended to be detailed questions. PPANI were currently in the process of offering to meet with Lord Morrow to address some of his queries in person.

The Head of HR advised members that the sick absence figures continue to rise. The figures will be discussed at CRC on the 25 November 2016 with an update on what actions are being taken to manage sick absence.

The Board noted the paper.

**12. PROGRAMME OF VISITS AND BUSINESS (PAPER 130/16)**

The Chairman advised that the level of engagement with MLAs and key stakeholders continues. Staff have attended a range of events and Dr O'Hare is in America as part of the Winston Churchill Fellowship.

The Chairman, Chief Executive and (Acting) Deputy Director have met with the Irish Secretariat on the emerging Fresh Start action plan, this proved a useful meeting.

The Chief Executive met with Kieran Harding of Business in the Community (BiTC) who is keen to work with engaging with employers on rehabilitation in its activities going forward.

The Board noted the paper.

**13. BOARD WORK PLAN 2016 – 2017 (PAPER 131/16)**

The Board Secretary advised that the three main committees were looking at the timing of their meetings to determine the optimum sequence. The Audit & Risk Assurance Committee's schedule does have a pattern of sequence but the Policy & Practice and Corporate Resources Committees do not have any particular pattern requirements.

The Board noted the paper.

**14. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2017 / 2020 (Paper 125/16)**

The Chairman welcomed the Head of Communications to the meeting.

The Board Secretary introduced the paper to members. He advised that factors affecting the Corporate Plan were: the financial uncertainties; the connection between intent and money; the

Minister's priorities and the matching with the PfG. A meeting with the designers will take place in December.

A member asked if the feedback received from the consultation had been incorporated into the document. It was advised that feedback showed that the plan was in the right direction and subtle changes were made to reflect the feedback.

Discussion ensued on the description of Priority 4. It was suggested that the current wording could be misleading on Probation's actual role. It was agreed that Priority 4 should be amended accordingly.

**Action: The wording of Priority 4 is to be reviewed, Board Secretary**

The priorities were discussed at length by the Members to ensure that they cover Outcome 7 in the PfG and the associated indicators.

It was noted that the nature of crime is changing with the growing scale of cyber-crime. There is a need to acknowledge, in the Plan, the change in the types of crime and the consequences for the work of Probation. It was agreed that the work of Probation Officers will look different in three years' time so there is a need to future proof the Plan and prepare accordingly.

It was agreed by the Board that the Corporate Plan was travelling in the right direction and the Board Secretary will incorporate the suggestions made by members.

The amended document will be sent to members electronically for their comment. A meeting of the Corporate Plan Working Group could be called if required.

**Action: Once amended, the document is to be sent to members electronically, Board Secretary.**

The Chairman thanked those involved in drafting the document

The Board noted the paper

## **15. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY (PAPER 126/16)**

The Chairman welcomed the Head of Communications to the meeting. The Members were given background into the strategy paper and that it should mirror the Corporate Plan which is why the paper is for three years.

The Strategy is split into three sections: Internal Communications which is the priority for the Organisation to ensure all colleagues are aware of what is happening within the Organisation; External Communications which is defined as the media; and Public Affairs which is politicians and stakeholders.

It was advised that there is a lack of a joint up strategy in the wider justice system which tends to make communication reactive rather than proactive. The IFA event was a good example of working in partnership with other agencies. The Members discussed the use of language and using a joined up approach with Twitter and other social media. Getting the message across on changing crime was important.

The Head of Communications in response to a question from a member advised where PBNI were targeting their engagement and messaging. The need for a consistent message was important but also to ensure governance of NPBD is maintained. It is important that the Department is advised of the principles of PBNI's engagement which is to build public confidence.

Following discussion the Board agreed to endorse the Communication Strategy 2017 – 2020.

**16. PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT (PfG) (Verbal)**

Members were advised that consultation response for the PfG was due by the 23 December 2016. It was proposed that a response be drafted and prepared for the Board meeting on 16 December 2016 for Board discussion and approval.

There are three strands of Outcome 7 and discussion ensued as to where Probation sat within these. There is a need to define the role and where Probation can contribute. Cost analysis and focus on areas where we have co-partners was particularly important. The main strand of Outcome 7 for Probation is problem solving. The Members discussed current initiatives and pilots with the courts. A member asked if it would be possible to observe a pilot session. The Board Secretary advised that it could be an item for future Office Visits by members. The Chief Executive advised that she would look at the appropriateness of observing in the longer term.

The Board noted the paper.

**17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No business was discussed

**18. BOARD SECRETARY’S BUSINESS**

- 18.1 The Board Secretary advised that dates of Board meetings for 2017 had been agreed. The committee chairs are deciding on the dates for their meetings across 2017  
**Action: Committee Chairs to advise on schedule of dates across 2017**
- 18.2 The Register of Interests will be sent to members for completion shortly with a target of approval at the January Board Meeting
- 18.3 The responses about the Christmas lunch have been received, with the majority preferring to have lunch after the December Board Meeting. More details to follow

**19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will take place on Friday 16 December 2016, PBNI HQ, Conference Room, 9.30 am. The meeting will open with a presentation by Dr Nicola Carr and colleagues, Dr Siobhan McAlister and Dr Clare Dwyer. Lunch will be available after the meeting.

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Vilma Patterson  
Chairman

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Date