

## PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

**BOARD MEETING – 14 MARCH 2014****346<sup>th</sup> MEETING – 17<sup>th</sup> OF TENTH TERM OF OFFICE**ATTENDANCE

Mrs V Patterson (Chairman)                      Mr R Mullan (Deputy Chairman)

Mr D Brown    Mrs M O'Rourke  
 Mrs J Erskine (Items 1-20, 22-28)              Mr D Rose  
 Mr E Jardine    Ms P Shepherd  
 Mrs L Jennett (Items 1-25)                      Mr R Wilson  
 Mr B McAllister

Ms C Lamont, (Acting) Director  
 Mr P Doran, Deputy Director  
 Mr D van der Merwe, Deputy Director Finance and Corporate Services  
 Ms L Cooper, Head of Business Planning and Development (Item 8 and 9)  
 Mr S Hamilton, Area Manager (Board Observer)  
 Ms G McGreevy, Head of Communications (Item 7)  
 Mr P Moss, Board Secretary  
 Mrs J Murray, Personal Secretary (Minutes)

1. OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chairman welcomed Mr Stephen Hamilton, Area Manager Rural South, to the meeting as Board Observer.

The Chairman stated there would be a brief closed session for Members at the end of the Agenda.

Mrs Erskine declared a Conflict of Interest for the discussion on the NILGOSC Business Case (minute 21 below).

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Mr O'Hanlon, Mr Wardlow, Mr Hamill, (Acting) Deputy Director and Mrs Robinson, Head of Human Resources.

3. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 FEBRUARY 2014 (M2/14)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 February 2014 were approved as an accurate record of the Meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Paper 28/14) tabled

The Matters Arising from the previous Minutes had been listed for Members' attention and the following additional information was reported:

Domestic Violence Intervention – Anthony Harbinson, DoJ, indicated at the Overview Meeting that this area of work should be progressed in April 2014 and the (Acting) Director confirmed that plans were in place to proceed when bids had been finalised.

Meeting with NIPS Director General (PRT Recommendations) – further to Members’ request, Mark Adam, HR and Organisational Change Director of NIPS, would make a presentation at a future Board Meeting.

**Action: (Acting) Director to invite Mark Adam to attend April Board meeting**

Emerging Issues (PRT Recommendations) – the (Acting) Director updated Members on recent meetings held with NIPS and recent correspondence from the Permanent Secretary in relation to a shared services review. A joint healthcare and justice seminar was also held which had been attended by both Ministers. Additional meetings were planned for the week beginning 24 March 2014.

**Action: (Acting) Director to update Members at April Board meeting**

Process for Circulating Papers to Members – the (Acting) Director reiterated her apologies to Members regarding the late delivery of the budget scenario paper for the March Board meeting. The Secretary stated that internal procedures had been reviewed and strengthened and an external issue with the post office had been addressed. The Secretary requested that Members make contact should papers not be received in advance of meetings and spare copies would be made available. The Conference Room would be booked from 8.15 am on Board days for Members’ use.

Community Grants Delegated Limit – the Deputy Director Finance and Corporate Services informed Members that the Department of Justice, sponsoring branch, had requested a meeting with the Financial Services Division to agree the way forward.

**Action: Deputy Director Finance and Corporate Services to provide update at the April Board meeting**

Internal Audit Report: Electronic Appraisal System – the (Acting) Director informed Members that KPMG had forwarded the Report to the Audit Committee Chair.

5. CORRESPONDENCE (Paper 29/14) tabled

The following items of correspondence had been tabled for Members’ consideration:

- Letter of 7 February 2014 from Rt Hon Jeffrey Donaldson, MP, on behalf of a constituent (Probation Officer) and reply from the (Acting) Director dated 20 February 2014.
- Letter of 20 February 2014 from Minister of Justice approving both the Corporate Plan 2014-17 and the Business Plan 2014-15.
- Letter of 28 February 2014 from Kevin Milhench, based at the Oval, outlining the “valuable and professional service” provided by two community service workers.
- Correspondence from Nick Perry, Permanent Secretary, regarding Reform Project. This item would be discussed in more detail under Director’s Business.

FOR DECISION

6. RESTORATIVE PRACTICE STRATEGY (Paper 30/14)

The Deputy Director Operations outlined the changes made to the Strategy subsequent to the detailed discussion at the General Purposes Committee meeting on 28 February 2014. The Committee Chair confirmed that the changes reflected the discussion.

The Board approved the paper.

## 7. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (Paper 31/14)

The (Acting) Director presented the first report which provided an update on the work carried out to date in respect of the Organisational Development Programme. A further report would be presented when the first tranche of work had been completed at the end of March 2014 and governance arrangements for handling would follow thereafter.

### **Action: Head of Human Resources to provide verbal report to April Board meeting**

The Project Leads reported on progress to date, as outlined in the paper, for each of the four workstreams. A Member commented that it would be encouraging for staff to receive timely updates on achievements and not wait for information to be disseminated in periodic reports.

Further to a query from a Member regarding the Board's role in making strategic decisions, the Chairman stated that Members would continue to be updated on a monthly basis and the Board would be requested to approve all recommendations.

The Board approved the paper.

## 8. VOLUNTEER MENTORING PILOT (Paper 32/14)

The Head of Business Planning and Development presented the paper which recommended the cessation of the pilot scheme due to financial pressures. The Deputy Director Operations informed Members that the proposal to end the pilot had been made with great reluctance and that options were being explored. Recently, an application to fund a co-ordinator linked to PRT Recommendation 37 had been made to the Assets Recovery Scheme but had been unsuccessful. Members requested that alternative methods be sought to continue with the delivery of volunteer mentoring and the employment of a co-ordinator.

### **Action: Head of Business Planning and Development to present options paper with final evaluation at the June Board meeting**

Further to a query from a Member, the Head of Business Planning and Development confirmed that contact would be maintained with volunteer mentors and PBNI would host a recognition event to acknowledge their significant contribution.

### **Action: Chairman to write and thank volunteer mentors for their service**

The Board approved the paper.

## 9. CONSULTATION ON PRISONER OMBUDSMAN (Paper 33/14)

The Head of Business Planning and Development presented PBNI's response to the DoJ's Consultation on the proposal to place the office of the NI Prisoner Ombudsman on a statutory footing. The various options were discussed and Members were in agreement with Option 1 to indicate that PBNI would be amenable for the current pilot arrangement to be reflected in future legislation.

### **Action: Head of Business Planning and Development to respond to DoJ with the Board's considered position**

The Board approved the paper with Option 1 as the preferred option.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

10. REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE (Verbal)

The following update was provided to Members:

- Two internal audit reports were due from the internal auditors.
- Agreement had been reached with DoJ internal audit to become the internal auditors.
- KPMG were contracted to the end of March 2014 to complete outstanding audits.

**Action: Secretary to confirm April Meeting date with Committee Members**

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to report.

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

12. REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE (31 JANUARY 2014) (Paper 34/14)

The Committee Chair confirmed that the Minutes from the Meeting held on 31 January 2014 had been approved.

13. REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE (28 FEBRUARY 2014) (Verbal)

The Committee Chair reported that the Restorative Practice Strategy had been the substantive item discussed at the meeting on 28 February 2014.

The Committee Workplan would be further developed and items identified to date were:

- Public Protection Arrangements
- Reducing Offending in Partnership
- Area Manager Input (possibly from rural perspective)
- Life Sentence Prisoners
- Terrorist/Politically Motivated Offenders
- Caseload Trends and General Workload
- Schedule of Policies

The Chairman confirmed that policies scheduled for Board approval would be presented the previous month to the Committee for discussion.

It was agreed that the items on Terrorist/Politically Motivated Offenders (TPMOs) and Caseload Trends/General Workload in conjunction with an input from an area manager should take place in May 2014 with a possibility of referring the item on TPMOs for discussion at the May Board Meeting.

The Committee Chair also confirmed that Professor Peter McBride, NI Association of Mental Health, would present to the Committee on 2 May 2014 and the Public Health Agency would make a presentation on 27 June 2014.

The next Committee was planned for Wednesday 26 March 2014 but this would be dependent on papers being available for circulation in advance. In the event the Committee was not held, Members would meet at 10.30 am in advance of the launch of the Corporate Plan.

**Action: Secretary to contact Members to confirm arrangements for 26 March 2014**

#### 14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to report.

#### FOR NOTING

#### 15. BUDGET 2013/14: SCENARIOS FOR SAVINGS (Paper 35/14)

The Deputy Director Finance and Corporate Services presented the Scenarios for Savings paper for the 2013-14 Budget and reported on the £471,000 (99%) of the total savings that had been realised up to 28 February 2014 with a further £2,000 (1%) of savings to be achieved.

Further to a query from the Chairman, the Deputy Director Operations stated that work was being carried out in conjunction with managers to reduce the impact made through staff savings to the front line delivery of services through the Service Delivery workstream of the Organisational Development Programme.

The Board noted the paper.

#### 16. BUDGET SCENARIOS 2014-15 (Verbal)

The Deputy Director Finance and Corporate Services reported that PBNI was awaiting the decision of the Strategic Resourcing Committee which would meet on 18 March 2014.

#### 17. JANUARY 2014 OUTTURN (Paper 36/14)

The Deputy Director Finance and Corporate Services updated Members as follows:

Corporation Tax – HMRC had confirmed the valuation for the Falls Road property and that total liability for 2007/08 to 2012/13 was £115,000 - a payment on account would be made during March 2014.

Capital Expenditure – an offer of £80,000 had been received for the Antrim property and, in order to expedite the process, the Chairman agreed that the bid should be forwarded to the DoJ for approval in advance of the April Board meeting.

**Action: Deputy Director Finance and Corporate Services to forward bid to DoJ and present at April Board meeting**

Portadown Office – final cost of the project had been confirmed at £61,000 and funding had been made available by the DoJ. The Chairman expressed concern that costs had been received at a late stage after the project had been completed and requested assurances around timely submissions of costs for future projects.

VAT – liaison was ongoing with HMRC regarding income from NIPS.

PAYE on Admin Back Pay – HMRC had indicated that claims for refunds could only be submitted after the 2013/14 P60 forms had been issued to staff - the process for the way forward had not been established.

A suggestion was made by a Member that relevant staff be informed as a matter of urgency.

Discussion ensued and the Chairman requested that the process for recovering money be verified.

**Action: Deputy Director Finance and Corporate Services to establish the process for recovering money**

Prompt Payment Results – the Internal Audit report from KPMG was to be received.

The Chairman suggested that expenditure headings should be re-profiled for 2014-15.

**Action: Deputy Director Finance and Corporate Services to undertake re-profiling of expenditure headings for 2014-15**

The Board noted the paper.

18. CORPORATE PLAN AND LAUNCH ARRANGEMENTS (Verbal)

The Chairman updated Members on arrangements and stated that the event would take place in Headquarters to minimise costs.

19. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION (Paper 37/14)

The Management Information paper was presented for Members' attention and the key points were highlighted.

Further to a request from a Member, a glossary of terms would be included with future papers.

**Action: Deputy Directors to include Glossary of Terms with future papers**

A Member made reference to the data presented in relation to the number of Probation Officers, orders and reports and commented on the increasing level of workload in relation to reduction in staff numbers. The importance of engagement with staff and unions at this time was emphasised.

Brian Grzymek, NIPS, was in the process of presenting the Prison Population Review report to various criminal justice organisations and a summary of the report would be made available to Members at the April Board meeting.

**Action: Deputy Director Operations to present Prison Population Review summary report at April Board meeting**

The Board noted the paper.

20. BUSINESS CASES UPDATE

The Deputy Director Finance and Corporate Services presented an update on PBNI Business Cases required to be presented to DoJ or DFP.

The Chairman commented on the helpful layout of the report and would value a similar layout for updates on project management.

**Action: Chairman and (Acting) Director to meet to discuss production of a project management update paper**

The Board noted the paper.

21. NILGOSC BUSINESS CASE

Mrs Erskine had declared a Conflict of Interest and left the meeting for the discussion on this item.

The Deputy Director Finance and Corporate Services presented an update on the business case in respect of NILGOSC Pension Contributions for admin staff.

Legal advice would be sought on the impact of the options on employee terms and conditions and it was noted that the preferred option would be to phase the allowance out over a period of years.

**Action: Legal advice to be sought on the impact of the options on employee terms and conditions**

The Board noted the paper.

22. PROGRAMMES OF VISITS AND BUSINESS (Paper 40/14)

The Chairman presented the paper and in particular drew Members' attention to the following events:

- Event held to congratulate PBNI's Regional ISU Programmes Teams on their recent success at reaching the finals of the Regional Social Work Awards (17 February 2014). The Chairman and Members thanked staff for their dedicated work.
- Following on from the recent meeting with Church Leaders, the Chairman and (Acting) Deputy Director met with Reverend Dr Heather Morris, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland (18 February 2014). The Methodist Church facilitated community service placements.
- The Chairman and (Acting) Director had a positive meeting with editors of the Irish News (19 February 2014). The Head of Communication would arrange a further meeting to follow up on the discussions.

**Action: Head of Communications to meet with Editors of Irish News**

Mrs Erskine gave positive feedback on an interesting and well organised Hate Crime Awareness event she had attended on 7 March 2014.

The Board noted the paper.

23. BOARD OBJECTIVES AND WORKPLAN (Paper 41/14)

The Chairman thanked the Senior Management Team on the work carried out to date. The document would require further development and, therefore, was subject to change.

The Chairman would wish to hold one of the 2014 meetings outside Belfast and would look at the possibility of a venue in the North West area for the June Board meeting.

**Action: Secretary to check arrangements for the June Board meeting**

The Board noted the paper.

24. APPOINTMENT OF BOARD DIVERSITY CHAMPION (Verbal)

The Chairman informed Members that Mr McAllister had expressed an initial interest in obtaining further information on the role of Board Diversity Champion. Subsequent to Members' approval, the Chairman would discuss in more detail with Mr McAllister and report back to the April Board meeting.

**Action: Chairman to meet with Mr McAllister and report back to April Board meeting**

## OTHER BUSINESS

### 25. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Staff Achievements – the Chairman informed Members that Christine Hunter had been successful in receiving a Churchill Fellowship on the area of restorative practices and Jean O'Neill's research proposal on female offenders had been accepted by the Griffin Society. This was a tremendous achievement for Mrs Hunter and Ms O'Neill and both pieces of work would be of great benefit to the organisation.

**Action: Chairman to write letters of congratulations to Mrs Hunter and Ms O'Neill**

Judith Gillespie – the Chairman would write to Ms Gillespie to wish her well on her retirement.

**Action: Chairman to write to Ms Gillespie**

Post of Director – the Chairman advised Members on recent developments and that the recruitment process to appoint a Director would be progressed. Further information would follow and the DoJ were to provide notification on the process.

**Action: Chairman to report on progress about the post of Director**

Meeting with Richard Good – the Chairman had met with Mr Good, Special Advisor to the Minister, to provide a brief on current probation issues.

### 26. DIRECTOR'S/SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

Reform Projects – the (Acting) Director had received correspondence from Nick Perry, Permanent Secretary, regarding a forthcoming review to survey structural delivery models and to improve service delivery outcomes. Ronnie Armour, DoJ, would temporarily vacate his role to carry out the review and he would meet with the (Acting) Director.

Head of Finance – Catherine McCann, currently with the Youth Justice Agency, would take up the post of Head of Finance on Monday 24 March 2014.

Expenses Forms – the Secretary encouraged Members to submit their forms on a timely basis.

### 27. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to report.

### 28. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Thursday 17 April 2014 at 9.30 am in the Conference Room, PBNI Headquarters.

The meeting closed at 12.45 pm.

### CLOSED SESSION

The meeting was followed by a closed session for Members (separate minute).