

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**BOARD MEETING – 15 NOVEMBER 2013****343rd MEETING – 13TH OF TENTH TERM OF OFFICE**1. ATTENDANCE1.1 Present

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

Mr D Brown	Mr D Rose (items 1-14)
Mr E Jardine	Mr M Wardlow
Mr B McAllister	Mr R Wilson (items 1-14)
Mrs M O'Rourke (items 1-8)	

1.2 Officials

Ms C Lamont ((Acting) Director)
Ms L Cooper (Head of Business Planning and Development)
Mr H Hamill ((Acting) Deputy Director Operations)
Mrs G Robinson (Head of Human Resources) (items 1-15)
Mrs S Glenn ((Acting) Head of Finance) (items 1-15)
Mr P Moss (Board Secretary)
Mrs J Murray (Personal Secretary)

1.3 OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that she intended to focus on the main substantive items dealing with a number of items under the "For Noting" section without staff presentation unless particular questions were raised.

The Chairman and (Acting) Director had just returned from attending the first part of the Public Protection Advisory Group (PPAG) Annual Seminar held at Hillsborough Castle. Mr Doran, Deputy Director Operations, remained at the Seminar for the full day's programme of events which included the launch of the 10th anniversary edition of the Irish Probation Journal. The (Acting) Director had given the Opening Address and the Chairman reported that the event had been very well attended by Probation Board and Probation Service staff from the Republic of Ireland.

The Chairman thanked Board Members for the agreement to postpone the start time of the Board Meeting to 12.00 noon to accommodate attendance at the morning session of the PPAG Seminar which had originally been scheduled for 22 November 2013.

The Chairman reported that consideration of the Risk Register had been completed and the Board would consider individual risks in the next financial year.

Ms Forrester had been granted a career break of one year commencing on 4 December 2013 and everyone wished her well. The Chairman welcomed Mrs Murray who was assisting Secretariat on Board days. There was no observer on this occasion.

No Conflicts of Interest were declared.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mrs Erskine, Ms Shepherd, Deputy Director Finance and Corporate Services and Deputy Director Operations.

3. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 OCTOBER 2013 (M11/13)

It was agreed to amend the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 October 2013 as follows:

On Page 4 at second bullet point replace “develop” with “review, update” to read as follows:

“The Board should review, update and approve its own estates strategy as soon as possible.”

On Page 10 at Item 25 add “due to the change of date of the PPAG” to read as follows:

“The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 15 November 2013 at 12.00 noon due to the change of date of the PPAG.”

Subject to these changes, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 October 2013 were signed as a true record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 11 OCTOBER 2013
(Paper 133/13) tabled

Correspondence – the matter in relation to letters received from Anthony Harbinson, DoJ, was being progressed.

Accountability Review – the Accountability Review for the previous year had been confirmed for 8 January 2014 at the Learning and Development Unit, Antrim, and this would be an agenda item for discussion at the Board Meeting on 13 December 2013.

Action: to be discussed at December Board

Community Grants – the paper had been revised and the advertisement for 2014-15 community grant funding had been published on 24 October 2013.

Business Plan Progress Report- the paper would be adjusted for the next quarterly report.

General Purposes Committee Themes and Speakers – the paper had been circulated to SMT for their comments.

Corporation Tax and Capital Gains Tax – issues had been reported to the Audit Committee held on 14 October 2013.

Members noted the matters arising and relevant actions.

5. CORRESPONDENCE (Paper 134/13) tabled

The following two items of correspondence were circulated for reference:

- Criminal Justice Board Communique – September 2013
- Probation Association News Update – November 2013.

The Board Secretary reminded Members that the Criminal Justice Board Communique was not for wider circulation.

FOR DECISION

6. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES (Paper 135/13)

The (Acting) Deputy Director Operations presented the revised Child Protection Policy and Procedures which had been updated following their previous review in August 2010. The changes to the Policy were minor with more significant changes made to the Procedures in Sections 5 and 7 on Case Management and Line Manager Responsibilities to reflect recommendations made by the Criminal Justice Inspection NI Report on Community Supervision. The (Acting) Deputy Director Operations also advised that changes to the language of the Policy had been informed by the Safeguarding Board (Northern Ireland) Act 2011.

The Chairman thanked the (Acting) Deputy Director Operations for his presentation and commented on the helpful summary of changes that had been listed at the beginning of the cover note.

A Board Member made reference to Section 9 “Child Protection in Specific Circumstances” and enquired regarding the omission of Mental Health referrals. The Deputy Director Operations advised that the specific situations quoted had been lifted from the current ACPC Regional Policy and Procedures and that no specific reference was made to mental health referrals because mental health issues did not directly constitute a child protection concern.

Members commented that the policy was critical and this area of work was of huge importance. It was suggested that it would be helpful to have a more detailed presentation at a future Board Meeting.

Action: Child Protection Presentation at future Board Meeting

Further to a query from a Board Member regarding PBNI’s responsibility towards adults with learning difficulties, the (Acting) Deputy Director Operations advised that guidance, as per the DHSS&PS current procedures, had been issued to staff in 2011. The (Acting) Deputy Director Operations also informed the Meeting that the Assistant Director for Risk was a member of the NI Adult Safeguarding Partnership. The Partnership’s current business plan was to provide new policy and procedures. Following the issue of these, PBNI would draft its own operational policy and procedures for staff.

The Chairman requested that acronyms in the text should be explained.

The Board approved the revised Policy and noted the revised Procedures.

**Action: (Acting) Deputy Director Operations
to revise the papers in light of the
discussion**

7. RISK OF SERIOUS HARM POLICY AND PROCEDURES (Paper 136/13)

The (Acting) Deputy Director Operations presented the revised Risk of Serious Harm Policy and Procedures and informed Members that the changes made to the Policy were minor and related to formatting and wording. The main changes were made to the Procedures in order to provide clarity to staff. The review of the Policy was brought forward in order to expedite the recommendations from the Criminal Justice Inspection report on Community Supervision (May 2013) and in-house training would be provided to staff on the new Policy and Procedures. The Chairman thanked the (Acting) Deputy Director for his presentation and stated that this Policy was central to Probation work.

Further to a comment from a Board Member about the importance of also having external training and opportunities for staff in supervision sessions to discuss self-care, the (Acting) Director advised that a practice reference group is extant at which practitioners had the opportunity to share learning and inform future practice in this work. In discussion the importance of ensuring that training was up-to-date was stressed and it was suggested that it would be helpful to have a further discussion at a later stage. The Chairman requested that a presentation on how probation practice was developed should be added to the Board Workplan for 2014-15. The (Acting) Director further advised that probation officers were regulated social workers and were required to demonstrate that they met the required standard. The (Acting) Deputy Director also advised that internal audits took place on an annual basis and RoSH cases were file-monitored by managers at defined periods.

**Action: Secretary to add Development of
Probation Practice to Board
Workplan for 2014-15**

In response to a query, the (Acting) Deputy Director stated that the proportion of the caseload which was RoSH had been increasing over the years. The Head of Business Planning and Development confirmed that currently 8% of the total caseload were RoSH cases whilst the figure had previously been 2-3%.

The Chairman requested that acronyms in the text should be explained.

The Board approved the revised Policy and noted the revised Procedures.

**Action: (Acting) Deputy Director Operations
to revise the papers in the light of the
discussion**

8. ESTATES STRATEGY (Paper 137/13)

The Chairman informed Members that, further to the discussion at the General Purposes Committee in October 2013, a more substantive paper was being presented which included action points for Board Approval. The Chairman took the opportunity to thank the (Acting) Deputy Director Operations for the comprehensive piece of work he had carried out in a short timescale.

The (Acting) Deputy Director Operations outlined the history of the Estates Review which had been commissioned by the Board in 2006. Following feedback received from public consultation, the Board had agreed that the approach outlined in the Review needed revision. Nine Drivers for Change were highlighted.

While all 32 properties within the estate would be individually reviewed, there were a number of immediate priorities that needed to be addressed and actioned in relation to Headquarters, Alderwood, Victims Unit, Inspire, L&D Unit and Downpatrick. The issues in relation to each of these sites were highlighted in the paper and discussed in detail.

Constraints and risks were identified with regard to taking forward the Strategy and it was proposed to establish a project team which would be organised along formal project management lines. Its immediate work would focus on drafting of business cases for 2014, outworkings of decisions made in respect of Alderwood and refining criteria for making recommendations in respect of the retention, refurbishment and disposal of premises. The Project Team would report to the Organisational Development Project Board which would hold its first meeting in December 2013.

The Chairman commented on the comprehensive nature of the Review and stressed the vital importance of identifying the needs for the organisation going forward and ensuring that the Review was aligned with the corporate plan work and business need. The Chairman also commented on the considerable work required in relation to the strategic decisions on premises. It was noted that if Alderwood had not been identified by the DoJ for use by NIPS, it would not be an immediate priority for PBNI.

The heavy demands imposed by the preparation of business cases required were highlighted and the (Acting) Director advised that PBNI had been given some time-limited assistance from NIPS with regard to writing business cases. In addition, a senior manager would be attending a two day CIPFA course on Business Cases. It was agreed to raise the issue of Business Cases at the Overview Meeting and it was also noted that it would be helpful to ascertain additional DFP requirements before drawing up business cases.

Action: (Acting) Director

In response to a query regarding client travel should the Alderwood work be relocated to Mallusk, the (Acting) Director advised that a minibus was provided to transport clients attending ISU programmes. A Board Member also expressed concern regarding the possible relocation of ISU clients to Headquarters.

Staff were advised to check lease conditions regarding possible costs incurred on termination.

In response to a query, the Head of Human Resources referred to the possible use of office space at Desertcreat, the new joint PSNI, NIPS and NIFRS training facility.

The Board approved the following actions:

- The criteria for refurbishment, retaining or disposing of properties with additional criteria were to be added in respect of ergonomics and environmental factors.
- Prioritisation of business cases for Headquarters and Inspire
- Agreement for the relocation of PDU.
- Agreed option appraisals to be explored in respect of L&D, Downpatrick and the Victims Unit. It was noted as part of this process other options might evolve.
- Agreement not to vacate Alderwood until a viable business case had been agreed and alternative premises secured for delivery of ISU programmes work.

Action: (Acting) Deputy Director Operations

9. SYSTEMS AND PROCESS REVIEW (Papers 138/13 and 139/13)

The Head of Human Resources and the Head of Business Planning and Development outlined the programme of work required up to April 2014. They hoped that the planned set of interventions would inform organisational restructuring and bring significant efficiency and effectiveness to the organisation which could be demonstrated to stakeholders.

The various projects would be overseen by an Organisational Development Project Board with its first meeting to be held in December 2013. Membership of the Project Board was to be agreed and the Head of Human Resources informed Members that Unions were supportive of the Review and would be included on the Project Board. The Programme Board would report on progress to the January Board Meeting.

A further detailed proposal and Terms of Reference would be presented once the Programme Board had met in December 2013.

The Chairman commented that this was a progressive piece of work and would underpin the work of the Corporate Plan going forward.

Board Members agreed that it was an encouraging paper but queried the short timeframe. The Head of Human Resources advised that the timelines could be extended if required. The Chairman agreed with the end of March 2014 deadline with the organisational and restructuring plan carried out in the first quarter of the new business year.

The Chairman agreed the timelines as outlined in the paper with a view to having implementation by the first quarter of 2014-15.

The Board approved the approach set out in the paper.

Action: Head of Human Resources and Head of Business Planning and Development to report to the Board Meeting in January 2014

10. MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE (Verbal)

The Chairman proposed that Mr B McAllister be appointed as a member of the Audit Committee.

The Board approved the proposal.

11. DATES FOR MEETINGS IN 2014 (Paper 140/13)

The Board approved the dates for Board and General Purposes Committee meetings in 2014.

FOR NOTING

12. BUDGET 2013/14: SCENARIOS FOR SAVINGS (Paper 141/13)

The (Acting) Head of Finance presented the paper and informed the meeting that scenario planning had started for the 2014/15 budget.

The (Acting) Director reported that she planned to circulate a bi-monthly Communication to staff to keep them informed and the next communication was planned for December 2013.

The Chairman requested that the (Acting) Head of Finance produce a page showing the impact that losing fixed term contract staff would have on the organisation.

Action: (Acting) Head of Finance

12.1 Emerging Financial Issues (Verbal)

The (Acting) Director asked that the (Acting) Head of Finance report on two emerging financial issues following a meeting with a DoJ official earlier that morning.

There was an emerging risk that corporation tax would be imposed on PBNI. The DoJ had indicated that the PBNI bid for £150k Corporation Tax Pressures in the January Monitoring Round would not be met and the (Acting) Director had asked for this request to be followed up formally in writing.

The second issue was in relation to the underpayment of NILGOSC contributions in respect of administrative staff. FSD had agreed to take this issue forward on behalf of PBNI and work was ongoing.

The (Acting) Director stated that she would ask the (Acting) Head of Finance to note these issues in Finance Report.

Action: (Acting) Director to raise emerging financial issues at Overview Meeting and follow-up with DoJ

Board Members expressed their concerns at the continuing requests from the DoJ to provide additional savings and considered it would be important to demonstrate the pressure felt by the organisation when such cuts were made. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to show the hardship associated with making the cuts. The Head of Human Resources advised on the extra pressure that would be felt by the

organisation when staff on fixed term contracts left over the coming months and would report to the Board.

Action: Head of Human Resources to report to the Board

It was noted that DoJ officials would be attending the next General Purposes Committee to give a presentation on the DoJ Finance situation and outlook.

The Board noted the paper.

13. SEPTEMBER 2013 OUTTURN (Paper 141/13)

The (Acting) Head of Finance presented the paper and reminded Members that the sale of the Antrim Office, which had been agreed at £95,000, was not going ahead. On the basis that the proceeds from that sale could not now be spent, the capital expenditure budget stood at £95,000.

The Board noted the paper.

14. BUSINESS CASES UPDATE (Paper 143/13)

The Chairman recommended that clarity be sought from the DoJ in relation to the outcome of the PBNI Business Cases and it was agreed to raise this at the Overview Meeting.

Action: Chairman to raise PBNI Business Cases at the Overview Meeting

The Board noted the paper.

15. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION (Paper 144/13)

The (Acting) Deputy Director Operations reported that he had attended the DoJ Case Management Project Board on 11 November 2013 to take forward the replacement for the joint PBNI/YJA Cases Management System. The meeting had brought to a close the current project due to affordability issues. The DoJ was to establish a new Project Board to develop an alternative way forward and PBNI would be represented on that Board.

The Board noted the paper.

16. CORPORATE PLAN UPDATE (Verbal)

The Head of Business Planning and Development provided a verbal update on the draft Corporate Plan. Substantive responses had been received and they would be responded to in writing by the relevant senior manager. “Changing Lives for Safer Communities” was approved as the heading for the Organisational Purpose section.

Business Plan priorities would be developed for each of the three business years. The Chairman thanked the Head of Business Planning and Development for her update and commented on the helpful feedback received. A final consultation meeting was planned on 29 November 2013 with the four Church Leaders and would be attended by the Chairman and (Acting) Director.

The Chairman expressed her thanks to Ms Cooper and Mr McIlwaine for their work and said that the consultation had been a very successful process which had produced some very good feedback.

17. PROGRAMME OF VISITS AND BUSINESS (Paper 145/13)

The Chairman presented the paper and reported on the dinner (expenses covered by the Chairman) held with the Chief Parole Commissioner which had been arranged subsequent to meeting at a consultation event. The Chief Parole Commissioner held PBNI in high regard.

The Board noted the paper.

18. POLITICAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE (Verbal)

Media coverage from 12 October 2013 to 15 November 2013 was tabled for Members' attention.

The Board noted the paper.

19. BOARD OBJECTIVES AND WORKPLAN (Paper 146/13)

The Board noted the paper.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

20. REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE (14 OCTOBER 2013) (Paper 147/13)

The Committee Chair reported that the Committee had met on 14 October 2013 and noted several significant points:

- a self-assessment exercise would be carried out in January 2014
- given the forthcoming end of the internal audit contract, an evaluation of the internal auditors would not take place at this time, although an exercise with the external auditors was under consideration
- the Committee had been assured that the scheduled internal audits would be completed
- two emerging risks had been noted under Risk Management
- the Head of DoJ Internal Audit would speak to the Committee at its January 2014 meeting before a recommendation was agreed to go to the Board about future services.

The Chairman thanked the Committee Chair for his report.

The Board noted the report.

21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

22. REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR (25 OCTOBER 2013)
(paper 148/13)

The Committee Chair reported that DoJ representatives had made a presentation on the Department's Estates Strategy which had set the context for a discussion of the Board's own Estates Strategy. Officials had highlighted the important role being played by the Strategic Investment Board which had been tasked with preparing an Asset Management Strategy for the public sector estate within Northern Ireland.

The Chair said that he had reported on a meeting with Moira Doherty, DoJ, about the Department's information needs.

The Head of Business Planning and Development and Mr N O'Neill, Statistician, had made a presentation on Statistics and Research within PBNI. Members had discussed a short-term staffing shortage in the Unit. Mr O'Neill's contribution to PBNI was recognised as very significant.

The Chair also reported on the Committee's Programme for Speakers. A number of potential speakers had been identified and it was envisaged that one would be invited each quarter.

The Chairman thanked the Chair for his report.

The Board noted the paper.

23. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

24. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

There was no Chairman's Business to report.

25. (ACTING) DIRECTOR'S/SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

The (Acting) Director drew attention to several points:

- (a) The (Acting) Director commended two individuals who had been successful in their application for a Winston Churchill Fellowship 2014 and had been called for final interview in London.
- (b) The annual service for Prisons Week would be held in St. Patrick's Church, Donegall Street, Belfast on 20 November 2013 and the Deputy Director Operations would be taking part in the service.
- (c) The (Acting) Director drew attention to the ongoing issue of PBNI providing extra resourcing for committal interviews at Maghaberry and her decision to cease extra resourcing on an agreed date with NIPS. Given all the Owers work with NIPS,

the (Acting) Director suggested it would be helpful for the lead Deputy Director Operations to give an update on current work. Members expressed the view that this remained an important issue for PBNI.

**Action: Deputy Director Operations to
report on NIPS/PBNI Owers
Reform work**

- (d) the report on the CJI(NI) inspection of Approved Premises had been published and the (Acting) Director said that PBNI staff could be proud of their performance.
- (e) the Secretary reminded Members to submit their expenses claims in good time.

26. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Friday 13 December 2013 at 9.30 am in PBNI Headquarters.