

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

BOARD MEETING – 14 November 2014**10.00 AM – CONFERENCE ROOM, PBNI HEADQUARTERS****354th MEETING – 25th of TENTH TERM OF OFFICE**ATTENDANCE

Mrs Vilma Patterson (Chairman)	Mr R Mullan (Deputy Chairman)
Mrs J Erskine	Mr E Jardine
Mrs L Jennett	Mr B McAllister
Mr T O’Hanlon	Mrs M O’Rourke
Mr D Rose	Mrs P Shepherd (Items 5-27)
Mr M Wardlow	Mr R Wilson

Ms C Lamont, (Acting) Director
 Mr P Doran, Deputy Director
 Mrs G Robinson, (Acting) Board Secretary/Head of Human Resources
 Ms G O’Hare, Head of Psychology and Interventions (Presentation and item 14)
 Ms C McCann, Head of Finance (Items 8-18)
 Mr B McCutcheon (Item 18)
 Mrs W Rodgers, Personal Secretary (Minutes)

Prior to the formal meeting commencing, the Chairman welcomed Ms G O’Hare, Head of Psychology and Interventions to the meeting who gave a briefing to the Members on her attendance at the 21st Century Forensic Practice: Moving Beyond Cultural Competence Conference which was held in New York in July 2014. The Members agreed that it had been a very successful visit and thanked Ms O’Hare for her briefing.

1. OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chairman welcomed all attendees to the meeting and Members were reminded of the closed session for Board Members which would take place after the listed business.

It was agreed by the meeting to take item 14 of the agenda at the beginning of the meeting as this was to be presented by Ms O’Hare, Head of Psychology and Interventions.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from, Mr D Brown.

3. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2014

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 October 2014 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

The Minutes of the Special Board Meeting held on 24 October 2014 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Members were content to note the Matters Arising.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

The Chairman advised the Members of a letter received from Peter Moss, retired Board Secretary, thanking the Members for dinner. A copy of the letter was distributed to the Members.

No further correspondence was presented.

6. CODE OF CONDUCT AND PRACTICE (Paper 146/14)

The Chairman provided the Members with the background as to why the Code was being brought to the Board for approval. The Members were advised that the Code had been through General Purposes Committee with the recommendation that the Board Secretary and the Chairman review the existing Code used by PBNI and the advised changes received from the Department of Finance and Personnel. The Code, as presented, now incorporates these changes whilst retaining relevant content from PBNI's Code of Practice. Copies of the current PBNI Code and the advice from the Department of Finance and Personnel were made available to Members if required. Members were content with the changes and approved the paper.

The Board approved the paper.

7. MEETING DATES FOR APPROVAL (Paper 147/14)

The Chairman introduced the paper to the Members and advised the reason for variations on some dates due to bank and public holidays. A Member queried why was General Purposes Committee scheduled to take place on 30 April 2015 as that day will be a Thursday. The Members agreed that the meetings should remain on a Friday and therefore the date is to be amended to 1 May 2015. The date in July 2015 should remain at this stage as a provisional Board date. No other queries were raised.

Action: Date to be amended to 1 May 2015 by (Acting) Board Secretary.

The Board approved the paper.

8. ESTATES : BUILDING INSPIRE (Paper 148/14)

The (Acting) Deputy Director gave the Members a brief background to the recommendation to close the Inspire building including the costs of renting and running the building and the dilapidation costs. The (Acting) Deputy Director confirmed that a Notice to Quit must be given shortly so that PBNI could vacate the premises by the end of February 2015; the timeframe would also allow PBNI to settle dilapidation costs in year.

There was discussion around the options to closing or keeping the Inspire building open. Staffing and delivering service were discussed against the costs of keeping the building. A Member suggested negotiating a rent agreement for one year; however the Members were advised that this was not financially practical, given the running costs; and the challenging financial situation for next year.

Action: The Deputy Director is to update the Members on the new arrangements after February 2015.

The Board approved the closure of the Inspire building on the understanding that the concept of Inspire remained and the Board appraised of the delivery options at a later date.

9. CAPITAL PROJECTS (Paper 149/14)

The Head of IT advised the Members as to the reason for the two IT projects being presented to the Board. As procurement was over £50,000 and under £100,000 of capital expenditure Board approval was required. The Members were advised of the benefits of the replacement of personal computers for probation grade staff, which were nearing the end of their life, with laptops; and the benefits of electronic provision for Board/Senior Managers. The new devices would provide more benefits and flexibility for users.

The Chairman and one Board Member had attended a workshop with Microsoft together with several senior managers; the feedback on the workshop was positive. There was discussion around the financing of purchasing the system and Members were made aware that the money available was from capital monies and not revenue therefore monies could not be transferred to staffing. The capital monies were only available for financial year 2014-2015 and therefore the procurement of the items had a very short lead time. There was also discussion around other hardware / devices with the Head of IT answering the queries raised.

Members were assured that they would be updated each month as to the progress of the two business cases.

Due to the urgency of the procurement the Members were advised that the business cases would be ready in two weeks and therefore it was agreed to hold a Special Board Meeting on the 28 November 2014 prior to the General Purposes Committee.

The Board agreed in principle to the paper subject to satisfactory business cases being presented to the Special Board Meeting.

10. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – ANY OTHER BUSINESS – (Agenda items 10 and 11)

The Chair updated Members on the General Purposes Committee held on 24 October 2014. The Head of Finance had conducted a training session for Members on finance and the Chair thanked her and her team for a comprehensive session. The update of the Board Organisational Development Sub-group was held as a closed session and this was a substantive piece of work. Members were advised that a number of presentations by Area Managers will be scheduled for forthcoming meetings with Ms Grant presenting at the meeting on 28 November 2014 on 'Lifers'.

As the Committee's main work is on policies the Chair has asked for the policy schedule to be brought to the next meeting for discussion.

Action: Policy Schedule to be presented at the next General Purposes Committee by Senior Management.

12. AUDIT COMMITTEE (Verbal) (Agenda items 12 and 13)

The Deputy Chair advised that the Committee last met on 17 October 2014 and she chaired the meeting on behalf of the Chair who had sent apologies. The Members were advised that the Annual Accounts have been submitted as unqualified. McClure Watters are coming to the end to

their contract so the new external auditors are to attend the next Committee meeting. Health and Safety is not on the audit schedule until year end.

The Chairman thanked the Deputy Chair for her input on the Finance training together with the Head of Finance.

14. SUBSTANCE MISUSE SERVICES (Paper 150/14)

The Head of Psychology and Interventions gave a brief background, and talked through the paper in detail, outlining the services open to PBNI. The next step is to develop a communication strategy (for staff). It was highlighted to the Members that this development was a positive outcome for PBNI with regard to efficiencies and services to PBNI clients.

15. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (Verbal)

The Head of Human Resources gave a verbal update on the current position to Members and advised that a paper will be presented at the December Board. Engagement and the working relationships with the unions have been good and there will be a further meeting scheduled for December.

16. SEPTEMBER FINANCIAL OUTTURN AND COST REDUCTION (Paper 151/14)

The Head of Finance took the Members through the presented paper and highlighted a number of areas. The underspend is back on track; the January Monitoring was issued with no change to the budget. There was discussion on VAT and the date of registration, the Head of Finance advised that negotiations continue around the date of registration, one Member advised that it was his view that commencement date should be when devolution commenced.

There was discussion around the Out of Hours Service and that the Department had been previously advised that the suspension of this service was due to in year savings requirements.

The Board noted the paper.

17. BUDGET 2015-2016 (Paper 152/14)

Following on from the correspondence received from the Permanent Secretary of the 4 November 2014, the Head of Finance worked through the scenarios and the impact on the 2015 – 2016 budget and took the Members through the presented paper.

Discussion took place around home visits and what was happening in other organisations. The (Acting) Deputy Director highlighted that home visits for high risk offenders and other specified cases would continue.

The Chairman thanked staff for their work on the paper and the quick turnaround that was required including the updated capacity paper.

Action: The (Acting) Director will update Members when the Department of Justice confirms the budget.

The Board noted the paper.

18. BUSINESS CASES, PROJECT AND PROGRAMME UPDATE (Paper 153/14)

The Head of Finance took the Members through the paper and highlighted a number of areas. The Members were advised that the Website business case had gone to procurement. The IT cases were due to come to a Special Board meeting for approval. The Chairman requested more details in reporting on updates.

Action: More narrative to be added when updates are provided by all authors.

The Board noted the paper.

19. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION REPORT (Paper 154/14)

The Deputy Director advised Members that on-going resource costs for the Case Management System will have to be met from PBNI resources; video conferencing is being used to reduce costs; e-appraisal statement of work has been submitted to Kofax. The Chairman advised that there had to be a solution to the replacement of the Case Management System. A Member suggesting that it should be referred to the Audit Committee in order to raise the matter with Internal Audit.

The (Acting) Deputy Director advised that the overall caseload was broadly similar to last year. It was noted that the number of probation officers had decreased.

The Board noted the paper.

20. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER (Paper 155/14)

This item was deferred to December's Board Meeting.

Action: Item to be on the December Board Meeting agenda by the (Acting) Board Secretary.

21. PROGRAMME OF VISITS AND BUSINESS (Paper 156/14)

The Chairman and (Acting) Director met with Edwin Poots, Paul Frew and Sammy Douglas of the Justice Committee and Mr Douglas offered to suggest that PBNI give evidence or briefing to Justice Committee on our work.

The Board noted the paper.

22. BOARD OBJECTIVES AND WORKPLAN 2014-15 (Paper 157/14)

Members were advised of changes to January's workplan which will be adjusted as there is no General Purposes Committee in December therefore policies will be deferred to January's Committee for onward presentation at February's Board.

The Board noted the paper.

23. BOARD MEMBERS' VISITS TO STAFF (Paper 158/14)

Paper noted

Action: Board Members to give Mrs Rodgers their forms.

24. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chairman reminded Members of the closed session after the meeting. The Chairman advised Members that she will be meeting with Nick Perry, Permanent Secretary before the next Board Meeting on budget pressures and a general update.

25. DIRECTOR'S /SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

The (Acting) Director advised Members that she had attended a social work conference on Leadership which Mrs O'Rourke had also attended. This was an excellent event held at the Lisburn Civic Centre.

On Friday 21 November the Public Protection Advisory Group will be meeting in Dublin with both Ministers attending to do the key notes and also launch of the Irish Probation Journal.

26. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Friday 12 December 2014 at 9.30 am.

The meeting closed at 12.30 pm.

Closed session was conducted at 12.30 pm.

Vilma Patterson
Chairman

Date