

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING – 28 November 2014**

**9.30 AM – CONFERENCE ROOM, PBNI HEADQUARTERS**

**355th MEETING – 26th 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 T O’Hanlon
Mr D Rose	Mrs P Shepherd
Mr M Wardlow	Mr R Wilson

Ms C Lamont, (Acting) Director (Items 1-2)  
Mr P Doran, Deputy Director  
Mr H Hamill, (Acting) Deputy Director  
Mrs G Robinson, (Acting) Board Secretary/Head of Human Resources  
Ms C McCann, Head of Finance (Items 1-3)  
Mr B McCutcheon, Head of IT (Items 1-3)  
Mrs W Rodgers (Minute taker)

1. OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chairman welcomed all attendees to the Special Board Meeting and advised of the reason why the meeting had been called. The Board was to consider capital monies which have been made available for use by IT. The projects had been considered by the Board previously and discussed by the Board on 14 November 2014.

There were no Conflicts of Interest declared.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from, Mr B McAllister, Mrs M O’Rourke, Mr D Brown.

3. BUSINESS CASES

a) To replace personal computers (PCs) with laptops (Paper 159-2)

The Head of IT provided the Members with background into why the business case was being brought to a Special Board meeting and confirmed that it was within the Board’s delegated limits of less than £100k and that it did not required approval from the Department of Justice.

The Head of IT summarised the main points of the business case and the rationale behind the replacement of 95 desk top computers with laptops. Members were advised that Option 3 of the business case is the preferred option; this would provide greater flexibility for the mobility of staff and the desk top computers that are to be replaced could act as spare parts for the remaining desktops. Members were advised that many of the desktop computers were nearing the end of

their life and would need replaced soon anyway. The project will be managed using a proportionate level of the Prince methodology.

One Member asked if the option of replacing desktops with tablets had been considered. The Head of IT advised that to make tablet devices able to access the existing case management system would be very costly and not good value for money at this stage.

There was discussion around why not replace all the 265 desk top with new desktops and the difference in costs of laptops versus desktops, Members were advised that the laptops provided more flexibility of location in particular with the Estates Strategy which is currently being rolled out. Members were advised that Area Managers and Intensive Supervision staff use laptops currently as this provides a more secure method of transporting client information to meetings.

Discussion took place around the provision of 3G cards for use of internet access, however this cost would be a revenue cost and not capital. It was also advised that many other agencies/organisations have moved to using laptops when attending meetings due to the added benefit this brought to their organisations.

Members discussed the benefits of laptops and the functionality of the hardware with fast moving technology. The Head of IT was to add some clarification to this point.

**Action: The Head of IT was to add some clarification to the business case.**

The Board approved the business case.

b) To invest in an electronic format for Board / Senior Management Team (Paper 159-3)

The Head of IT gave the Members background on the business case and advised of the substantial savings that could be made both in staff costs and ceasing to provide hard copies of meeting papers to both the Board and the Senior Management Team together with reducing the carbon footprint. Competitive tendering will be carried out by PBNI and a proportionate level of Prince methodology will be used to manage the project. Members were advised of two demonstrations that have taken place and feedback has been positive from both.

In considering Option 3 it was agreed by the Members that there would be considerable savings achieved in resources, printing and postage and time. The Head of IT advised that this solution is not just for the Board but has a much wider use with around 70 meetings being suitable to avail of the system. Members were also advised that the system is being piloted by the Northern Ireland Civil Service for wider use and the spend would be within this year and not available next year.

The Board approved the business case.

Meeting closed at 10.15 am

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Vilma Patterson

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Date

Chairman