

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

BOARD MEETING – 12 December 2014**10.00 AM – CONFERENCE ROOM, PBNI HEADQUARTERS****356th MEETING – 27th of TENTH TERM OF OFFICE**ATTENDANCE

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| 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 |
| Dr M Wardlow | Dr R Wilson |

Ms C Lamont, (Acting) Director
 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 6, 15 - 18)
 Ms G McGreevy (Item 7, 17)
 Mrs W Rodgers, Personal Secretary (Minutes)

The Chairman advised attendees that the Minister had sent his apologies for the presentation. Prior to the formal meeting commencing, the Chairman welcomed Ms C Hunter, Area Manager to the meeting who gave a presentation to the Members on her successful application and involvement with the Winston Churchill Fellowship.

Having been successful in her application to the Fellowship Ms Hunter specialised in Restorative Justice for Adults. Ms Hunter thanked the Board for the opportunity to take part in the work of the Fellowship and advised that she had recently visited three cities in America to liaise and compare on Restorative Justice Practice. The Fellowship work has still to be completed and Ms Hunter advised that she wished to train as an accredited trainer for the Organisation with the course being funded by the Fellowship.

Following the presentation there was an interesting discussion and Ms Hunter responded to Members' questions. The Chairman asked how the Board could be an enabler to help with the work and to introduce such an element of the learning to the Organisation.

The (Acting) Director advised Members that Ms Hunter is the third employee of the Probation Board to have been successful in their application to the Fellowship which is something to be very proud of.

1. OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chairman welcomed all attendees to the meeting and Members were advised of a change in the agenda order.

No Conflicts of Interest were declared.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from, Mr D Brown, Mr D Rose, Mrs P Shepherd. The Chairman gave the Members an update on Mr Brown's health matters and his wife who was also in ill health. She wished them both well on behalf of the Board.

3. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2014

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 November 2014 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. The Minutes from the Closed Session on 14 November 2014 were also agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Members were asked to note the Matters Arising. It was agreed that item 1 was now complete.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

The Chairman briefly described to Members the correspondence received from the Northern Ireland Audit Office, the Criminal Justice Board Communique and correspondence with Minister Ford, as per the Members pack. No further correspondence was presented.

Members noted the correspondence.

6. PROCUREMENT POLICY (Paper 162/14)

The Head of Finance gave the Members a brief background to the Policy and brought attention to the main change being to delegated limits. Members were advised that the Policy had been through General Purposes Committee on 28 November 2014 with no issues or amendments. The Chair of the General Purposes Committee advised that the Committee had recommended approval of the Policy.

The Board approved the paper.

7. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION POLICY (Paper 163/14)

The Head of Communications advised Members that the Policy had been through General Purposes Committee with a recommendation of amendments.

The Policy was then presented again to General Purposes Committee on 28 November 2014 with no issues or amendments. The Chair of the General Purposes Committee advised that the Committee had recommended approval of the Policy.

The Board approved the paper.

8. BOARD AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE DATES FOR 2015 (Verbal)

The Chairman informed the Members that Board and Committee dates for 2015 had been approved at the Board meeting on 14 November 2014. However, it had been brought to the Chairman's attention that one of the Audit recommendations was to have more up to date financial information in the forthcoming year. The Members agreed to keep the schedule as previously agreed and then to receive the most up to date information available prior to the meeting, this may be by email or hard copy. It was noted that when the electronic solution was in place for the Board, this would cease to be an issue.

The Board approved the proposed way forward.

9. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – ANY OTHER BUSINESS – (Agenda items 9 and 10)

The Chair updated Members on the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 28 November 2014 with draft minutes from the meeting presented to the Members. There were three substantive items, the presentation on Work with Lifers by Ms Grant and two papers which have been presented to the Board today for approval.

11. AUDIT COMMITTEE (Verbal) (Agenda items 11 and 12)

The Deputy Chair of the Audit Committee confirmed that Members had received a verbal update of the last Audit Committee meeting held 17 October 2014 at the last Board Meeting on 14 November 2014. Draft minutes were presented to Members for information. The next meeting will be held on 23 January 2015.

13. REGISTER OF INTEREST – BOARD MEMBERS (Paper 164/14)

Members were advised that each member had received a personalised list of their Register of Interests from 2014 in their tabled pack. Member were asked to complete the register and return to Mrs Rodgers as soon as possible

Action: Members to complete Register of Interest Forms

The Board noted the paper.

14. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (Paper 165/14)

The Head of Human Resources gave an update on the current position and progress to Members advising that the Chairman would verbally update Members on Tranche 2, Senior Management. The review of Corporate Services' systems and processes has been completed and will be presented to the OD Programme Board in January 2015, with the Board being updated in February 2015.

The (Acting) Deputy Director updated Members on the progress of the Estates Strategy outlining the closure of premises; dilapidation costs associated with closure and repairs to premises. There was a discussion around dilapidation costs on some premises. The Head of Finance provided financial information on costs associated with dilapidation, providing assurance to the Board that value for money was a major consideration. Members were advised that negotiations were continuing with the landlord of two of the premises (PDU and Inspire).

A Member asked for feedback on the impact of compliance in relation to attendance by offenders now that some reporting centres have been closed. The (Acting) Director advised that this was

also an action on the Matters Arising item 4, scheduled to report to the Board in June 2015. The (Acting) Deputy Director highlighted that it may not be possible to attribute any compliancy increases to closures given the number of other cost saving measures that have been undertaken.

Action: (Acting) Deputy Director to check if there has been any immediate impact on attendance due to reporting centres being closed.

The Chairman advised Members of the next stage in the SMT Tranche. The date for the delivery of the report has been extended to allow for the (Acting) Director and Senior Managers to look at the core work of Probation. The Senior Management input will then be presented to the Sub-group and included in the final report to the Board. The Report is now scheduled for completion mid to end of January 2015.

The Board noted the paper.

15. OCTOBER FINANCIAL OUTTURN AND COST REDUCTION (Paper 166/14)

The Head of Finance took the Members through the paper presented and highlighted a number of areas to Members by way of an update. The underspend is running at £113k with the paper giving explanations for this.

November's financial figures were tabled, as per the Audit recommendation, to provide the Board with the most up to date figures as possible and Members were advised that the Department had requested November's figures for the Overview Meeting which was to be held on 15 December 2014. The Head of Finance briefly highlighted a number of areas for the Members; namely, underspend had moved from 1% to 3%; staff pension pressures of 2%; and revenue underspend was down to maintenance spend but this will be spent within the financial year.

The Board noted the paper.

16. BUSINESS CASES, PROJECT AND PROGRAMME UPDATE (Paper 167/14)

The Head of Finance updated Members on the current situation and progress of business cases and projects.

The E-appraisal system is progressing on time with testing taking place on the 17th and 19th of December 2014, also support costs being renegotiated downwards.

The tenders for the procurement of the tablets and the management software have been issued with a return date of 17 December 2014.

The business case for HQ has been approved by the Department and is going to SIB and FSD for fast-tracking.

The Board noted the paper.

17. BUDGET 2015-2016 (Paper 172/14)

Members were advised that a letter was received from the Permanent Secretary dated 1 December 2014, setting out the draft budget reflecting a 12% reduction. Feedback to the Department was due

back on 10 December 2014 which was sent with the proviso that the Board would be discussing the budget at the Board meeting on 12 December 2014.

The Head of Finance took Members through the paper advising on the impact of the cuts. The (Acting) Director advised Members of the impact on staffing and the changes to practice that would have to be made. In summary, the budget allocation means a reduction to rehabilitative services in the Criminal Justice sector. Disappointment was expressed in relation to the allocation of the budget, with such a significant reduction, and its effect on victims and offenders given the requirement on PBNI to now seek to re-design its operating model.

There was a query on PBNI's ability to cap the number of Reports. The (Acting) Director advised that she would meet with the Lord Chief Justice to advise him of the reduced resource when the budget is confirmed and prior to any change in PBNI practice.

Action: (Acting) Director to meet with Lord Chief Justice when the budget is confirmed.

Members had a lengthy discussion on the budget, the consequences of the cuts, the political support from all parties and political implications of these cuts. There was discussion around the positive media coverage received on the cuts and the Chairman thanked the Head of Communications for her work on promoting the Organisation and the support she gave the Chairman throughout the media coverage. The Head of Communications briefed the Members on the media coverage and advised that there had been positive feedback on Twitter.

The Board noted the paper.

18. CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (Verbal)

The Deputy Director advised Members that an update was contained in the Management Information Report. Discussions were ongoing with the Department and it was confirmed that while capital was available, the challenge was to agree on resource costs. Members were advised that alternatives were being looked at and the Head of IT had met with the IT managers of Northern Ireland Prison Service and Youth Justice Agency. The Deputy Director confirmed that the Internal Auditors were going to look at PIMS.

The Board noted the update.

19. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION (Paper 168/14)

Members noted the paper. One Serious Further Offence was brought to the Members' attention with no practice issues to report.

The Board noted the paper.

20. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER (Paper 155/14)

The Strategic Risk Register had been deferred from November's meeting. The (Acting) Deputy Director went through the risks and gave an explanation to Members on the RAG status of Risks 2, 4 and 6. There was discussion around the Business Plan risk and its status.

The Board noted the paper.

21. PROGRAMME OF VISITS AND BUSINESS (Paper 170/14)

The Chairman noted the considerable amount of engagement with other organisations taking in to account the opportunities that this presents for Probation.

The Board noted the paper

22. BOARD OBJECTIVES AND WORKPLAN 2014-15 (Paper 171/14)

Members were advised that the Workplan is revised each month as business need requires.

The Board noted the paper.

23. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

- a) The Internal Audit recommendation to review the Standards and Board Effectiveness is to be completed before the year end, which will involve a meeting of Board Members.
- b) CJINI – the Members were advised that any recommendations will go to the Audit Committee.
 - a) **Action: Chairman will be in contact with Members to arrange a meeting of the Remuneration Committee.**
 - b) **Action: The Chairman will be in contact with Members to arrange a review of the Standards and Board Effectiveness.**

24. DIRECTOR'S /SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

- a) The (Acting) Director advised Members that Rosemary Crawford of DoJ had advised PBNI about the Change Fund Scheme which has a pot of £30m. There was a quick turnaround on this and the Probation Board has made three bids totalling more than £1m.
- b) On the 3 December 2014 the Prison Review Oversight Group, which the Minister attends, met where PRT 31 was signed off.
- c) The (Acting) Director met with the Director General of Prisons and the Members were advised that NIPS had proposed a review of how PBNI deliver services to prisons which was to be completed by the end of January 2015.

25. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Friday 16 January 2015 at 9.30 am.

The meeting closed at 1 pm with the Chairman wishing the meeting a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Vilma Patterson
Chairman

Date