

## PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

**BOARD MEETING – 8 AUGUST 2014****9.30 AM – CONFERENCE ROOM, PBNI HEADQUARTERS****350<sup>th</sup> MEETING – 21st of TENTH TERM OF OFFICE**ATTENDANCE

Mrs Vilma Patterson (Chairman)	Mr R Mullan (Deputy Chairman)
Mr D Brown	Mr T O'Hanlon (left the meeting at 1 pm)
Mrs J Erskine	Mr E Jardine
Mrs L Jennett	Mr M Wardlow
Mr R Wilson	Mrs P Shepherd (left the meeting at 12.30 pm)

Ms C Lamont, (Acting) Director  
 Mr P Doran, Deputy Director  
 Mr H Hamill, (Acting) Deputy Director  
 Ms L Cooper, Head of Business Planning and Development (Items 7-10, 25)  
 Ms C McCann, Head of Finance (Items 7-9, 27-30)  
 Mrs G McGreevy, Head of Communications (Items 15-17)  
 Mr B McCutcheon, Head of IT (Items 15-18)  
 Mr P McIlwaine (Item 10)  
 Mr P Moss, Board Secretary  
 Mrs W Rodgers, Personal Secretary (Minutes)

1. The Chairman welcomed Niall O'Neill from Business Planning and Development to the meeting to present Reoffending Rates 2010/11 to the Board Members. Following the presentation there was a brief discussion on the figures presented and how these could be used in Probation practice. The Chairman thanked Mr O'Neill for the very interesting piece of work on reoffending trends.

2. OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chairman welcomed Members and thanked them for attending a brief closed session before the commencement of the meeting. The Chairman introduced Mrs Rodgers to the Members. The Chairman advised that the papers had been a huge task and commented that the venue of the meeting had initially been proposed to be in Ballymena. However, this had not proved realistic given a number of challenges from the Department and annual leave. She appreciated staff having met these challenges. The Chairman congratulated Mr Jardine on his appointment to the Board of Governors at Stranmillis. The Chairman advised that due to the full agenda, some items would be dealt with by exception only.

Mr Wardlow declared a conflict of interest for the discussion on Section 75 Annual Progress Report (agenda item 20A). Mrs Erskine declared a conflict of interest for the discussion on NILGOSC Pensions Business Case (agenda item 19).

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Mrs O'Rourke, Mr D Rose and Mr B McAllister. Mrs Shepherd and Mr O'Hanlon had advised the Chairman of leaving early.

4. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JUNE 2014

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 June 2014 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

5. MATTERS ARISING (Paper 93/14)

Report from the Audit Committee – The training session would be arranged around the General Purposes Committee; Mr Jardine suggested October's meeting. The Chairman wished to hold the October meeting in Ballymena or an alternative location outside Belfast.

Volunteer Mentoring – Would be covered under funding on the agenda.

PBNI/YJA Co-operation with Young People, under the age of 18, who offend – The Deputy Director gave a verbal update on the pilot being extended to Rural – the meeting agreed.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

There were four pieces of correspondence brought to the meeting's attention:

13 June 2014 – Nichola Mallon, Lord Mayor of Belfast to Chairman

18 July 2014 – Chairman to Nick Perry, Permanent Secretary

22 July 2014 – Nick Perry, Permanent Secretary to Chairman

6 August 2014 – Charlie Mack, CEO Extern Group to Chairman

There was discussion around the correspondence and the Chairman reported on her meetings with Nick Perry, the Minister, Richard Good and the Head of the Prison Service.

The letter received from Extern would be discussed under Community Grants.

**Action: The (Acting) Director to follow up on arranging a meeting with the Lord Mayor.**

7. FURTHER IN YEAR SAVINGS 2014-15 (Paper 95/14)

The Head of Finance advised the meeting that the paper had been sent to DoJ on 7 August 2014. The Head of Finance took the meeting through the saving scenarios and the percentages involved from savings already identified, bringing attention to the risks and impact of the savings.

The Head of Business Planning & Development presented the paper on Capacity and summarised the required staffing levels against current complement.

There was a lengthy discussion around the paper with a number of points raised. The Head of Finance and the Head of Business Planning & Development responded to queries raised.

The Board approved the paper.

8. COMMISSIONING BUDGET 2015-16 – SAVINGS SCENARIOS (Paper 96/14)

The (Acting) Director gave a brief background on the paper which had been sent to the DoJ on 7 August 2014 and advised that the content had to be amended due to changes in the previous paper (item 7).

The Head of Finance took the meeting through the paper and responded to queries raised.

**Action: Head of Finance to amend wording.**

The Board approved the paper subject to the amendments being made.

9. NILGOSC PENSIONS BUSINESS CASE (Paper 108/14)

**Action: Head of Finance to submit Business Case to DOJ/DFP for approval.**

10. SECTION 75 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT (120/14)

The Chairman introduced Paul McIlwaine of Business Planning & Development. Mr McIlwaine briefed the meeting on the report and advised that PBNI was piloting a new format at the request of the Commission. In response to a query, Mr McIlwaine advised that the possibility of appointing a Disability Champion was being considered.

The Chairman acknowledged the work and welcomed the logical approach of the pilot.

The Board approved the paper.

11. SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY AND PROCEDURES (Paper 97/14)

The (Acting) Director presented the Policy in the absence of the Head of Human Resources who was on annual leave.

The (Acting) Director advised that the Policy had been through General Purposes Committee with no issues or amendments. The Chair of the General Purposes Committee advised that the Committee had recommended approval of the Policy and Procedures.

The Board approved the paper.

12. SECONDMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES (Paper 98/14)

The (Acting) Director presented the Policy in the absence of the Head of Human Resources who was on annual leave.

The (Acting) Director advised that the Policy had been through General Purposes Committee with no issues or amendments. The Chair of the General Purposes Committee advised that the Committee had recommended approval of the Policy and Procedures.

The Board approved the paper.

13. RETIREMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES (Paper 99/14)

The (Acting) Director presented the Policy in the absence of the Head of Human Resources who was on annual leave.

The (Acting) Director advised that the Policy had been through General Purposes Committee with no issues or amendments. The Chair of the General Purposes Committee advised that the Committee had recommended approval of the Policy and Procedures

The Board approved the paper.

#### 14. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION REGARDING COMMISSION OF AN OFFENCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE (Paper 100/14)

The (Acting) Deputy Director presented the Policy and advised that the Policy had been through General Purposes Committee. The (Acting) Deputy Director confirmed that the amendments requested by the members of the General Purposes Committee had been made. The Chair of the General Purposes Committee advised that the Committee had recommended approval of the Policy and Procedures.

The Board approved the paper.

#### 15. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

##### ESTATES STRATEGY – (I) – ZERO BASED REVIEW (Paper 101/14)

The (Acting) Deputy Director went through the paper and appendices and briefed the meeting. The (Acting) Deputy Director advised that all proposals arising from the outworking of the Estates Strategy would be brought to the Board for approval. A Member asked about the equality implications for clients and staff and whether the screening process had been addressed. The (Acting) Deputy Director advised that screening had been carried out on the two offices already closed (and will be done prior to any subsequent office closures).

##### ESTATES STRATEGY – (II) – CLOSURE OF REPORTING CENTRES (Paper 102/14)

The (Acting) Deputy Director took the meeting through the paper and appendices and recommended the closure of five reporting centres. A member asked about the impact on compliance of reduced funding of travel and the closure of the five reporting centres.

The (Acting) Deputy Director also apprised Board member of the second stream of the DoJ's proposed Estates Strategy. The realisation of same (if it is approved) may take some five to ten years. PBNI's strategy outlined in the Zero Based Review, will have to proceed, although the DoJ will have to be consulted (and approve) any changes to t PBNI's Estate Strategy.

**The Board approved the Zero Based Review.**

**Action: (Acting) Deputy Director to ask Statistics Research to identify whether there is an increase in non-compliance.**

The meeting approved the closure of the five reporting centres.

##### COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY UPDATE AND SURVEY OUTCOME (b) (Paper 103/14)

The Head of Communications gave a brief outline of the activities of Communications and took the meeting through the paper. The meeting was asked to note the findings of the survey.

The Chairman congratulated the Communications team and thanked the Head of Communications.

The Board noted the paper.

16. WEBSITE OPTIONS (Paper 104/14)

The Head of Communications advised that the current contract was due to run out in December 2014 and the Electronic Provision Sub-group had discussed the options the previous week. The Head of Communications ran through the preferred options and the meeting discussed these. The Board accepted that Option 1 was not appropriate and agreed that Option 5 should be approved.

**Action: The Head of Communications to put more detail around the specification required, This should include building an interactive capacity into the new website**

The Board approved the paper

17. ELECTRONIC PROVISION (Paper 105/14)

The Head of IT outlined the experience of other organisations which had introduced electronic processes; he had further meetings arranged in September with more organisations and with Microsoft.

The Head of IT put forward an interim solution to reduce printing costs but this was not accepted by the Board.

The Board approved the paper.

18. CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM – STRATEGIC OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE (Paper 116/14)

The Chairman commented on the time already lost on this project and stressed the importance of progressing this project. The Head of IT was asked to report back to the Board on his consultation with DoJ about affordability.

**Action: Head of IT to report back to the Board**

The Board noted the paper.

19. COMMUNITY GRANTS APPEAL PANEL (Paper 106/14)

The Deputy Chairman reported that the Panel had found this a difficult process and had met on two occasions to consider the documents provided. They had concluded that there was evidence to support the Allocation Panel's original decision and were therefore recommending that it should be upheld.

At the same time the Panel had set out a number of concerns and comments about the current process for consideration.

The (Acting) Director said that these points would be taken forward in the current review of the Community Grants Policy and the (Acting) Deputy Director would consult Panel members about their concerns.

**Action: (Acting) Deputy Director to meet with Panel Members to discuss their recommendations**

The meeting approved the recommendation of the Appeal Panel.

20. EX GRATIA PAYMENTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE (Paper 107/14)

The Board Secretary explained the background of this issue and requested that the Board approve the reinstatement of the Policy in the light of the revised delegated limits. He also asked Members to set a commencement date for application of the Policy.

The Board approved the paper and agreed that the Policy should be reinstated from 24 June 2014.

21. BOARD DIVERSITY CHAMPION (Verbal)

The Chairman proposed that Lillian Jennett be appointed as the Board Diversity Champion and would attend the Good Relations Group as an observer. The Chairman thanked Mr McAllister for considering the position at an earlier stage.

The Board approved the appointment of Mrs Jennett as Diversity Champion.

22. AUDIT COMMITTEE (Verbal)

The Chair of the Audit Committee reported two points of note:

- a) The accounts had been laid before the Assembly in good time
- b) The Electronic Appraisal system required further work and a paper would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

23. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE (Paper 110/14)

The Chair of General Purposes Committee gave an update about the meeting. Points of note were:

- a) PHA Public Consultation – on the Joint Criminal Justice and Healthcare Strategy provided a chance for the Board to raise concerns
- b) Policies - all policy papers were approved for recommendation to the Board
- c) DFP Guidance – new guidance on a Code of Conduct for Board Members had been issued but, after discussion, the Committee had expressed reluctance to depart from PBNI's existing Code of Practice.

**Action: The Chairman and Board Secretary to compare the new guidance with the existing Code of Practice.**

24. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (Paper 111/14)

The Chairman advised the meeting that the Organisational Development Sub-group had been convened with ACC Todd as the independent member. Methodology and Terms of Reference had been agreed and meetings with the senior team were being scheduled with a focus group following the individual discussions. The Chairman underlined the short timeframe to complete this piece of work and that the Senior Management Team had been updated and received the Terms of Reference.

The Board noted the paper.

25. Q1 BUSINESS PLAN 2014-15 (Paper 112/14)

The Head of Business Planning & Development briefed the meeting on the paper and asked for Section 2 to be noted.

The Board noted the paper.

26. PRISON POPULATION REVIEW UPDATE (Verbal)

The Deputy Director advised that there was no update on prison population and this item would be included in the Management of Information paper going forward.

**Action: The Deputy Director to use the Management of Information paper to update the Members going forward.**

27. JUNE 2014 OUTTURN (Paper 113/14)

The Head of Finance took the meeting through the paper and drew attention to Table 2. The meeting was advised that VAT was now to be charged on secondments although the organisations to whom this applied had not been notified as yet.

Mrs Erskine advised that a training programme was being put together by the Head of Finance for the Members and this might take place in October at the General Purposes Committee.

The Board noted the paper.

28. DELEGATED LIMITS (Paper 114/12)

The Head of Finance advised that the Department had issued revised Delegated limits with two changes as listed in the paper.

The Board noted the paper.

## 29. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION (Paper 115/14)

The (Acting) Deputy Director drew attention to one Serious Further Offence and gave some background to the case. The (Acting) Deputy Director confirmed that an internal review of the case would be carried out.

The Board noted the paper.

## 30. BUSINESS CASES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES (Paper 117/14)

The Board noted the paper.

## 31. PROGRAMME OF VISITS AND BUSINESS (Paper 118/14)

The paper was dealt with under Exceptions Only – the Chairman advised of two additional meetings she had attended with Nick Perry and Sue McAllister.

The Board noted the paper.

## 32. BOARD OBJECTIVES AND WORKPLAN 2014-15 (Paper 119/14)

The Board noted the paper.

## 33. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chairman reported on her meeting with the Minister and the discussion around the upcoming appointment of Board Members in 2015.

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

The (Acting) Director briefed the meeting as follows:

- a) The Head of Psychology Services and Interventions attended a Forensic Social Work Conference in New York where she presented a paper and was a speaker. She had received very positive feedback about PBNI's work from the conference and the (Acting) Director will arrange for her to present the findings to the Board at suitable date.
- b) A Deputy Director was leading a delegation to a two day European Union conference on rehabilitation in Germany. Five staff were attending from PBNI with three invitations being extended to other agencies.
- c) There was a successful bilateral meeting held between PBNI and the Prison Service in June at PBNI HQ.
- d) The (Acting) Director attended a meeting with Richard Good (special adviser to the Minister) at the Newtownards Road Office where they discussed general topics of interest and Christine Hunter provided a briefing on Community Service.
- e) Vivian Geiran of the Probation Service had requested that a Deputy Director sit on an interview panel for Probation Service Regional Managers and the (Acting) Director had agreed to this request.



The Board Secretary requested that all members submit their expense forms on a timely basis.

35. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

The meeting closed at 1.20 pm.

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Vilma Patterson  
Chairman

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Date