

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

BOARD MEETING – 12 SEPTEMBER 2014**9.15 AM – CONFERENCE ROOM, PBNI HEADQUARTERS****351st MEETING – 22nd of TENTH TERM OF OFFICE**ATTENDANCE

Mrs Vilma Patterson (Chairman)	Mr R Mullan (Deputy Chairman)
Mr D Brown	Mrs J Erskine
Mr E Jardine	Mrs L Jennett
Mr D Rose	Mrs P Shepherd
Mr M Wardlow	Mr R Wilson

Ms C Lamont, (Acting) Director
 Mr P Doran, Deputy Director
 Mrs G Robinson, Head of Human Resources
 Ms L Cooper, Head of Business Planning and Development (Items 10 - 13)
 Ms C McCann, Head of Finance (Items 10-15)
 Mr P Moss, Board Secretary
 Mrs W Rodgers, Personal Secretary (Minutes)

1. OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Board meeting commenced at 9.15 am with a pre-meeting to the Accountability Review followed by items 1 to 9 of the Board agenda covered up to 10 am when the meeting was adjourned.

The Minister for Justice together with members of his staff from the Department attended the annual Accountability Review which commenced at 10 am and concluded at 11.15 am.

The Board meeting recommenced at 11.15 am. The Chairman thanked Members for attending the Accountability Review with the Minister and for the questions asked. The Chairman stated that the Board's approach to the budget was correct and that the Board had reported on a successful year.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Mr B McAllister, Mr T O'Hanlon, Mrs M O'Rourke and Mr H Hamill, (Acting) Deputy Director.

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

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 August 2014 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING (Paper 121/14)

Secretary to identify alternative venue for a future Board meeting – After discussion it was agreed to consider the viability of holding a meeting at suitable council premises.

Action: Secretary to consider the viability of holding a meeting at suitable council premises

General Purposes Committee – It was noted that the Chairman – not the Committee Chair - and Board Secretary had held preliminary talks about the Code of Conduct and Practice.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

One piece of correspondence was brought to the meeting's attention:

20 August 2014 – Memo to Board Members on Expenses Claims

6. REMUNERATION COMMITTEE – APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS (Paper 123/14)

The Chairman advised Members that she was convening a Remuneration Committee and nominated Mr O'Hanlon and Mr Wardlow as members if available. After discussion it was agreed that in principle a member of the Audit Committee could not be a member of the Remuneration Committee.

If Mr O'Hanlon was not available then the Chairman would approach another Board Member.

Action: Chairman to approach relevant Members with regard to convening a Remuneration Committee

The Board approved the paper.

7. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE (Verbal)

The Committee Chair advised Members that Mrs Jennett as Deputy Chair would chair the meeting on 26 September 2014 in his absence. The Members were advised of a number of themes that had been identified for presentation to the Committee in the next six to eight months such as T/PMOs, Public Protection, and Work with Lifers and field teams which will be brought to the Committee.

8. AUDIT COMMITTEE (Paper 124/14)

The Committee Chair advised that the Annual Report and Accounts had been finalised with no significant changes or amendments before being signed off and laid before the Assembly. A paper on E-appraisal system will be presented at the next Committee meeting.

Action: E-Appraisal System to be agenda item at next Audit Committee

The Chairman congratulated all concerned on a satisfactory outcome for the year and thanked the Audit Committee for their contribution.

9. AUDIT COMMITTEE – ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Verbal)

No items were presented.

10. ORGANISATONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME BOARD (Verbal)

The Chairman gave a verbal briefing and update on the work of the Organisational Development Board Sub-group. The Chairman advised that ACC Alan Todd acted as the independent member of the Sub-group and a Human Resources consultant had been engaged to provide assistance to the Group and to write the report. The Chairman thanked the members of the Sub-group for the time that they have given to the project. Feedback had been given to the Senior Management Team and a communique had been sent from the Chairman and (Acting) Director.

Action: Board Members to receive a copy of the communique

The Chairman anticipated that the draft report would be brought to the General Purposes Committee in October 2014 to facilitate time for a longer discussion with the final draft coming to the November Board meeting.

Action: OD draft report to be presented at GPC in October 2014 and final report to be presented at November Board meeting

11. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE JUSTICE BILL (Paper 125/14)

The Head of Business Planning & Development briefed the Members on PBNI's response to the Department of Justice Consultation on the Justice Bill. The Members were advised that only one of the amendments related to PBNI which was (Victims and Witnesses) on the sharing of victim and witness information. The response had accepted the amendment proposed and was advised that PBNI not be commenting on any of the other amendments.

The Board noted the paper.

12. JULY 2014 OUTTURN AND COST REDUCTION PLAN (Paper 126/14)

The Head of Finance took the Members through the paper, and highlighted several of the areas: Further reductions had to be made to meet in-year pressures of £354k, year to date underspend of £144k or 2% slowing down spending in anticipation of further cuts as set out in the cost reduction plan. Still waiting for a decision from the Department on the capital budget. There was still potential in-year pressures largely relating to pensions, VAT and dilapidation costs that are yet to be quantified, estimated at £284k (worst case scenario), further work is being carried out to determine potential amount of these pressures.

There was discussion around the points raised in the paper and in particular discussion around VAT, unsocial hours and pensions. The (Acting) Director advised the Members that she hoped to have feedback from the Minister by the end of September 2014 on the in-year budget reductions.

The Board noted the paper.

13. STRATEGIC IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT OF RISK (Paper 127/14)

The Head of Business Planning & Development advised the Members that the Capacity paper would also be covered under this agenda item.

The Members were advised that Risk 4 should be middle of the table and not red as shown on the paper. Attention was drawn to a new format on page 26 following a recommendation from the last Audit Committee. A Member asked whether the seven risks were adequately covered which led to a discussion around Risk 2 and what risk level it should be. The (Acting) Director advised that she had attended a meeting with other Accounting Officers and stressed that it was the Accounting

Officer's responsibility to bring the Organisation in within budget, since the budget had changed throughout the year, the risk status would change in real terms.

The Head of Business Planning & Development was thanked for her work on the horizon scanning and emerging risks. A discussion took place in relation to the role of the Board and, in turn, the Accounting Officer. The Board fully recognised that the Accounting Officer held the main role in relation to the management of budget and delivery within budget. A Member made the point, by way of support for the Accounting Officer, that at some point the risk may need to be passed back to the Department if the risk is eventually untenable or outside PBNI's control.

The Capacity paper outlined a shortfall in staff which resulted in the Best Practice Framework being amended to ensure delivery of adequate services. The paper had been shared with the DoJ at the last Overview meeting. It was noted that the Strategic Risk Register would be brought to the next Audit Committee meeting.

Action: Strategic Risk Register to be brought to the next Audit Committee

The Board noted the paper.

14. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION (Paper 128/14)

The Head of Human Resources highlighted sickness absences levels and the present forecast of 9.3 days for 2014-15.

Action: Sickness Absence to be discussed at a future Board Meeting

The Board discussed visits by Members to staff teams and agreed that consideration should be given as to the best way forward. The (Acting) Director advised the meeting that an organisation wide Christmas event was being planned to improve relationships and improve morale.

Action: Board Members' staff visits to be discussed

The Board noted the paper.

15. BUSINESS CASES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES UPDATE (Paper 129/14)

The paper was treated as 'by exception' and no comments were made by Members.

The Board noted the paper.

16. PROGRAMME OF VISITS AND BUSINESS (Paper 130/14)

The Chairman underlined the importance of the Overview meeting and the Accountability Review. The Overview Meeting had gone well with the papers from the August Board meeting being presented. The budget was discussed and it was noted that the anticipated further saving requirements would not be known until the forthcoming October Monitoring round. Percentage savings were indicated for 2015-16 and it was agreed that it was imperative to know the percentage as soon as possible, it was hoped that this would be later in the month.

The Chairman advised of changes in staffing at the Department with Karen Pearson moving to Research and Rosemary Crawford replacing her as the Grade 5.

The Board noted the paper.

17. BOARD OBJECTIVES AND WORKPLAN 2014-15 (Paper 131/14)

The Board Secretary stated that the Board Objectives and Workplan paper was updated each month taking account of agenda items for the General Purposes Committee.

The Board noted the paper.

18. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chairman asked the (Acting) Director to update the Members on Alderwood under Director's Business.

The Chairman paid tribute to the Board Secretary as this was his last Board Meeting after 17 years before retirement. The Board Secretary thanked the Chairman for her kind words and wished the Board and staff good wishes for the future.

19. DIRECTOR'S / SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

The (Acting) Director expressed her good wishes to the Board Secretary on his retirement. The Members were advised that Gillian Robinson, in the interim, would carry out the Board Secretary's duties for the Board with Wendy Rodgers as the dedicated support to the Board.

The Members were apprised of the secondment of the Head of Business Planning & Development to the Reducing Offending Directorate (ROD) after a selection process, she would be based at Dundonald House from 1 October 2014 and the secondment was for an initial period of 12 months, which could be extended further.

Interviews for the post of (Acting) Assistant Director for Rural had been conducted and the result of this should be known within a week.

The Deputy Director would be attending a Penal Reform Policy meeting in Dublin on 20 September 2014 and would be also be attending a Recall Seminar at Millise on 2 October 2014.

The (Acting) Director reported that Niall O'Neill would be attending a three day conference in Malta from 22 to 24 October 2014 with no cost to PBNI.

The (Acting) Director had been asked to join a NISCC group formed to lead on social work strategy and issues and she would keep Members informed.

Action: (Acting) Director to keep Members informed in respect of NISCC Social Work Strategy Group

Alderwood – There had been communication between the Department, NIPS and PBNI. Anthony Harbinson and Karen Pearson had agreed that programmes would be continued at Alderwood and that the Department was to manage the risk. Correspondence is to be sent by Anthony Harbinson and Karen Pearson to that effect.

The (Acting) Director informed Members that she would be on three weeks leave from 12 September 2014 with cover being provided for two weeks by the Deputy Director and the final week by the (Acting) Deputy Director.

The Attorney General for Northern Ireland – There had been a preliminary meeting with the Attorney General, at the request of his office, reference drafting Human Rights guidance for PBNI.

The Deputy Director supplied more information and the process of writing a draft is now underway with nothing of difficulty arising.

The Board Secretary advised the Members that Probation News and Press Coverage would be emailed to Members each month. Any member wishing to receive a hard copy should contact Wendy Rodgers.

Action: Secretariat to email Probation News and Press Coverage to Members on a monthly basis

Expenses sheets – the Secretary reminded Members that expenses sheets must be received within the three month period.

20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Verbal)

The Chairman drew attention to an email from Charlie Mack, Chief Executive of Extern, thanking PBNI for the opportunity to attend the trip to Germany for the CEP Probation Conference on Rehabilitation.

Action: Deputy Director to present a report to the next Board Meeting

The Chairman thanked Gillian Robinson and Wendy Rodgers for their input to the Board looking forward.

The Chairman wished the (Acting) Director an enjoyable holiday.

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Friday 10 October 2014 at 9.30 am.

The meeting closed at 1.00 pm.

Vilma Patterson
Chairman

Date