

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

BOARD MEETING – 10 October 2014**10.00 AM – CONFERENCE ROOM, PBNI HEADQUARTERS****352nd MEETING – 23rd 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 (Items 1-21)
Mr B McAllister	Mr T O'Hanlon
Mr M Wardlow	

Ms C Lamont, (Acting) Director
Mr P Doran, Deputy Director
Mrs G Robinson, (Acting) Board Secretary/Head of Human Resources
Ms C McCann, Head of Finance (Items 1-17)
Mrs W Rodgers, Personal Secretary (Minutes)

1. OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chairman welcomed all attendees to the meeting and in particular Stephen Hamilton as an observer. The Chairman congratulated Mr Hamilton on his new post as (Acting) Assistant Director Rural.

The Chairman informed the Meeting that a closed session for Board Members would take place after the listed business.

Mr Wardlow declared a conflict of interest for item 7 – Equal Opportunities Policy.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from, Mr D Rose, Mrs M O'Rourke, Mrs P Shepherd, Mr R Wilson and Mr H Hamill, (Acting) Deputy Director.

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

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 September 2014 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING (Paper 132/14)

- Budget and Staffing – This item is ongoing and is to be taken off the Matters Arising.
- Code of Conduct and Practice - The Chairman and the Board Secretary met to discuss the Code of Practice and this is to be brought to the November Board.
- 'Future Meeting' – All Matters Arising with 'Future Meeting' are to be time lined

Action: The (Acting) Board Secretary is to ensure that all Matters Arising have a time line where appropriate.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

The (Acting) Director brought attention to one piece of correspondence received from Nick Perry on Financial Year 2015-16.

The Members noted the correspondence.

6. COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES
(Paper 133/14)

The Deputy Director advised that the Policy had been through General Purposes Committee with no further 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.

7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY (Paper 134/14)

The Deputy Director advised that the Policy had been through General Purposes Committee with no further issues or amendments. The Chair of the General Purposes Committee advised that the Committee had recommended approval of the Policy and Procedures. Mr Wardlow abstained from the decision on the Policy due to a conflict of interest.

The Board approved the paper.

8. RETIRED ASSOCIATES OF PROBATION GROUP (Paper 135/14)

The Head of Human Resources advised that the paper 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 paper.

The Board approved the paper.

9. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE (Verbal)

The Chair updated the Members on the items for the November meeting agenda that had been scheduled for October. The agenda for October will have Finance training for Members and a closed session to discuss the Organisational Development SMT draft report.

10. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman advised the Members that she had attended Human Rights training and suggested that Virginia McVea should be invited to attend a future meeting of the General Purposes Committee. The Members agreed to this suggestion.

Action: The (Acting) Board Secretary is to invite Virginia McVea to a future General Purposes Committee.

11. AUDIT COMMITTEE (Verbal)

The Chair advised that the Committee had not met since the last Board Meeting but a full Committee meeting will be held on 17 October 2014.

12. AUDIT COMMITTEE – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None reported.

13. BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE 2014-15 – Q2 PROGRESS REPORT (Paper 136/14)

The Deputy Director took the Members through the objectives and highlighted where there were issues and why. The Members were advised that 12 of the 14 objectives were on target; attention was brought to the objectives that were amber and the reasons for this.

Following detailed discussions around the objectives the Members expressed concern about acceptance of a 'satisfactory' service. Staff had worked very hard to achieve the current RAG status on each objective, but it was emphasised that this had required the re-prioritising of work. The (Acting) Director advised that the core statutory remit must be delivered within budget and Members were asked for any suggestions.

Action: The (Acting) Director is to give an update on objectives to the Chairman.

It was agreed to adjust the Business Plan and the Chairman will write to the Minister to explain the changes; the correspondence will be circulated to Members for comment prior to being sent. The Members agreed to this approach.

Action: The Chairman to write to the Minister

The Board noted the paper.

14. CEP PROBATION CONFERENCE REPORT ON RE-INTEGRATION OF HIGH RISK OFFENDERS (Paper 137/14)

The Deputy Director briefed the Members on the Conference that he attended which was fully funded by the EU Commission. In all five representatives from PBNI and three invited partners attended. The Conference was deemed to be very useful. Reference was made to the Scandinavian model and the intercultural competencies, the Deputy Director brought attention to presentations by Mary Rogan, Sally Lewis and John Long, all of whom PBNI have had contact with previously.

Following discussion around the roles of Probation Officers and Prison Officers, the Deputy Director also advised that the introduction of Conditional Early Release by NIPS is to be delayed.

The Board noted the paper.

15. SUPERVISED ACTIVITY ORDERS UPDATE (Paper 138/14)

The Deputy Director gave an update on Supervised Activity Orders to the Members and advised that there was a delay in introducing the Fines Enforcement Bill. The Deputy Director advised that the PBNI pilot in 2013 was successful and showed the system worked, but it is likely to be 2016 before SAOs became available to the Courts.

The Board noted the paper.

16. AUGUST 2014 OUTTURN AND COST REDUCTION PLAN 2014-15 (Paper 139/14)

The Head of Finance took the Members through the paper and highlighted a number of ongoing issues. The Members were advised that the paper did not yet reflect the cut in budget at June monitoring. Members were advised that after the budgets are reduced the position should be that of break even though further forecasting will be carried out for January monitoring. The budgets are not expected to reduce any further however the DOJ has not ruled out any further budget reduction. The Department has asked all Accounting Officers to sign monthly declarations to confirm that they are living within the budget.

Following Members discussion around some of the issues highlighted in the paper, it was agreed to bring a practice update to a future meeting. The Deputy Director gave a brief update on some changes to practice already in force.

Action: The Deputy Director is to bring the Practice Update Summary to a future meeting (via Management Information).

The Board noted the paper.

17. BUSINESS CASES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES UPDATE (Paper 140/14)

The Head of Finance took the Members through the paper highlighting that the project on the Website is now progressing into the programme and project stage. The Headquarters' lease has a RAG status of amber due to awaiting plans and costings which were only received in September and the delay in the landlord negotiations. Members were advised that both the Landlord and the Department have been advised of the overstay to the lease and that this would continue until DOJ and DFP approval is received.

There was discussion around the Headquarters business case and it was agreed that the Business Case would be presented to the Audit Committee at its next meeting.

Action: Headquarters' Business Case to be presented to the Audit Committee on 17 October 2014.

The Board noted the paper.

18. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION REPORT (Paper 141/14)

The Deputy Director reported that the meeting with the Department has been scheduled for 16 October to discuss the Strategic Outline Case for the Electronic Case Management system.

The Meeting was advised that the Memorandum of Understanding is with Youth Justice Agency.

The Deputy Director highlighted that progress has been made in the exploration of provision of electronic tablet devices for the Board and Senior Management. Dates had been proposed and it was agreed that the Chairman and Mr O'Hanlon would attend the workshop if available.

The Deputy Director highlighted a reduction of Short Pre-sentence Reports from last year; however the number of Probation Officers has also reduced.

The Members were advised that the Board Secretary, Mr Moss had retired and the Head of Business Planning and Development, Ms Cooper had commenced secondment with the DOJ Reducing Offending Directorate. The Members were advised of the reallocation of duties linked to both roles. A Member asked if the Head of Business Planning and Development will be involved in the preparation of the Business Plan for next year, the Member was advised that Ms Cooper will be available to attend meetings when required.

The Members were advised of one Serious Further Offence; having reviewed the case, the practice had been appropriate in this case and although there was media attention, there was no reference to PBNI.

The Board noted the paper.

19. PROGRAMME OF VISITS AND BUSINESS (Paper 142/14)

The Members were advised of one amendment to the paper – Mr Wardlow did not attend the Remuneration Committee on 3 October 2014 as he is a member of the Audit Committee.

The (Acting) Director highlighted that she will be meeting with council Chief Executives.

The Board noted the paper.

20. BOARD OBJECTIVES AND WORKPLAN 2014-15 (Paper 143/14)

The Board noted the paper.

21. COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE (Verbal)

The Head of Communications tabled a paper which briefed the Members on media coverage and in particular the coverage over budget matters and the Minister. The Head of Communications advised that there had been good coverage with PBNI being mentioned by the Minister on a number of occasions, resulting in PBNI receiving prominent media attention. The Members were advised of a number of articles that will be coming up in the future, in particular, the Sunday Life and the Belfast Telegraph. The Head of Psychology and Intervention is to be interviewed for an article on domestic violence.

It was felt that the engagement strategy of the Chairman and (Acting) Director with the Minister and his officials had benefited this work.

There was discussion around the changes to the Justice Committee and the reshuffle of the DUP members including the Chair, it was agreed that there should be engagement with all of the Members.

Action: The Head of Communications to arrange meeting with DUP Justice Members.

22. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW OF SMT (Verbal)

Agenda item deferred to the end of the meeting and conducted as a Closed Session.

23. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

No matters reported

24. DIRECTOR'S /SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

No matters reported

25. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Friday 14 November 2014 at 9.30 am.

The meeting closed at 1.00 pm.

Vilma Patterson
Chairman

Date