

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

BOARD MEETING – 26 JANUARY 2018

10.30 AM – PBNI HEADQUARTERS

393rd MEETING – 25th of THE ELEVENTH TERM OF OFFICE

ATTENDANCE

Mrs V Patterson (Chair)
Mrs J Erskine (Deputy Chair) Mr D Brown
Mr E Jardine Mr I Jeffers
Mrs A Matthews Mr R Mullan
Mr G OhEara Mrs P Shepherd
Mr D Wall
Mrs D Groves, Board Apprentice

Officials

Ms C Lamont, Chief Executive
Mr P Doran, Director of Rehabilitation
Mr H Hamill, Director of Operations
Mrs G Robinson, Head of HR
Mrs C Teggart, Head of Finance
Mr M Cox, Board Secretary

Mrs W Rodgers, Personal Secretary (Minutes)

1. OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the January Board meeting. The Chairman thanked the Members and Officials for accommodating the change in meeting date due to the full day's training arranged for the previous week. The Audit & Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) has already met prior to today's Board meeting and the Policy & Practice Committee (PPC) are to meet after the Board Meeting. Two of the Committees are meeting before the next Board so items will be deferred to them. Papers will be taken on an 'exceptional only' basis but with members highlighting any points as appropriate. The main business of this meeting will be the 2018/19 budget paper and the impact it could have on delivery of probation services.

No conflicts of interest were declared. Mrs Erskine advised that she had resigned from the Board of NILGOSC in December 2017 and therefore has no longer a conflict of interest in this regard.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from: Mrs J Gillespie, Member and absence was noted of Mr T O'Hanlon, Member.

3. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Board Meeting – 15 December 2017 (M12/17)

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 15 December 2017 were accepted as an accurate account of the meeting with agreed amendments.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (PAPER 01/18)

The Matters Arising were noted. The Chairman advised that 'action 3' had not been required as the Threat Assessment was received from the PSNI prior to a letter being sent.

The Board noted the paper.

5. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE – VERBAL

The Chairman thanked the Chief Executive for inviting her to speak at the Staff Business Planning day held in January.

The Chairman along with the Chief Executive and Head of HR met with Mr Harbinson, Director of Safer Communities, together with Maura Campbell and Adrian Doherty of the Department. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the staff's Terms & Conditions and to obtain a steer from the Department for their preference on the issue. Mr Harbinson set out his preference which would also be the opinion of the Permanent Secretary and senior colleagues in the Department. It was advised that due to the absence of a Minister the status quo will remain for the present. It was also advised that when there is a Minister in post there will be a review of the Probation Board.

The Chairman wrote to both unions in December with regard to TPMOs and has now received a response from both unions. NAPO's reply was received on 25 January 2018. Both letters would be tabled later in this meeting. NIPSA has also written to the Department on this matter.

The training that took place on the 19 January 2018 was interactive; a report and action points are to be provided. Eileen Mullan will also be facilitating the self-assessment session which is being held after the Board meeting on 16 February 2018.

The Chairman, representing the Board, attended an Accounting Officers' budget briefing held by the Department with the Chief Executive and Head of Finance. This will be discussed under agenda item 10.4 of this agenda.

The Chairman is taking part in a 2 day event run by Innovation Labs on how Arm's Length Bodies can improve relationships with their sponsor department. Maura Campbell of the Department is also attending.

The Chairman reminded members that the Annual Accountability Review will be taking place on 13 March 2018 and asked for as many members to attend as possible.

The 400th meeting of the Probation Board since the creation of the Board in 1982 is coming up later in 2018. Members are asked for suggestions on how to mark this milestone.

The Board noted the update.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE – VERBAL

The Chief Executive updated members on matters arising since the December Board Meeting.

The Chief Executive advised that she had received an update on the Threat Assessment to PBNI from the PSNI; the threat remains as 'substantial'.

The Chief Executive advised she held a SMT meeting where it was unanimously agreed that there should be a return to service across Northern Ireland, except for contact with TPMOs, As part of consultations senior managers will have briefed middle managers and unions will also consult with their members. If there are any issues that arise, these can be brought to senior management's attention. The PSNI have advised that there are no specific issues at present with regard to the resumption of normal working for the non-TPMO cohort. In reply to a question from a member on the duty of care the Chief Executive advised that she was satisfied with the decision to resume service delivery as there will be no direct contact with TPMOs. There are ongoing meetings with the DOJ regarding TPMOs and the Chief Executive will update as and when appropriate.

Members were advised that four staff days have been arranged and the Chairman and / or a representative from the Board will be invited to attend each session.

The Head of HR updated the Members on the NILGOSC issue. There had been a meeting with DOF during which their rationale was set out, PBNI will now seek a further legal opinion.

Following the budget briefing on 11 January 2018, the Chief Executive and Head of Finance have had a follow up meeting with Glyn Capper of FSD which was productive.

The Board noted the update.

7. CORRESPONDENCE (PAPER 02/18)

There was one piece of correspondence for the Board to note.

7.1 Letter received by the Chief Executive from the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman

The Chairman advised that the letters received from NIPSA and NAPO on TPMOs has been tabled at this meeting.

The Board noted the correspondence.

8. AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE BUSINESS

8.1 Update by Committee Chair

The Chair of the Committee advised Board Members that the Committee had met on 26 January 2018 prior to this Board meeting.

There were two Internal Audit Reports presented and both received 'satisfactory' ratings. The Quarter 3 Risk Register was discussed and noted.

It was advised that the Audit Plan for the year had been completed with one report to be received. The Audit Strategic Plan had been agreed for the incoming year.

There was one item that required Board approval - Changes to the Capital Delegations of non IT Items Limits. It was requested that the limit of £500 be raised to £1,000 for Furniture and Fittings, Plant and Machinery and Office Machinery and Equipment. Following discussion and the Head of Finance confirming that the Department has a limit of £1,000 the Committee agreed to recommend approval to the Board.

The Board approved the limit for the items stated above to be raised to £1,000.

The Board noted the update.

8.2 Review of the MSFM (Verbal)

The Board Secretary advised that a meeting had been set up with the Department to discuss amendments to the MSFM. This meeting is scheduled for 30 January 2018. There is a need to clarify the Accounting Officer's role and look at definition of terms so as to avoid confusion and ambiguity.

The Board Secretary will report back to the Board on progress.

The Board noted the update.

9 POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Committee Chair advised that the Committee is meeting directly after the Board meeting on 26 January 2018. There are three policies that the Committee will be reviewing. The Director of

Rehabilitation is to present a paper on Strategic Influence. There is a suggestion of having three events during the next financial year and this will be discussed at Committee.

The Board noted the update.

9.1 Management Information Report (Paper 03/18)

The paper was taken on an 'exceptional only' basis. The Chairman referred 'caseload' to the PPC for discussion. The 'tablet' review and Case Management System (CMS) were referred to the Corporate Resources Committee (CRC) to discuss. A summary of legal cases was provided and the Chairman asked that this be discussed at CRC.

There were three Serious Further Offences (SFO) reported in the paper. The Director of Operations advised that additionally one more may require an independent review. The Director of Rehabilitation advised the Board of a very recent SFO and the detail of it.

Action: PPC to discuss the 'caseload' summary (PPC)

Action: CRC to discuss review of the 'tablets', CMS and legal cases (CRC)

The Board noted the paper.

10 CORPORATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE BUSINESS

For Noting

10.1 Financial Outturn – December 2017 (Paper 04/18)

The Chairman commented that there was good detail on the January Monitoring Round and referred discussion of the paper to the CRC with the paper taken on 'exceptional only' basis. The Head of Finance advised that there could be a pressure resulting from the Public Pay Policy. The Members were advised that there has been a discussion with the Department and FSD on this.

Action: Financial Outturn referred to CRC for discussion (CRC).

The Board noted the paper.

10.2 Programme and Project Management (Paper 05/18)

The paper was taken on an 'exceptional only' basis. The Chairman asked the CRC to look at the paper in more detail.

Action: Programme and Project Management referred to CRC for discussion (CRC)

The Board noted the paper

10.3 HR – Managing Attendance Update (Paper 06/18)

The Chairman referred discussion on the paper to the CRC.

Action: CRC to discuss the Managing Attendance Update (CRC)

The Board noted the paper.

10.4 Budget 2018/19 Consultation (Paper 07/18)

The Head of Finance introduced the paper to members and provided background into the Consultation document and the scenario paper. It was explained that there were three scenarios laid out and members were taken through what impact each might have on Probation. It was

advised that there will be £1.6m of pressures on 2018/19 financial year and members were provided with the detail around the pressures. There is a need to radically look at solutions such as revising professional standards, revising the Business Operating Model and potentially having a Voluntary Exit Scheme in order to meet potential budget reductions.

A full discussion ensued with members discussing workload which has not reduced but the budget has been reduced by 20% since 2011, however with inflationary pressures this was actually higher in real terms.

Members discussed where the 'red line' would be for the Board? The Board's role is to oversee the delivery of probation services and how it continues to operate. It was agreed to wait for feedback from FSD on funding before considering the next steps. It was agreed that Probation need to identify the impact that Probation has on society and the schemes that it is involved in such as Enhanced Combination Orders, which reduce costs overall across the public sector and make communities safer.

The Board noted the paper.

11 ALDERWOOD GROUND RAVINE PROJECT PROPOSAL (Paper 08/18)

The Chairman asked that the paper be discussed at committee prior to coming to the Board for approval. This was to allow for a reputational risk to be discussed. The Director of Rehabilitation advised that there was not a financial implication for PBNI. The Business Case is looking for endorsement from PBNI and monies were being awarded by the 'Big Lottery'. The Members were advised of the timeline of receiving the request for support. The deadline for submission to the 'Big Lottery' is 31 January 2018. The Chairman advised that there needed to be good governance in the scrutiny of the proposal and therefore discussion will go to committee first.

Action: CRC to discuss Ravine Project Proposal (CRC)

The Board noted the paper

12. PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT QUARTERLY UPDATE (PAPER 09/18)

The Board noted the paper.

13. BUSINESS PLAN Q3 UPDATE (PAPER 10/18)

The Chairman noted the good progress that is being made and commented that the first priority being 'amber' was underselling the achievements. The Director of Rehabilitation advised that this will be looked at in the next quarter.

The Board noted the paper.

14. PROGRAMME OF VISITS AND BUSINESS (PAPER 11/18)

The Board noted the paper.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None to report

16. BOARD SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

16.1 Board Work Plan 2017 – 2018 (Paper 12/18)

The Board Secretary asked for any changes to the Work Plan to be notified to Secretariat

The Board noted the paper.

16.2 Preparation for Register of Interests (Verbal)

The Board Secretary advised that the paper had been revised for the 2018 year. Members and Officials were asked to advise of any amendment before the paper was published on the internet.

Action: Members and Officials to advise of any amendments required, Board Members and Officials.

The Board noted the paper

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Friday 16 February 2018 in PBNI HQ, Conference Room, commencing at 9.30 am.

Vilma Patterson
Chairman

Date