

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

BOARD MEETING – 16 FEBRUARY 2018

9.30 AM – PBNI HEADQUARTERS

394th MEETING – 26th of THE ELEVENTH TERM OF OFFICE

ATTENDANCE

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

Officials

Mr P Doran, Director of Rehabilitation
Mr H Hamill, Director of Operations
Mrs G Robinson, Head of HR
Mrs C Teggart, Head of Finance
Ms G Colhoun, Project Manager (Item 10.2)
Mrs W Rodgers, Personal Secretary (Minutes)

1. OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the February Board meeting. The Chairman advised that after the Board meeting the Self-assessment session, facilitated by Eileen Mullan, will commence. There are a number of papers that had been referred to committees and these will be reported on at this meeting.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from: Mrs J Erskine, Deputy Chair; Mr David Brown, Member; Ms A Matthews; Member, Mr T O'Hanlon, Member; Ms C Lamont, Chief Executive and Mr M Cox, Board Secretary.

3. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Board Meeting – 26 January 2018 (M01/18)

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 26 January 2018 were accepted as an accurate account of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (PAPER 14/18)

The Matters Arising were noted, two actions are in process and all other actions have been completed.

The Board noted the position.

5. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

5.1 Chairman's Update (Verbal)

The Members were reminded of upcoming dates in March 2018. The 13 March 2018 is the Annual Accountability Review which will be chaired by the Permanent Secretary this year in the absence of a minister. The Board will be reporting on the 2016/17 year and then will focus on the challenges ahead. It is important that the successes of Probation are highlighted. The 15 March 2018 is the Annual Probation Seminar which is being held in the Long Gallery, Stormont, commencing at 10.30 am.

Updated 'Keyfacts' cards have been printed and have been provided to members for their information and distribution.

5.2 Innovation Lab (Paper 15/18)

The Chairman provided a paper on the recent event hosted by the Innovation Lab. She had attended a two day workshop on the 29 and 30 January 2018. Members were given background into the purpose of the workshops and the areas of discussion. Mr Sterling, Head of the Civil Services, commissioned the Innovation Lab to work with the Chairs' Forum and Chief Executive's Forum to come up with a report and recommendations. There were 16 recommendations coming out of the two days and these will be presented to the Northern Ireland Civil Service Board for consideration.

It was noted that 70% of the block grant in Northern Ireland is used by Arms-length Bodies (ALBs) to deliver services. There was discussion around the influence of ALBs in Northern Ireland with their sponsoring departments versus those in England and Wales. It was advised that the Cabinet Office Code of Good Practice formed the basis of the work and the National Audit Office study on oversight of ALBs.

Action: Both the Cabinet Office Code of Good Practice and the National Audit Offices study on oversight of ALBs to be placed on minutepad (Secretariat)

The Board noted the paper.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE – VERBAL

The Director of Rehabilitation provided an update to members on matters arising since the January Board Meeting.

The Director of Rehabilitation advised members of two separate disciplinary matters which had resulted in the suspension of two staff members pending investigation.

He also advised members on the position with regard to service delivery in all geographical areas.

The Director of Rehabilitation acknowledged the four Staff Engagement Days scheduled to take place and thanked those Board Members who had agreed to speak at the events. He also thanked all involved for their work in arranging the days.

The Director of Rehabilitation noted the correspondence received advising that Probation's Domestic Violence Perpetrations Team had been selected as a finalist for the Adult Services Team of the Year Award.

The Board noted the update.

7. CORRESPONDENCE (PAPER 16/18)

There were two pieces of correspondence for the Board to note.

7.1 Letter received by the Chairman from Anthony Harbinson

7.2 Letter received by the Chief Executive reference the Social Work Awards 2018
The Board noted the correspondence.

8. AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE BUSINESS

8.1 Strategic Risk Register Q3 (Paper 17/18)

The Director of Operations introduced the paper. It was advised that the Senior Management Team had reviewed the Strategic Risk Register in January as had the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee at its meeting on 26 January 2018.

There were no changes to the number of risks. The rating of 'risk' 7 (staff or premises) had been reduced to 'medium'. It was acknowledged that there had been no change to the formal risk assessment; however, it was held that the control measures and specifically the cessation of direct contact with TPMOs had reduced the risk to staff. The re-commencement of work in all areas was discussed. In light of recent media attention in respect of charities there was discussion around any potential reputational risk in relation to our work with the Community and Voluntary Sector. Also if there had been any change in compliance and any increase in re-offending due to staff being unable to carry out their work in all areas of Northern Ireland.

A member noted the need for a record of governance in line with the Board's responsibility as the employer

Action: Discussion was referred to the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee on 'Risk' 7. (Audit & Risk Assurance Committee)

Action: It was agreed that discussion on reputational risk in relation to the Community and Voluntary Sector could be discussed at the next ARAC meeting (Audit & Risk Assurance Committee)

The Board noted the paper.

9 POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE BUSINESS

9.1 Update by Committee Chair

The Committee Chair advised that the Committee meet on the 26 January 2018 directly after the last Board meeting. There are three policies being brought to the Board for approval.

The Director of Rehabilitation had presented a paper on 'Influencing' to the Committee which suggested having three workshops on different topics throughout the incoming financial year. Following discussion the Board approved moving forward with planning for these events. It was suggested that the date of the first workshop should be agreed upon and put in the diary.

Action: Date of the first workshop in 2018/19 should be agreed. (Mr Wall)

The Committee reviewed the caseload statistics. The trend is reflecting the downward numbers going through courts. Probation's number of Supervision Orders is down by 7% since 2013 which compares to those in custody down 24% over the same period. Enhanced Combination Orders (ECOs) were discussed and how to show the complexity of these orders, officials have been asked to look at this.

The Director of Rehabilitation provided the Committee with a summary of two CJINI reports published. The report on Magilligan had positive comment on Probation's work on risk assessment and it was suggested that NIPS could learn from this. The Hate Crime report provided recommendations which Probation already do in normal practice. Mrs Gillespie advised that she attended the Good Relations Group meeting in January and was pleased to have an insight into other work in the Organisation and recognised the work and commitment.

The Committee agreed to review the Corporate Plan twice yearly to monitor progress.

The Board noted the update.

9.2 Dignity at Work Policy and Grievance Policy (Papers 18 and 19)

The Head of HR presented the policies to the Board for approval. The two policies are taken alongside each other as they have the same type of changes made to them. It is mainly housekeeping and tightening up with nothing of significance. The Chair of the Committee advised that the Committee had discussed both policies at its meeting on 26 January 2018 and agreed to recommend approval of both to the Board.

The Board approved the Dignity at Work Policy and the Grievance Policy.

9.3 Client Travel Policy (Paper 20)

The Head of Finance introduced the policy to the Board for approval. The amendment to the policy has come from an internal audit recommendation. The Board was advised that the main change was that claims and payments had to be made in a timely way and that the delegation would remain. The Chair of the Committee advised that the Committee had discussed the policy at its meeting on 26 January 2018 and agreed to recommend approval to the Board.

The Board approved the Client Travel Policy.

9.5 Management Information Report (Paper 21/18)

The paper was presented to the Board with caseload already having been discussed by the Committee Chair during his update.

There were two Serious Further Offences (SFOs) reported in the paper. One was referred to verbally at the last Board meeting. The Director of Operations advised that due to the nature of the offences committed, both cases will be referred for independent review.

The Board noted the paper.

9.6 Draft minutes from 26 January 2018

Draft minutes were provided for members' information. The next meeting of the Committee will be 2 March 2018

10 CORPORATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE BUSINESS

10.1 Update from Committee Chair (Verbal)

The Committee Chair advised that the Committee had met on 9 February 2018 and he thanked officials for providing papers to the Board so promptly.

Members were advised that there would be three items coming to the Board for approval and the Committee had had lengthy discussions on each. The Chair would provide comment under each item.

For Decision

10.2 Revised Outline Business Case (OBC) Electronic Case Management System (ECMS) (Paper 23/18)

The Committee Chair advised that the Committee had scrutinised the OBC presented at its meeting on 9 February 2018. The reason for the OBC being returned for approval was that

costs had increased by more than 10%. Increased costs include extending the life of the Project from 7 years to a possible further 3 years. Resource and support costs have also now been built in. The Members were advised that following a full discussion the Committee had agreed to recommend approval of the OBC to the Board.

Members discussed the timelines for the project and the need to increase the timeframe of the DAC to January 2020. The Project Manager advised on the timeline for procurement and confirmed that the system would be GDPR compliant. The Committee Members provided assurance to the Chairman that the OBC had been fully scrutinised and that they were content with the paper. The Committee had discussed the need to mention the funding of the system at the Accountability Review so there is no ambiguity on the monies required to fund a new ECMS.

The Board approved the OBC for the ECMS.

10.3 Alderwood Ground Ravine Project Proposal (Paper 23/18)

The Director of Rehabilitation presented the Proposal to the Board. It was advised that the Proposal had been referred to the Corporate Resources Committee for scrutiny from the last Board meeting. The Committee Chair confirmed that the Committee had discussed the Proposal in detail and in particular any risk of reputational damage to the Organisation. The Committee had agreed to recommend proceeding with the Proposal to the Board. If approved by the Board the next steps will be a meeting with Advantage NI (the Proposal Owners) and for the Crown Solicitor's Office to draw up an appropriate lease.

Following discussion, the Board approved the Alderwood Ground Ravine Project Proposal.

10.4 Downpatrick Business Case (Paper 24/18)

The Head of Finance presented the paper to members. The Committee Chair advised that the Committee had discussed the business case at its meeting on 9 February 2018 and agreed to recommend approval to the Board.

The Head of Finance confirmed that the property was council owned and met Probation's accommodation requirements in Downpatrick.

The Board approved the Downpatrick Business Case

For Noting

10.5 Financial Outturn – January 2018 (Paper 25/18)

The Head of Finance introduced the paper to members. The January Outturn reflects the profiled budget which shows an overspend to date of £8k. A breakeven position is being forecast for year end.

The Head of Finance highlighted a number of issues. A request has been sent to FSD for funding of a pressure of £85K which has come about due to the Public Sector Pay Policy. An underspend in capital monies has been caused mainly due to the delay in the Coleraine Business Case. The Department have had the paperwork from November 2017. There was discussion on having to re-bid for this money next year and the lack of certainty in securing monies.

The Board noted the paper.

10.6 Budget 2018/20 Update (Verbal)

The Head of Finance provided an update on the budget for 2018/20. The Committee Chair advised that the Committee had discussed this issue at length at its meeting on 9 February 2018.

The Board noted the update

10.7 Programme and Project Management (Paper 26/18)

The paper was taken on an 'exceptional only' basis. The Head of Finance provided an update on the leases and work on Omagh, Coleraine and Shipquay Street.

The Board noted the paper

10.8 Employment Matters (Paper 27/18)

The Committee Chair advised that the Committee had discussed the Employment Issues in detail at its meeting on 9 February 2018 and agreed to recommend approval to the Board as requested.

The Head of HR briefed members on the three issues which impact on the Board as the employer.

Following a meeting with the Director of Safer Communities on the NNC / SCCOG Terms & Conditions, he has written to the Chairman to confirm the Department's current position (agenda item no 7.1). It is clear that the current status quo will remain until there is a Minister in post. He outlined that PBNI should look at the current issue of pay and now that the Public Pay Policy is in place for 2017/18 PBNI can commence engagement with its staff groups.

The Board approved commencement of pay negotiations with the recognised trade unions.

As the status quo is to remain the Managing Attendance Policy will go through the appropriate approval process again with an adjustment to reflect the NICS position on the trigger mechanism.

The Board approved proceeding through the appropriate approval mechanism again including the DOJ and DOF.

The Head of HR and Head of Finance met with the DOF, with the DOJ present, to discuss NILGOSC Administrative Staff Pension Contributions. The Members were advised of the discussion and noted the update.

10.9 HR – Managing Attendance Update (Paper 28/18)

The Head of HR advised that there had been slippage in the attendance statistics. She assured the Board that action was being taken and provided some detail on how HR and managers are managing attendance. It was confirmed that the spike in October to December was not caused by the security threat.

The Board noted the paper.

11 DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN (Paper 29/18)

The Director of Rehabilitation provided background into the current status of the Business Plan for 2018 – 2019. The Plan had been discussed by all managers in January 2018 and officials from the DOJ were also consulted.

The Members were taken through each of the five Strategic Priorities with the Director of Rehabilitation providing comment.

The Director of Operations referred to a forthcoming open event of the new cross border Extern employability facility at Springtown. Both PBNI and NIPS are supporting partners along with Probation Service Ireland.

Action: Dates for the Extern events to be provided (Director of Operations)

There was discussion on the challenges of delivering the statutory role and where would the priority for monies lie in the event of budget pressures dictating funding of projects. The Department is currently working with the Ulster University on evaluating ECOs and they are also looking at the cost savings across the Criminal Justice System and the wider system. Mr Wall talked of working with Voluntary and Community Sector and the effect that financial pressures will have on this sector. Mr Wall provided revised wording for point 3 of 'Priority 3'.

'To review current and future risks and opportunities for work with the Voluntary and Community Sector in the context of potential changes to funding support for the sector'

It was advised that the Department would like fuller discussion on 'Priority 4'. The current wording reflects last year although references to paramilitarism has been removed from the 2018-19 draft.

There was discussion on Brexit and how this would impact on the work with the Irish Probation Services. PBNI's membership in the Confederation of European Probation post Brexit has been confirmed and this is seen as an important point for working with Probation Service.

The Board agreed to approve the Draft Business Plan 2018/2019.

12. PROGRAMME OF VISITS AND BUSINESS (PAPER 30/18)

The Board noted the paper.

13. BOARD WORK PLAN 2017/18 (PAPER 31/18)

The Board noted the paper.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman thanked Mrs Erskine, Mrs Gillespie and Mr OhEara for representing the Board at the forthcoming Staff Engagement Events.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Friday 23 March 2018 in PBNI HQ, Conference Room, commencing at 9.30 am.

Vilma Patterson
Chairman

Date