

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

BOARD MEETING – FRIDAY 16 August 2019

9.30 AM – HMP MAGHABERRY

412nd MEETING – 9th OF THE TWELFTH TERM OF OFFICE

ATTENDANCE

Mr Dale Ashford (Chair)	
Ms Patricia Keenan	Mrs Judith Gillespie
Paul Douglas	Mr Alastair Ross
Kieran Donaghy	Mr Dave Wall
Dr Jonny Byrne	Dr Theresa Donaldson
Mr Neil Bodger	Mr Max Murray
Ms Brenda Henderson (Boardroom Apprentice)	

OFFICIALS

Ms Cheryl Lamont, Chief Executive
Mr Hugh Hamill, Director of Operations
Dr Geraldine O'Hare, Director of Rehabilitation
Mrs Gillian Robinson, Head of Human Resources
Mrs Catherine Teggart, Head of Finance
Mrs Paula Donnelly, Personal Secretary (Minutes)

APOLOGIES

Dr Kelly Clark
Mr Gearoid OhEara
Mr Michael Cox, Board Secretary

1. OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Deputy Governor Andy Tosh commenced the meeting with a warm welcome to members and officials. A background/update on HMP Maghaberry was provided and the Board Chair and Chief Executive thanked the Deputy Governor.

Ms Gillian Montgomery, Assistant Director Prisons, Jill Grant, Area Manager, Caroline Patterson, Probation Officer (life sentence and ICS prisoners) and Catherine Mulholland, Probation Officer, all based at HMP Maghaberry then joined the meeting and presented to members and officials an overview of their work with individuals at HMP Maghaberry.

After discussion the Board Chair thanked the Staff for their informative input.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

The Board Chair thanked Ronnie Armour, Director General, NI Prison Service, for facilitating the Board and the visit to Davis House scheduled after the Board meeting and lunch.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dr Kelly Clark, Mr Gearoid OhEara and Mr Michael Cox.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING – 21 JUNE 2019 (M07/19)

The minutes of the previous Board Meeting held on Friday 21 June 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM BOARD MEETING HELD ON 21 JUNE 2019

All outstanding actions have been completed.

5. BOARD CHAIR'S UPDATE (verbal)

The Board Chair advised Members that he had recently met with National Probation Service representatives from England and Wales, and Brendan McGuigan, CJINI for a very productive meeting late June.

The Accountability Review meeting was held the same day (25 June 2019) which went very well. The Board Chair reiterated his thanks to the Chief Executive and her team.

The Board Chair had a meeting with Derek Baker, Permanent Secretary along with Gail McGreevy and Geraldine O'Hare in relation to the draft corporate plan and the Board Seminar.

The Board Chair also met with Sue Gray, Permanent Secretary, with the Chief Executive in early July in relation to draft corporate plan and the Board Seminar.

The Board Chair hosted a round table briefing with the major political parties on 19 July 2019 to discuss the Corporate Plan. All major parties were represented except Sinn Fein.

The Board development day was held on 9 August 2019 after the Corporate Resources Committee meeting.

The Remuneration Committee approved a partial retirement.

The Corporate Plan consultation was launched and the Board Chair will update members accordingly.

The Board Chair reminded members of the Appraisal process and Michael Cox, Board Secretary will arrange dates with members.

Action: Board Chair to arrange interviews with Board members.

The Board Chair informed members that today was the last meeting the Board Apprentice, Brenda Henderson, would be attending.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVES UPDATE (verbal)

The Chief Executive will update the Board under Correspondence.

7. CORRESPONDENCE (Paper 62/19)

7.1 CJINI Terms of Reference

The Chief Executive advised field work was due to commence October 2019. The Board Chair and Board Secretary have been kept informed.

7.2 Short Term Funding

The Chief Executive advised the Board of correspondence between herself and Peter May, Permanent Secretary, on the impact of short term funding, which was very helpful and allowed PBNI to progress recruitment.

Gillian Robinson then provided an update to members on recruitment – the permanent staff will allow stability in the workforce which will lead to a positive strategic direction.

7.3 Letter from Anthony Harbinson to Chief Executive – 16 July 2019

Anthony Harbinson will be moving to a new post – Access to Justice Directorate with effect from 1 September 2019 and he thanked PBNI for its support. The Board noted this correspondence.

7.4 Visit by Ms Jo Farrar, HMPPS – 4 September 2019

The Chief Executive advised members that Jo Farrar, Chief Executive HMPPS will be visiting Northern Ireland on 4 September 2019 and will meet with PBNI in the afternoon, having spent the morning at Maghaberry. Geraldine O'Hare will be leading on the visit to include ECO, SMC and a meeting with Mrs Bagnall. Discussion arose on the relationship with Parole Commissioners and Geraldine O'Hare advised of an upcoming joint workshop with the Parole Commission on 16 October 2019 to update staff on policies etc.

POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE BUSINESS

8. COMMITTEE CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Committee Chair advised the Board the PPC took place on the 2 August 2019 and provided a summary of the meeting.

9. DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN Q1 2019/20 UPDATE (PAPER 63/19)

The Board noted discussion is ongoing regarding Corporate Plan outcomes and while it was agreed to keep Strategic Priority 2, the members noted the difficulty in measuring performance against this measure and accepted this was a weakness going forward, but this will be addressed as the current year business plan comes to an end.

10. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO SERVICE USER POLICY (Paper 64/19)

The Head of Finance presented the Policy to the Board which is a very small, but important, part of the budget. Dave Wall indicated it was important that members were aware of the policy. Ms Teggart indicated there was very little change to the Policy –change to the title. Ms Teggart advised the policy was submitted to the Policy and Practice committee on 2 August 2019.

The Board approved the Financial Assistance to Service User Policy

11. ACTION PLAN FOR PBNI RESPONSE TO DEALING WITH UK WITHDRAWAL FROM EU (PAPER 65/19)

The Director of Rehabilitation presented her paper and the Board noted the update. Discussion arose on Brexit planning and the Chief Executive informed members she had a meeting on 15 August 2019 with the new DOJ Lead on Brexit, Graham Walker. It was agreed Graham Walker should be invited to the next Board meeting to brief the Board.

Action: Board Secretary to invite Graham Walker to the next Board meeting on Friday, 20 September 2019

12. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION PAPER (PAPER 66/19)

The Director of Operations updated the Board Members on the Serious Further Offences since the last Board meeting.

13. UPDATE ON BOARD SEMINAR

The Committee Chair updated Members on discussions regarding potential for PSNI input from new Chief Constable and outlined views regarding possible invitation to the Garda Commissioner. After discussions by Members it was agreed that on this occasion the Chief Constable should be offered a short key note.

CORPORATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE BUSINESS

14. COMMITTEE CHAIR'S UPDATE

The CRC Chair provided an overview of the discussion which took place at the meeting held on 9 August 2019:

- correspondence between the Chief Executive and Peter May re long term planning was welcomed.
- recruitment is very positive.
- recognise medium – long term planning is challenging.
- ECMS Project Delay – better to get right than rush and get it wrong.
- Sickness Absence – increase noted as was the update on ongoing activities by the management team
- Estates – welcome move to Shipquay Street.

15. Financial Outturn Summary (Paper 61/19)

The Head of Finance updated the Board members and key points to note:

- underspend to date largely relates to staff costs.
- monitoring round is currently launched.
- ECMS Capital budget will have to be released.
- receipts due to come in on three properties.
- financial planning exercise has commenced for the next three years (discussed in detail at the CRC meeting).

The Board noted the paper.

16. Human Resources

(i) NNC and SCCOG Update

This will go to Department of Finance week commencing 19 August 2019.

(ii) NILGOSC Update

There was nothing new to report.

(iii) Managing Attendance Update (Paper 67/19)

The Head of Human Resources presented the Analysis of Sickness Absence September report. Ms Robinson assured Board Members she is doing everything possible to reduce the figures to an acceptable level and seeking innovative ways to return staff to work.

17. Estate and Business Cases Update

The Head of Finance indicated all projects were progressing well. Duncairn Gardens should be ready for occupation by October 2019.

Information Systems Update

The Director of Operations provided an update as follows:

- ECMS Project Board met in June. Equiniti had asked for a delay which was unacceptable. Agreed a compromise of 31/3/2020 for minimal viable product to be implemented.
- ICT Service Delivery – running very smoothly however there was a delay in five offices due to upgrade required by BT. This should be completed by end September/beginning October 2019. Feedback has been very positive from staff.
- Minutepad is now functional with PBNI Senior Leadership Team.
- Board meetings will be paperless from September onwards.
- Devices used must be PBNI owned and not personal.

Communications Update

The Board noted the paper.

BOARD SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

This was deferred due to the Board Secretary being on annual leave.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Governor Dave Kennedy, Austin Treacy, Director of Operations and Ronnie Armour, Director General, NIPS all joined members and officials for lunch prior to the tour of Davis House.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Board Meeting will take place on Friday 20 September 2019 at 9.30 am, Conference Room, PBNI HQ

Dale Ashford QFSM
Board Chair

Date