

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

BOARD MEETING – FRIDAY 21 AUGUST 2020

9.30 AM – WEBEX VIDEO CONFERENCE

424th MEETING – 20th OF THE TWELFTH TERM OF OFFICE

ATTENDANCE

Mr Dale Ashford, Chair
Mr Neil Bodger
Dr J Byrne (Dr Byrne left at 10.40)
Dr K Clark
Dr T Donaldson
Mr Kieran Donaghy
Mrs Judith Gillespie
Ms Patricia Keenan
Mr Max Murray
Mr G OhEara
Mr Dave Wall

OFFICIALS

Ms Cheryl Lamont, Chief Executive
Mr, Hugh Hamill, Director of Operations
Dr Geraldine O'Hare, Director of Rehabilitation
Mrs Gail McGreevy, Head of Communications (Items 9 and 22)
Mrs Gillian Robinson, Head of HR
Ms Catherine Teggart, Head of Finance
Ms Joyce Mercer, DP Statistician (Item 19 and 20)
Mr Michael Cox, Board Secretary
Ms Fiona Quail, Personal Secretary (Minutes)

1. WELCOME, OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Board Chair welcomed everyone to the Board meeting, which continues to be conducted via video conferencing.

The Board Chair congratulated Dr Theresa Donaldson on her appointment to the Health & Social Care Board.

No potential Conflicts of Interest were declared.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Mr Paul Douglas, Member and Ms Sarah Bruce, Boardroom Apprentice.

3. MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD ON THE 24 JULY 2020 (M07/20)

The minutes of the Board Meeting held on Friday 24 July 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (PAPER 64/20)

All actions have been completed.

The Board noted the paper.

5. BOARD CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Board Chair reported that he had attended the Senior Leadership Team Meeting on 11 August. He noted the enthusiasm and great attitude of all attending.

The Board Chair told the meeting that he and the Chief Executive had completed joint visits on the 12 August to PBNI Offices in Richmond Chambers, Shipquay Street and Ballymena. During the visits, the importance of adhering to the rules on social distancing in the workplace were emphasised.

The Board Chair had spoken with Brendan Fitzpatrick, who is leading the Department's review of its Arm's Length Bodies. Once the review is completed, the report will be sent to the Executive for consideration.

The Board Chair is going to meet Dr Julie Harrison, Director of Safer Communities on 2 September.

The Board Chair had attended the Policy and Practice Committee meeting on 14 August. Mr Ashford advised the position for the Deputy Chair of the Board will be advertised by the Department next month and encourages everyone to apply.

The Board Chair advised he will be completing members' appraisals in September.

Mr Ashford also advised that some changes had been made to the Committee-led Board meetings. The PPC will lead the October Board meeting with the CRC taking the lead in February 2021. The ARAC led Board meeting will be organised for 2021/22.

The Board noted the update.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE

The Chief Executive told the Board Members she will provide members with an update on agenda 8.

The Board noted the update.

7. CORRESPONDENCE (PAPER 65/20)

There were no items of correspondence.

8. CJI(NI) INSPECTION UPDATE - CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive advised the Board that a factual accuracy response has been sent to CJI(NI) in response to the draft report. The Chief Executive does not expect any further contact for a number of weeks as she had been informed the Lead Inspector was on 3 weeks' leave. The Chief Executive advised the Board that the Senior Leadership Team

will brief the Board once the final report is available and before it is published. The CEO will also brief the DoJ officials once the final report is provided to the Minister.

The Chief Executive advised the Senior Management Team will continue to work purposeful and constructively with CJI(NI) over the next period.

9. COVID 19 UPDATE

Mrs Robinson provided an update and advised that communications continue to be sent to staff across the Organisation. The Senior Leadership team, are continuing to try to ensure that complacency does not set in and recognise that this needs to be reinforced at every meeting and every communication. Senior staff continue to meet regularly to discuss any issues and the way forward. The Recovery Plan, phase 2 will begin in September, as planned at this stage.

Mr Hamill provided an update on 'High Risk Offenders', advising that 800 Service Users will be seen. Phase 2, will ensure all 'Medium Risk Offenders', circa 900 Service Users, are scheduled to be seen from the 7 September. The programmes for 'High Risk Offenders' will be delivered to smaller groups. Pre-Sentence Reports for the Crown Court are continuing to be completed.

Gail McGreevy provided an update on the Communications strategy, advising the Board that meetings are continuing to take place every Monday. Any decisions made by the Executive are relayed to all PBNI Staff in a clear way. Any changes made to the Health and Safety arrangements are updated on the Intranet regularly. The Communications Team completed an internal communications survey in June 2020. The main focus of the survey was to capture how Staff felt about the level of communication they had received during the Pandemic 98% felt it was good/very good; 67% listened to the Chief Executives Monthly Pod Cast; and 95% read the weekly Covid Communication.

The Director of Operations advised the Board that Staff are continuing to work on a rota basis. Operations are currently in the process of installing Screens within the Staff Areas. Mr Hamill also provided the Board with an update on PBNI staff working within Courts and non PBNI Offices. Staff in these offices carry a portal screen when necessary so this can be installed and taken away again when necessary.

The Director of Rehabilitation provided an update on the Prison Portfolio. Parole Hearings will continue to take place remotely.

The Board noted the update.

10. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION PAPER (PAPER 66/20)

The Director of Operations advised that since the paper was published there has been two Serious Further Offences. Mr Hamill briefed the Members on the cases.

The Head of Human Resources updated the Members on the pay negotiations and advised the department is continuing to work with Unions on this.

Mrs Robinson advised the members that she is waiting on a response from NIPSA regarding their NILGOSC legal challenge. Discussion ensued on the risk of Probation having lower pay rates in a competitive job market. Mrs Robinson advised she is continuing to work on this and it was discussed that this could be placed on the agenda for the next Corporate Resources Committee meeting in October. This was agreed. The

Head of Human Resources provided an update on the decrease in Staff Sickness Levels. The Director of Operations updated Members on the ECMS project and confirmed that funding would not be an issue.

Ms Teggart, Head of Finance, provided an update on Estates, as laid out in the paper.

The Director of Rehabilitation provided an update on Communications and Engagement, as laid out in the paper and on the recent consultations including the Adult Restorative Justice Consultation. Dr O'Hare advised that she will update the Board in October's Board Meeting on any further consultations.

Action: Dr O'Hare advised she will update the Board in October's Board Meeting on any further consultations

Action: Pay review matter to be placed on CRC agenda for October 2020.

The Board noted the paper.

11. BOARDROOM APPRENTICE FEEDBACK

In Sarah Bruce's absence, her 'Board Buddy', Patricia Keenan, read a statement prepared by Ms Bruce in which she thanked the Board and Senior Officials for the training and guidance she received whilst serving as a Board Apprentice.

The Board Chair thanked Ms Bruce for her kind words and asked Ms Keenan to pass on his best wishes to Ms Bruce.

12. BOARD REGISTER OF INTERESTS (67/20)

The Board Secretary advised members that the Register of Interests is an important document in assuring public confidence. It was agreed that the Secretariat would review the register every 6 months.

The Board noted the paper.

13. BOARD WORK PLAN (68/20)

Mr Cox, the Board Secretary, introduced the paper showing the scheduled work for the Committees and the Board.

The Board noted the paper.

The Board Meeting continued after a 10 Minute intermission.

14. COMMITTEE CHAIR'S UPDATE – AUDIT & RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE (ARAC)

Mr Bodger, Committee Chair, provided the Board with a summary of the ARAC meeting held on 6 August 2020. Members were advised that the Internal Audit Opinion for 2019/20 was a 'satisfactory' assurance level. Mr Bodger asked for congratulations to be passed to the staff who were involved in the preparation of the accounts.

15. YEAR END ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2019/20 (PAPER 69/20)

Ms Teggart, Head of Finance, presented the Annual Report and Accounts to members. Members were advised that the draft had been approved at the ARAC on 6 August 2020. Ms Teggart advised there were some minor wording redrafted but nothing of significance. There were also some late changes, as the department have asked for a few lines to be added on 'Holiday Pay', which Ms Teggart has agreed to add and the Audit Office will then give final approval.

The Board Chair thanked Ms Teggart and her team for the work on the Annual Accounts

The Board approved the paper.

16. REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE (PAPER 70/20)

The Board approved this paper.

17. Q1 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER 2020/2021 (PAPER 71/20)

The Strategic Risk Register was discussed at the ARAC meeting on the 6 August 2020 and recommended approval to the Board.

The Board approved this Paper.

18. COMMITTEE CHAIR'S UPDATE - POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE (PPC) (VERBAL)

Mr Wall, Committee Chair, provided members with a summary of the PPC held on 14 August 2020. The Committee looked at the Communication Strategy and recommended its approval to the Board. Meeting. The Committee also looked at future themes for the PPC Meetings and plans to review these in the near future. The PPC has agreed the webinar (to replace the Annual Seminar) will be on Domestic Abuse. The Committee also reviewed Q1 Report on the Business Plan and were pleased to report the actions were all 'green'. The Committee also looked at DOJ's Problem Solving Justice 5 year Strategic Plan.

The Board noted the update.

19. 2019/20 ANNUAL CASELOAD (PAPER 72/20)

The Board Chair welcomed Ms Mercer, DP Statistician, to the meeting.

Ms Mercer presented the paper to the Board. There were no questions for Ms Mercer.

The Board noted the Paper.

20. 2020/21 CASELOAD STATISTICS Q1 (PAPER 73/20)

Ms Mercer presented the paper to the Board. It was highlighted that the number of females in the Criminal Justice System has decreased by 19% compared to previous years. The number of reports completed by PBNI for the Courts has reduced, due to Covid 19, by 87%. The courts are currently only dealing with the most urgent cases.

The Board noted the Paper.

21. BUSINESS PLAN 2020/21 Q1 (PAPER 74/20)

The Director of Rehabilitation has presented the Business plan as set out in the Paper and highlighted that all 6 Strategic priorities are achieving a green rating.

The Board Approved this Paper.

22. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY (PAPER 75/20)

The Head of Communications presented this paper to the Members. Ms McGreevy advised members she will be part of a DOJ Communications Working Group, which will be ensuring a collegiate approach to communications across Justice. Ms McGreevy also noted her team are working on the Domestic Violence Webinar planned for the New Year.

The Board Chair and members thanked Ms McGreevy for her input.

The Board approved the paper.

Action: Gail McGreevy has agreed to add a line a line under the stakeholder's analysis about the contribution from the Community and Voluntary Sector.

23. COMMITTEE CHAIR'S UPDATE - CORPORATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE (CRC) (VERBAL)

Mrs Gillespie, Committee Chair, advised the CRC last met on 23 June 2020. An update was provided at the last Board Meeting.

24. FINANCIAL OUTTURN JULY 2020 (PAPER 76/20)

Ms Teggart presented the July Outturn to the Board and highlighted a number of points. There has been an overspend in July. Ms Teggart advised that monies for 'Fresh Start' have not yet been allocated but will be updated in October's figures. Members expressed their frustrations at the perceived overspend but fully understand this will be rectified in Octobers monitoring round. Members thanked Teggart and her team.

The Board noted the paper.

25. OTHER BUSINESS

The Board Chair thanked members and officials for attending the meeting. The next meeting will be on 18 September 2020 via WebEx.

D Ashford QFSM
Board Chair

Date _____