

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND  
**BOARD MEETING – FRIDAY 13 DECEMBER 2019**

**9.30 AM – PBNI HEADQUARTERS**

**416th MEETING – 13<sup>th</sup> OF THE TWELFTH TERM OF OFFICE**

ATTENDANCE

Mr Dale Ashford (Chair)  
Mr Neil Bodger  
Dr Jonny Byrne  
Dr Theresa Donaldson  
Mr Paul Douglas  
Mrs Judith Gillespie  
Mr Gearoid OhEara  
Mr Max Murray  
Mr Alastair Ross  
Mr Dave Wall

Ms Sarah Bruce (Boardroom Apprentice)

OFFICIALS

Ms Cheryl Lamont, Chief Executive  
Dr Geraldine O'Hare, Director of Rehabilitation  
Ms Catherine Teggart, Head of Finance  
Ms Gail McGreevy, Head of Communications (Item 15)  
Mr Michael Cox, Board Secretary  
Mrs Wendy Rodgers, Secretariat (Minutes)

**1. WELCOME AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The Board Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Dr Kelly Clark, Member; Mr Kieran Donaghy, Member; Mr Alastair Ross, Member; Mr Hugh Hamill, Director of Rehabilitation; Mrs Gillian Robinson, Head of HR

**3. MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING 15 NOVEMBER (PAPER M11/19)**

The minutes of the previous Board Meeting held on Friday 15 November 2019 were agreed as a true and accurate record with one change to the attendee list.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM BOARD MEETING HELD ON 15 NOVEMBER 2019 (101/19)**

Action 4 – ‘Review of the Annual Seminar’ has been deferred by the Policy & Practice Committee to its meeting on 18 December 2019 and is therefore not complete. All other actions have been completed.

The Board noted the paper.

#### **5. BOARD CHAIR’S UPDATE (Verbal)**

The Board Chair wished to pass on the Board’s congratulation to the ‘Aspire’ team for their success at the recent Social Work Awards.

**Action: Chief Executive to pass on the Board’s congratulations to the Aspire Team. (Chief Executive)**

The Business Case for NNC/SCCOG has been approved and the Finance Department are working on the pay remits.

The Partnership Arrangement have been received and will be posted on ‘Decision Time’ for members’ information later today.

Action: Partnership Arrangement to be posted on ‘Decision Time’. (Secretariat)

The organisers of the ‘Boardroom Apprentice’ Scheme have contacted the Board Chair to ascertain if the Probation Board would wish to continue to take part in the Scheme in 2020/21. The Members agreed that they were content to proceed for the next term of the Scheme.

The Board Chair advised that he had attended a number of events since the last Board including: The Probation Recognition Awards; Chairs Forum event; Public Protection Advisory Group (PPAG) at the Long Gallery; Trauma Course in Lisburn, CRC in Armagh and an Audit lessons event run by the Chairs Forum in conjunction with the C&AG.

The Board noted the update.

#### **6. CHIEF EXECUTIVES UPDATE (Verbal)**

The Chief Executive advised that an induction to Probation will be arranged for Jacqui Durkin, the incoming Chief Inspector of CJI(NI).

Members were advised that the CJI (NI) Report will not be available until Spring 2020. The work is due to be finished in January and the Chief Executive will update members of emerging findings at the January Board.

The North / South Seminar on Public Protection took place on the 29 November 2019 in the Long Gallery. The theme was, ‘Effective Trauma Informed Public Protection Practice within the Criminal Justice Systems’ across Ireland. This was a well-attended event and widely regarded as successful.

Joanne Meadows, who works with complaints and records, received an award from the Butler Trust. The Board asked that their congratulations be passed to Joanne.

**Action: Chief Executive to pass on the Board’s congratulations to Joanne Meadows. (Chief Executive)**

The Chief Executive advised members that the Department and the Permanent Secretary had decided to look at work relating to the legislation on Probation and Terrorist Politically Motivated Offences (TPMOs). The Chief Executive provided members with background and context into the issues around the 2008 and subsequent legislation and Probation's working practices with TPMOs. There was discussion by members resulting in agreement that a Special Board Meeting would be convened on 10 January 2020. The Executive will provide papers for the meeting. During the discussion, a member raised the question of whether PBNI has or should have an agreed language policy.

**Action: Special Board Meeting to be convened on 10 January 2020 with papers being provided by the Executive Team. (Secretariat, Executive Team)**

The Board noted the update.

## **7. CORRESPONDENCE (PAPER 102/19)**

No correspondence was presented.

## **AUDIT & RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

### **8. Update by Committee Chair**

The Chair of the Committee advised that there had not been a meeting of the Committee since the last Board.

Mr Bodger informed that he had attended a meeting of Audit Chairs at the Department of Justice. He advised that it had been a useful meeting but there were a number of issues arising from the meeting, mostly around 'Risk' that would be discussed at upcoming Committee meeting on 24 January 2020.

The Board noted the update.

## **9. CORPORATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE UPDATE**

The Chair of the Committee advised that the Committee had met on 6 December 2019 in the Probation Office, Armagh. It was a productive meeting with Mrs Gillespie highlighting areas of discussion.

The Head of Finance provided an update on the budget and reasons for a current position of underspend, which was mainly due to the costs associated with IT Assist, staff vacancies and the timing of work on the estate. She is forecasting a break even position at financial year end within the 1 % tolerance. The Committee noted that the DOF approval had been received for the pay business case and the Committee recognized the work of Ms Teggart and Mrs Robinson in successfully reaching this point. It was also recognized that there will be more work required in the preparation and approval of the pay remits.

Attendance figures are not where they should be and the Committee agreed to new focus on them in the new financial year.

The Head of IT has succeeded in getting the cabling work completed ahead of schedule and staff will be moving in to Shipquay Street on 19 January 2020. This development was warmly welcomed by the Committee.

The recruitment profile was discussed. The Committee was reassured that qualitative and quantitative indicators are used in determining the grades and numbers to be recruited.

The Terms of Reference (TORs) for the Committee were discussed with some minor changes being identified to the draft. The Committee agreed the changes and that the TORs will be brought to the February Board for formal approval.

A risk still remains around a catastrophic failure of the PIMS (the soon to be replaced Case Management System). The Committee had been reassured about the contingency planning for such an eventuality prior to the new system being operational.

#### **10. FINANCIAL OUTTURN SUMMARY (PAPER 103/19)**

The Head of Finance set out the financial position at the end of November highlighting some areas. There was an underspend of £316k or about 2.37%. The underspend in pay is decreasing each month as appointments are made. The Capital budget is on target however receipts for the properties up for sale required before the end of the financial year to come in on budget. The Prompt Payment Performance Targets are slightly below target. This is due to one supplier who was invoicing for goods before the goods had been received and some invoices of another supplier which required investigation.

The Board noted the paper.

#### **11. HUMAN RESOURCES (PAPER B – 104/19)**

In the absence of the Head of HR, the Head of Finance provided an update on HR The NNC and SCCOG business case has been agreed for 2017/18 and 2018/19 with some queries replied to. The Statement of Claim has been received in relation to the NILGOSC case and the Head of HR has met with the Crown Solicitor's Office who have asked for further information.

The Board noted the paper.

#### **12. ESTATES AND BUSINESS CASES (PAPER – C - 104/19)**

Ms Teggart provided an update on Estates and Business Cases, as set out in the paper provided. Members were informed that staff are to move into Shipquay Street on 19 January 2020 now that the cabling has been completed by BT. Staff are currently moving into Duncairn Gardens. Members were advised of the properties up for sale, one has been agreed.

The Board Chair noted the positive progress with Shipquay Street.

The Board noted the paper.

#### **13. INFORMATION SYSTEMS (PAPER D – 104/19)**

In the absence of the Director of Operations, the Head of Finance provided an update on the Electronic Case Management System and advised that all work was on schedule. Following a question from a member, Ms Teggart advised that PIMS is in the Business Continuity Plan. In March 'super-users' and trainers will be trained on the new system and then training will be rolled out to all staff.

Members were informed the current email addresses for PBNI will be changed on 13 January 2020.

The Board noted the paper.

## **POLICY & PRACTICE COMMITTEE UPDATE**

### **14. UPDATE BY COMMITTEE CHAIR (VERBAL)**

The Chair of the Committee confirmed that there had not been a meeting of the Committee since the last Board and therefore there was no emerging business in the interim. The next meeting of the Committee will be 18 December 2019.

The Board noted the update

### **15. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN TO BOARD (PAPER 105/19)**

The Board Chair welcomed the Head of Communications to the meeting. Ms McGreevy introduced the draft Corporate Plan 2020-2023 to members. Discussion ensued on a number of areas.

There was a lengthy discussion on the use of language and the understanding of language in terminology. It was agreed that the language should be neutral as narrative can identify communities and the Board should be conscious of its Section 75 duties. The Board Chair commented that he agreed with this position.

There was discussion on 'how do we know we have made a difference' and giving a powerful message on how people can turn around their lives.

Ms McGreevy informed that the Plan will be 'proofed' in January and will come to the Board at its January meeting.

**Action: Executive Team to review the document in light of the discussions. (Executive Team)**

The Board approved the Corporate Plan 2020-2023, subject to the suggested changes being made.

### **16. SERIOUS FURTHER OFFENCES (SFOs) (PAPER A- 104/19)**

The Members were advised that there were no SFOs to report.

The Board noted the update

### **17. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT (PAPER – E – 104/19)**

The Director of Rehabilitation provided an update on current Communications and Engagement highlighting a number of events. PBNI held an 'Aspire' evaluation launch on 14 November; staff took part in the Restorative Justice Conference; a staff achievement event took place on 21 November and the PPAG annual seminar took place on 29 November.

There were two social media campaigns during November. Assistant Director, Gillian Montgomery did an interview with Good Morning Ulster in relation to Domestic Abuse.

The Board noted the update.

## 18. CONSULTATION UPDATE (PAPER F – 104/19)

The Director of Rehabilitation provided an update on consultations as laid out in the paper. The Sentencing Review Consultation's deadline has been extended to February. Dr O'Hare will present the draft response to the Board at its January meeting.

**Action: Draft Response on the Sentencing Review Consultation to be presented to January Board. (Director of Rehabilitation)**

The Board noted the paper.

## 19. BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN (PAPER 106/19)

Members were informed that the Plan had been approved by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on 3 December 2019. The Members agreed that it was a comprehensive document. In response to a question from a member, it was advised that the Plan will ensure that key business continues. The Plan is tested on a biannual basis with a test being conducted in the near future which will also test what happens if there is a PIMS failure. It was confirmed that key personnel have the document for urgent access purposes.

The Board noted the Plan

## 20. BOARD SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

### 24.1 Use of email addresses by members

The Board Secretary stated that papers will only, in future, be sent to Probation email addresses. Members have probation email addresses now but they will be replaced on 13 January 2020.

The Board noted the Update.

## 21. OTHER BUSINESS

The Board Chair wished everyone a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

## DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Special Board Meeting will take place on Friday 10 January 2020 at 9.30 am, Conference Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, PBNI HQ with the next Board meeting to be held on 17 January 2020.

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**Dale Ashford QFSM**  
**BOARD CHAIR**

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**Date**