

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

**BOARD MEETING – FRIDAY 18 JUNE 2021**

**10.30 AM – WEBEX VIDEO CONFERENCE**

**435<sup>th</sup> MEETING – 31<sup>st</sup> OF THE TWELFTH TERM OF OFFICE**

ATTENDANCE

Mr D Ashford, Chair  
Mr N Bodger  
Mr K Donaghy  
Dr T Donaldson  
Mr P Douglas  
Mrs J Gillespie  
Ms P Keenan  
Mr M Murray  
Mr G OhEara  
Mr D Wall

Mrs J Anderson, Boardroom Apprentice

OFFICIALS

Mr H Hamill, Interim Chief Executive  
Ms G Montgomery, Acting Director of Operations  
Dr G O'Hare, Director of Rehabilitation  
Ms C Sweeney, Head of HR  
Ms C Teggart, Head of Finance  
Mr M Cox, Board Secretary  
Mrs W Rodgers, Secretariat (Minutes)

**1. WELCOME, OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The Board Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Meetings continue to be conducted via video conferencing.

Members were advised that the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee had met prior to the Board meeting and the Committee had a number of papers to bring to the Board for approval.

This is Mr Hamill's first meeting as Interim Chief Executive and the Board looks forward to working with him until the new Chief Executive is appointed.

There will be a closed session at the end of the meeting when the Head of HR will be asked to update the Board on the Terms & Conditions for the Chief Executive's post and the progress of the recruitment exercise.

There were no conflicts of interest advised. A quorum was confirmed.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were recorded from Dr J Byrne, Member and Ms C Lamont, Chief Executive.

## **3. MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD ON THE 21 MAY 2021 (M05/21)**

The minutes of the Board Meeting held on Friday 21 May 2021 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

## **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (PAPER 54/21)**

The Board Chair confirmed all actions had been completed.

The Board noted the paper.

## **5. BOARD CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Board Chair provided members with an update of his meetings and events attended since the last Board meeting.

He advised that he has had a number of meetings with 'Headstogether' on the recruitment process for the Chief Executive post. The Committee Chairs' Working Group had met and the papers will be made available to Board Members. The Board Chair attended the PPC meeting on 28 May 2021 when Mr Harbinson and Mr Capper of the DOJ provided an update on Problem Solving Justice Initiatives.

The Board Chair advised that he had had a handover meeting with the Chief Executive and the Interim Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is still in post until 30 June 2021 but is taking annual leave until that date.

He advised that it is expected that PBNi will retain its status as an Arms' Length Body. The status of the Board and details such as the number of Board Members etc will be discussed in preliminary meetings with DoJ and the Board Secretary will feedback to the Board on any discussions.

The Board noted the update

## **6. INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE**

The Board Chair invited the Interim Chief Executive to update the Board on developments since the last Board meeting.

The Interim Chief Executive advised that there had been an Overview Meeting with the DOJ and no significant issues emerged.

The Interim Chief Executive re-highlighted the legislative process to allow for the new arrangements for the supervision of TPMP licences. In particular he noted that the new arrangements are due to commence in September 2021.

The pay remit for operational grades 2019/20 has now been approved. The Board Chair congratulated the Senior Executive Team for succeeding in achieving the approval of the pay remit business case.

The Board noted the update.

## 7. CORRESPONDENCE (PAPER 55/21)

There was one item of correspondence to note.

### 7.1 PBNI Operational Pay Remit 2019/20

The Head of Finance received advice that the 2019/20 Operational Pay Remit had been approved with two conditions:

- 1 – That cash saving be made in respect of agency staff
- 2 – Progress speedily to a review of pay grades

It was noted that the senior staff business case was submitted last week. Discussion ensued on the issues on the pay remit 2019/20 and the Board congratulated the Senior Team on achieving the approval of the business case for operational pay remit. The Cultural Survey was discussed in relation to the recruitment and retention of staff.

The Board noted the correspondence.

## 8. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION PAPER QUARTERLY UPDATE (PAPER 56/21)

The Board Chair invited the Executive Team to take members through the Report.

The Acting Director of Operations advised that there had been no Serious Further Offences to report since the last Board.

The Director of Rehabilitation provided an update on the Covid arrangements for the Organisation as laid out in the paper. The Organisation is currently on phase 2 of the Recovery Plan and will hopefully move to phase 3 in September.

The Director of Rehabilitation reported on the Communications and Engagement activities, as laid out in the paper. Responses have been made to a number of consultations.

The Head of HR provided an update on HR matters and attendance levels. It was noted that the pay remit for 2019/20 has been approved and arrears will be included in the June payroll. The Head of HR reported that there was no update on the NILGOSC legal challenge. The attendance statistics remain below target with 75% of staff having no absence and there being an overall attendance rate of 95%. Considerable investment in Well Being continues.

The Head of Finance provided an update on Estates and Business Cases as laid out in the paper. It was noted that one of the properties for sale has an offer of below the asking price and the other property is sale agreed at £325K. Conveyancing is ongoing on the second property with a target for completion by the end of June. Work identified from the conditional surveys have commenced and there is a maintenance programme in place for the next 5 to 10 years. The freehold properties will be assessed to consider if it would be viable to modernise them or, as an alternative, sell them. Land and Property Services have concerns around another lease on the proposed L & D property together with the requirement of a sprinkler system, which will be costly. Mrs Gillespie, Chair of CRC, asked if the CRC could talk through the proposed L & D centre in more detail at the Committee's next meeting

**Action: CRC to discuss the L & D facility at its next meeting (CRC)**

An update on the key business cases and lease business cases were as set out in the paper.

The Board noted the paper.

## 9. CULTURE SURVEY (PAPER 57/21)

The Head of HR provided a summary of the survey commissioned by the Chief Executive following the CJI (NI) Inspection. The results are broadly similar to surveys carried out in 2011/12 and 2017. The response rate was 30% compared to the previous survey of 58%. The staff questionnaire provided a good indication of where the Organisation is. The Report will be used to move forward with staff engagement and improvements in the Organisation's capabilities and performance. Members were advised that both the Head of HR and Head of Communications will be meeting with the Trade Union side prior to the Report being circulated to staff. The Head of HR referred to the focus groups facilitated externally – appendix 2.

**Action: The Head of HR to provide the Board with further wording from the external facilitator's report. (Head of HR).**

An in-depth discussion ensued. The Board Chair advised that following the appointment of the new Chief Executive, this will be a major piece of work to take forward. The Board were in agreement that the results of the staff questionnaire needed to be addressed in a balanced manner.

It was agreed by members that the Board wished to be involved in taking the recommendations forward and they discussed ways of communicating with staff. The CRC will discuss the recommendations at its meeting and report back to the Board in August. The Members discussed the next steps. The Head of HR provided a timeline for communicating the Report to staff. Members agreed that communication was a key point.

**Action: The Culture Survey to be an item at CRC and this agenda item is to be made open to all Board Members to attend. Members to be invited. (Secretariat)**

The Board accepted the Report.

## 10. BOARD SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

### 10.1 Proposal for hybrid meetings (Paper 58/21)

The Board Secretary provided a summary of his paper, which offered a road map to return to face-to-face meetings. He suggested that meetings would be 'hybrid', which would allow for meeting in person and by video conferencing. The CRC would be used to test the approach on 30 July 2021. If this is successful, then the PPC could be scheduled to take place under the same method in the Shipquay Street office. This will be a step toward normality, taking into account the current Public Health advice. A member asked that the Public Health guidance be reviewed for meeting in person.

**Action : The Board Secretary to obtain advice on meeting face-to-face. (Board Secretary)**

The Board noted the paper.

### **10.2 Board Work Plan 2021/22 (Paper 59/21)**

The Board Secretary advised that the Work Plan has been revised accordingly to take in to account that the tenure of the Board has been extended to the end of February 2022

The Board noted the paper.

## **11. COMMITTEE CHAIR'S UPDATE – AUDIT & RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE (ARAC)**

Mr Bodger, Committee Chair, advised that the ARAC had met prior to this Board meeting to review the Annual Report and Accounts. There were two papers coming to the Board for approval.

### **11.1 Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 (Paper 60/21)**

The Committee Chair advised members that there were no major changes to the final accounts from the draft. The Auditors had introduced the Annual Report and Accounts to the Committee and provided a summary of the paper, highlighting a number of points. The Auditors had advised that the 2020/21 will be treated as unqualified opinion with no adjustments; no misstatements identified and with all appropriate internal controls in place. All results were reflected in the Report. All previously outstanding items had now been included. The Committee agreed to recommend approval of the Annual Report and Accounts for 2020/21 to the Board.

The Board approved the Annual Report and Accounts and congratulated the Head of Finance on the Report.

### **11.2 Report to Those Charged with Governance (Paper 61/21)**

The Committee Chair informed that the Auditors had taken the Committee through the Report. The significant risks were explained. There were 3 risks identified with the risk on NILGOSC Pension Contributions for Administrative Staff highlighted. The summary of the Report was provided on page 6 and the Committee was asked to note appendices 1 and 2 with appendix 2 being the responsibility to the Comptroller and Auditor General. There were no audit findings identified. The Committee agreed to recommend appendix 1 to be sent to the Accounting Officer for signature.

The Committee Chair congratulated the Head of Finance on achieving an excellent report with no audit findings identified. The Board Chair also congratulated the Head of Finance and her team on the Report.

The Board approved the Report to Those Charged with Governance.

## **12. COMMITTEE CHAIR'S UPDATE - CORPORATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE (CRC)**

Mrs Gillespie, Committee Chair, informed members that there had not been a meeting of the Committee since the last Board meeting and there were no emerging issues to bring to the Board's attention. The next meeting of the Committee is 30 July 2021.

The Board Noted the update

### **12.1 Financial Outturn – May 2021**

The Head of Finance provided a summary of the presented paper. It was noted that the overall resource overspend of £256k relates to pressures in staff costs due to the annual pay increases and the cost of the Fresh Start initiative. Funding for Fresh Start had not been included in the budget allocation. There is a forecasted pressure of

£650k. A bid has been made in the June Monitoring Round. There are no pressures in the Capital budget to date. Prompt Payment targets have been affected by one supplier invoicing before the goods have been received. The Head of Finance is awaiting the outcome of the June Monitoring Round.

The Board noted the paper.

### **13. COMMITTEE CHAIR'S UPDATE - POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE (PPC)**

Mr Wall, Committee Chair, provided a summary of the PPC meeting held on 28 May 2021. Mr Harbinson and Mr Capper of the DOJ attended the meeting to provide an update on Problem Solving Justice. The Committee raised a number of issues on funding including when 'pilots' would cease being treated in that way. Mr Capper provided a presentation on PSJ going forward over the next 5 to 10 years.

The Committee Chair advised that there were two papers being brought to the Board for approval and two papers for noting.

#### **13.1 Good Relations and Equality Action Plan 2020/22 (Paper 62/21)**

Members were advised that this paper had been deferred.

#### **13.2 Q4 Business Plan 2020/21 (Paper 63/21)**

Members were informed that the Committee had reviewed the Q4 Business Plan 2020/21 and noted that all 6 Strategic Priorities had ended the year rated as 'green'. The Committee agreed to recommend approval to the Board.

The Board Chair congratulated the Director of Rehabilitation and staff on the achievement of the 2020/21 Business Plan.

The Board approved the Q4 Business Plan 2020/21.

#### **13.3 Significant Risk of Harm to Others Policy (SROSH) (Paper 64/21)**

The Committee Chair provided a summary of the Policy, which had been presented to the Committee by the AD Risk. The Committee had agreed to recommend approval to the Board.

The Board approved the SROSH Policy.

#### **13.4 Annual Caseload – Year End 2020/21**

The Committee Chair provided a summary of the presented paper. He advised that the Committee had had a comprehensive discussion on the year-end report. It was noted that the caseload and reports were returning to pre-Covid levels. Females represent 1 in 10 of the caseload and this continues to fall. The caseload age profile has shifted to one third of the caseload being over the age 40 or more. The Victim Information Scheme registrations continue to increase and this is welcome.

The Board noted the Report.

#### **13.5 Deaths Under Supervision Annual Report**

The Committee Chair informed that the Committee had discussed the Report at length. It was noted that death by drug overdose/substance misuse, including alcohol misuse, is still the main cause of death for service users while under supervision. The rates of suicide were discussed and the reasons behind them. Following a review of the Report, there were no changes to professional practice. The Committee agreed that

the Report should be brought to the Board's attention at its next meeting The report was presented to the June Board.

The Board noted the Report.

#### **14. OTHER BUSINESS**

The Board Chair thanked all in attendance at the meeting and advised that the next meeting will be 20 August 2021 with the venue to be confirmed.

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm.

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D Ashford QFSM  
Board Chair

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Date