

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
BOARD MEETING – FRIDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2020

9.30 AM – PBNI HEADQUARTERS

419th MEETING – 16th OF THE TWELFTH TERM OF OFFICE

ATTENDANCE

Mr Dale Ashford, Chair
Mr Neil Bodger
Dr Jonny Byrne (Agenda items 1-24)
Dr Kelly Clark
Mr Kieran Donaghy
Dr Theresa Donaldson
Mr Paul Douglas
Mrs Judith Gillespie
Ms Patricia Keenan
Mr Max Murray
Mr Dave Wall

Ms Sarah Bruce, Board Apprentice

OFFICIALS

Ms Cheryl Lamont, Chief Executive
Mr, Hugh Hamill, Director of Operations
Mrs Gillian Robinson, Head of HR
Ms Catherine Teggart, Head of Finance
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 meeting and set out the agenda for the meeting. No potential Conflicts of Interest were declared. In the interest of transparency, the Board Chair informed the Board, that the new Special Advisor to the Minister for Justice is in a relationship with a family member.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Gearoid OhEara, Member and the Director of Rehabilitation, Geraldine O’Hare.

The Board Chair noted the Mr. Alastair Ross has resigned as a Board member. Mr Ashford told the Board, Mr Ross would be sadly missed and acknowledged his contribution to the Board and the Policy and Practice Committee during his tenure. The Board Chair advised Members, he had sent Mr Ross a letter, congratulating him on his new post and wished him well for the future.

3. MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD MEETING HELD ON THE 10 JANUARY 2020 (M01/10)

With some minor changes, the minutes of the special Board Meeting held on Friday 10 January 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record

4. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2020 (M02/20)

The minutes of the Board Meeting held on Friday 17 January 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (PAPER 7/20)

All actions have been completed.

6. BOARD CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Board Chair attended the following events since the last Board Meeting;

- The 'Four Corners' Event in Hydebank;
- Visits to PBNI's Offices in Omagh and Duncairn Gardens (accompanied by Theresa Donaldson, Member) and the Finance Department's team meeting.
- The Conference on Sexual Violence;
- PBNI's Lunchtime Seminar on 'Homelessness';
- The ALB Forum organised by the DOJ,

He had also attended meetings – accompanied by the chief executive - with Julie Harrison, the Director of Safer Communities, and the Minister for Justice with whom they had discussed issues surrounding Terms and Conditions and the legislation around TPMO's.

There were no questions or further comments.

Action: The Board Chair is going to write a letter to Julie Harrison, Director of Safer Communities re the timing of the publication of the Corporate Plan (Board Chair)

7. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE

The Chief Executive stated she is planning to meet the Minister for Justice's Special Advisor who is keen to understand all areas of the Probation's work. It is intended to provide future briefings specific areas of our work.

The Chief Executive invited the Head of Human Resources, Gillian Robinson in her capacity as Committee Chair on the 'Strictly Come Dancing' Committee to provide an update on the forthcoming charity event. Ms Robinson stated this is a Staff led event, which will take place on the 21 March 2020. The tickets are now on sale. The volunteer dancers, meet every Tuesday and are trained by professional dancers. The nominated Charity, Kids NI, hosted a successful coffee morning in PBNI Head Quarters last December. Ms Robinson invited Board members to support this worthwhile event.

8. CORRESPONDENCE (PAPER 8/20)

The Board Chair has received a letter from NIPSA's Lisa Hoy about meeting the Board to convey her members' concerns. The Chair informed the meeting that Ms Hoy had subsequently been invited to a meeting he is hosting with the trade Union Side planned for 3rd March.

9. BOARD BUSINESS

Nothing further was discussed.

PRESENTATION

A presentation on '**Considering Risk and its Implications**' was delivered by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's Chair, Neil Bodger. A discussion followed the presentation during which Members asked questions and considered the potential implications going forward on how the Board manages strategic risk.

It was agreed that the ARAC would further develop the ideas discussed and incorporate them into their consideration of the new Strategic Risk Register that will relate to the Corporate Plan.

10. UPDATE ON AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2020

The ARAC Chair, Neil Bodger gave a brief summary on the meeting held on the 24 January 2020.

Mr Bodger informed the Board Paul Douglas had replaced Dr Kelly Clark on the Committee.

He also reported the Committee had considered an Internal Audit Report on the Complaints Handling procedure, which had received a 'Satisfactory' rating. The Committee also considered PBNI's 2019-20 Audit Strategy and the Audit Control Log Q1 2019-20.

11. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER Q3

A discussion took place in regards to the relevance of Risk number 7 – '**In the event of a no-deal Brexit, potential adverse operational implications**' appearing on the Risk Register or if there is a more appropriate platform in which to highlight this 'risk' an example of an Incident log was proposed.

Following discussion, it was agreed by the Board that this 'Risk' would remain on the Strategic Risk Register. It was also agreed that the Board will examine in further detail the implication of a 'no deal Brexit' in 3 months' time, once the risks become more apparent.

Strategic Risk Register Q3 – Approved.

12. UPDATE BY CORPORATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE CHAIR

There had been no meeting since the last Board meeting and no emerging issues.

13. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE COMMITTEE

The Committee Chair reviewed the Terms of Reference and highlighted the importance of the fifth objective, 'Developing and Valuing Staff'

A discussion took place about the actual approval of staff's Terms of Conditions of service. The Head of Human Resources advised the Board that such approval is vested in the Department of Justice by the Probation Board (Northern Ireland) Order 1982.

The Board approved the revised Terms of Reference.

14. FINANCIAL OUTTURN SUMMARY

The Head of Finance set out the financial position at the end of January 2020. There was an underspend of £270k or about 1.6%. The underspend is decreasing each month as staff are now permanently in post. Funding has also been allocated to cover maternity and sickness which will reduce the underspend in staff at year-end. There is also an underspend of £80K which is due to the contracted out IT Services, namely IT Assist. These funds will be transferred to Voluntary and Community programmes.

The Head of finance also noted a Capital expenditure of £639K underspend. This was due to the timings of work on new offices, namely Duncairn Gardens and Shipquay Street.

The Head of Finance also advised the Board, she is waiting on a reply from the Department of Justice regarding the budget planning exercise that was submitted to the department in November 2019.

The Board noted the paper.

15. HUMAN RESOURCES

- 15.1 **Sick Absence Report** – The Head of Human Resources presented the Sickness Absence report. In summary, Sick Absence has come down slightly to 29.9% but it is still at an unsatisfactory level. More work will be undertaken, to reduce absence levels.

The Board noted the Paper

- 15.2 **National Negotiating Council and Standing Committee for Chief Officers Grades** – The Head of Human Resources advised the Board that PBNI are still awaiting Business Case Approval from the Department of Justice for pay remits in respect of both the 17/18 and the 18/19 financial years.

A discussion took place regarding the approval of the Police Service of Northern Ireland's pay remit and the speed at which this was approved. This was difficult for Staff to understand and staff are viewing this negatively.

Further discussions took place regarding the potential impact on operations. The CRC Chair raised concerns that the situation may have a detrimental effect on the recruitment and retention of qualified social workers.

Action: The Board Chair will write to the DOJ's Permanent Secretary to convey the Board's serious concerns that the delays might have on service delivery by undermining the relationships between staff, senior officials and the Board.

15.3 – ***NILGOSC – Update*** – The Head of Human Resources advised a draft response to the Plaintiff's Statement of Claim has been received. Ms Robinson will continue to liaise with the Crown Solicitor's Office and Counsel and will update the Board Chair and Chief Executive on any developments.

16. ESTATES AND BUSINESS CASES

The Head of Finance updated the Board on progress at the Shipquay, Duncairn Gardens and the Enniskillen Offices. Ms Teggart also updated the Board on the Business Case submission to the Department of Justice for a 5-year lease on Richmond Chambers and a further Business Case for the continuation of the Enhanced Combination Orders project to run beyond 31 March 2020. The Board noted the updates.

17. INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The Director of Operations updated Board members on the ECMS project. The project is on schedule and a Gateway 4 review will be held in the first week of March.

18. UPDATE ON THE MEETING HELD ON POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE MEETING 14 FEBRUARY

The Committee Chair for the Policy and Practice meeting advised the Board that an additional meeting will need to take place in order to cover some agenda items not discussed at the last meeting. The Retirement Policy was discussed at this meeting.

19. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE COMMITTEE

The Board considered the revised Terms of Reference, which were approved.

20. SERIOUS FURTHER OFFENCES

Members were advised there were four Serious Further Offences since the last Board in January.

21. CONSULTATION UPDATE

The Board noted the paper.

22. COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

The Board noted the paper.

23. 2019/20 CASELOAD STATISTICS

A Member asked officials if the statistics and research presented in the Paper were available to other agencies. The Chief Executive told the Board the Director of Rehabilitation chairs the Data Analytics Forum whereby this information is shared with other stakeholders.

24. BUSINESS PLANNING 2019/20 Q3

The Director of Operations presented this Paper, which was approved following a brief discussion.

25. DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2020/21

This Business Plan was approved following a brief discussion and clarification of some items.

26. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

This Paper was approved following a brief discussion.

27. BOARD SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

27.1 REGISTER OF INTERESTS – The Board Secretary advised Members to inform the Secretariat of any changes on the Register of Interests. This will be posted on the PBNI's external website.

The Board approved this Register.

27.2 BOARD WORK PLAN – The Board Secretary advised an additional Policy and Practice Committee meeting is required. Members will be consulted on the new date.

The Board noted this Paper

28. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Board Chair advised Members that the Board meeting to be held on 20 March will start at 9.30am in the premises in Shipquay Street.

**D Ashford
Board Chair
March 2020**