

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

BOARD MEETING – Friday 22 November 2024

12.40pm – Malone Suite, Newforge Sports Complex and Events Hub, Belfast

ATTENDANCE

BOARD MEMBERS

Mr M Murray, Chair
Ms E Patterson, Deputy Chair
Mr K Donaghy
Mr B Ingram
Mr J Johnston
Ms A Lloyd-Stevens
Mrs C Magee
Ms B Mongan

OFFICIALS

Ms A Stewart, Chief Executive
Mr S Hamilton, Director of Operations
Ms G Montgomery, Director of Operations
Mr P King, Head of Finance & Estates
Ms C Sweeney, Head of HR and L&OD
Ms G McGreevy, Head of Communications
Ms J Fitzsimons, Board Secretary (Minute-taker)

The Board held a themed meeting focussing on ‘Becoming a resilient and Trauma Informed Organisation’ prior to the Board meeting.

1. WELCOME, OPENING REMARKS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Board Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and set out the schedule for the day. A quorum was confirmed. There were no conflicts of interest.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were recorded from Ms M Brunt.

3. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING – FRIDAY 25 OCTOBER 2024 (PAPER)

The minutes of the Board Meeting held on Friday 25 October 2024 were approved as a true record.

The minutes were approved by the Board.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (PAPER)

There were five actions from the previous meeting two of which are on today’s agenda (see items 6.1 and 6.2). Another two in relation to facilitating Board visits to the North West and North Belfast teams and uploading the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy and Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategic Framework to Decision Time have also been completed.

The Chief Executive advised Members that the action to bring a paper to a future Board meeting on PBNI’s position in relation to housing is ongoing. She confirmed that a Task and Finish Group is to be established to progress the development of a position paper.

The Board noted the paper.

BOARD BUSINESS

5. PBNI PAY REMIT 2024-25 (PAPER)

The Board Chair invited Mr King to present the paper. Mr King advised Members that under the pay modernisation agreement, PBNI agreed to utilise the National Joint Council (NJC) pay points and to

follow NJC annual pay awards. For the period April 2024 - March 2025 there will be an increase of £1,290 for all pay points up to 43; and all NJC Pay Points from 44 to 61 and the Chief Officer pay rates are to receive a 2.5% uplift. He also explained that there would be one step progression where applicable and the date of progression will be 1 April or the anniversary of joining for all new staff post 1 April 2022 (1 April 2023 for former NICS aligned staff).

Mr King advised that the overall impact of this proposal is a 5.19% average increase for staff in post. This is made up of 3.56% revalorisation and 1.63% progression. The single increase for all pay points up to 43 means that lower paid staff will receive a greater % increase in their pay.

The overall cost of the uplift is £949k for the 2024/25 financial year and he assured Members that this has been built into PBNI forecast budget requirements for both this year and beyond. Mr King also confirmed that as part of the October monitoring round exercise PBNI had received an additional £110k and he was confident that the pay remit proposals were affordable and fully funded.

The Board Chair enquired how this pay award compared to the wider public sector deal. In response Mr King explained that there was no forthcoming offer for the wider NICS as yet, however it was comparable to the Health Trusts proposed pay remit. He also confirmed that no issues had been raised by the Unions and advised that subject to Board agreement PBNI would submit the pay remit to DoJ for final approval. It was hoped that payments will be made in January payroll for all staff.

The Board approved the submission of the PBNI Pay Remit 2024/25 to DoJ for consideration and final approval.

6. CORRESPONDENCE (PAPER)

There were two items of correspondence to note.

6.1 Draft Correspondence from Board Chair to Director General NI Prison Service on the Review of the Prisoner Development Model.

As agreed at the October Board meeting a letter was drafted from the Board Chair to Beverley Wall, Director General NIPS in relation to PBNI's expectations of the proposed PDM. The Board Chair sought comments from Members on the draft. During discussions the Chief Executive advised that the Terms of Reference for the review had been shared with the Board last November and that Ms Wall had confirmed that it had not changed. Following discussions Members agreed that a paragraph should be added seeking more detail on how the review is progressing in terms of potential timescales, the approach to the review and the role and function of the Advisory Board.

Action: The draft correspondence from the Board Chair to Director General NI Prison Service on the PDM review should be amended as agreed prior to being sent.

The Board noted the correspondence

6.2 Correspondence from the Board Chair to DoJ Permanent Secretary on the Criminal Justice Board.

As agreed at the October Board meeting a letter was drafted from the Board Chair to the DoJ Permanent Secretary requesting that he consider PBNI representation on the Criminal Justice Board (CJB). The Board Chair also advised Members that PBNI's response to the Draft Programme for Government consultation was included in the correspondence. During discussions the Chief Executive confirmed that the portfolio of the CJB was predominantly 'Speeding up Justice'.

The Board noted the correspondence.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The next scheduled Board meeting will be on Friday 13 December 2024, PBNI Conference Room, 4th Floor Headquarters at 9.30 am.

The meeting ended at 1.10pm.

Mr Max Murray CBE
Board Chair

Date