

PROBATION BOARD

27th April 2006

10.00 a.m. to 2.10 p.m.

PRESENT: S. Harrison (Chair)
A. Abbasi, D. Clark, O. Gleadall, H. Harker,
J. Hinchcliffe, M. Ismail, A. Khayum, B. Maslen,
F. McCready, M. Murphy, H. Redhead, L. Taylor,
H. Williams, K. Wyatt.

Also in attendance: J. Fox, B. Kerslake, P. McMullan (Items 1 to 17 only), S. Scott (Item 8 only), R. Brown (Items 9 - 10 only) and J. Tarr.

1. Declarations of interest

No interests were declared.

2. Items to be considered in the absence of the public

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded during consideration of the items 'Disclosure of Board Members' remuneration' and 'Future senior management arrangements' by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. (Minutes 18 and 20 refer).

3. Minutes of last meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 31st March be approved subject to the following amendments:

- i) Minute 180 – in the last line of the preamble deletion of the words 'their current role in reviewing reports' and substitution of the words 'the current arrangements',
- ii) Minute 183.2 – after the word 'Committee' add the following 'or observing meetings with a view to becoming members'.

4. Matters arising

- i) 2006/07 Voluntary, Community and Private Sector expenditure target (Minute 177)

O. Gleadall said he had met a representative of a Basic Skills agency at a recent open day and said he would pass contact details to B. Kerslake

after the meeting. B. Kerslake reminded Members that with effect from 1st August responsibility for Basic Skills contracts would pass to the Learning Skills Council (LSC). H. Harker asked Members to pass to B. Kerslake contact details for any 'non-traditional' agencies of which they were aware, no matter how small the agency.

ii) HMIP Report on Hanson and White (Minute 179)

P. McMullan said that all Areas had to produce an Action Plan and this would be undertaken in SY by the Offender Management Implementation Group (OMIG).

iii) Serious Further Offences (SFOs) (Minute 180)

P. McMullan said he had done a formal presentation on the new procedures at the recent County Managers' Meeting (CMM) and he would attend a national seminar on 2nd May with his Strategic Support Officer, Linda Hurrell. Members would note the new procedures when they next considered an SFO.

iv) ESI Follow-up (Minute 181)

H. Harker said she had had a reasonable meeting with the Lead Inspector at the end of the process and she hoped to receive the formal report in the next few weeks.

v) Members interested in observing the Audit Committee (Minute 183)

A. Khayum, B. Maslen and H. Williams said they were interested.

5. Annual Business Plan 2006/07

P. McMullan said the Plan was in its final draft form and whilst the performance figures for 2005/06 had yet to be included he noted that this would be the first year in which the full year's figures would be shown. Together with colleague Chief Officers and J. Tarr he went on to comment on the content and answer Members' questions.

It was noted that the Plan did not directly reflect the content of the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with the Regional Offender Manager (ROM) and H. Harker said this was partly because the targets were still set in 2006/07 by the NPD. B. Kerslake added that SY would have to report on performance to the NPD and copy the information to the ROM who would pick out those elements in the SLAs.

S. Harrison asked Members to send comments on the content of the Plan to P. McMullan by Friday 5th May. P. McMullan said the final version would be submitted to the May Board meeting.

6. Budget 2006/07

B. Kerslake reported that agreed budget allocations were finally released to Areas on 12th April and the outcome for SY was an allocation of £23,892,000. This represented a reduction of £10,000 on the assumed total used in the budget report presented to and approved by the Board in March and he gave some detail of the make-up of the allocation. He added that the NPD's presentation that the settlement represented a 9.2% increase gave unhelpful messages to staff and partner agencies. The actual increase in resources, on a like for like basis i.e. taking into account the change in TPO numbers, was 6.1%.

Together with Chief Officer colleagues he answered Members' questions but noted that there were several areas of expenditure where clarification was awaited.

RESOLVED:

1. That confirmation of the current resource allocation of £23,892,000 be noted.
2. That the budget approved on 31st March (subject to the £10,000 reduction in the contingency balance) be confirmed.
3. That the Board note the additional allocations of £98,000 and £116,000 and the requirements for further clarifications and developments to inform the use of these sums and their incorporation into specific budget proposals.

7. Human Resources – future arrangements

H. Harker submitted a report on the interim arrangements which had been put in hand to ensure continuity of service provision following the early retirement of the ACO (Human Resources). The arrangements took account of the current thinking in the Region on HR functions i.e. to have a Regional HR Business Unit. The structure in SY would need to fit with that development when it took place. The likelihood would be that individual Areas would lead on functions for the Region e.g. training. Each Area would, however, still need an HR structure to underpin the work. She went on to detail the functions of Personnel Services, Training and Staff Development and Health & Safety, which would become separate entities under the new arrangements and commented on management roles and responsibilities and answered Members' questions. She undertook to clarify with K. Griffiths the question raised regarding the line between the two posts referred to in Appendix B.

RESOLVED: That the proposed interim structural arrangements for Human Resources services be supported.

8. Offender Management (OM) policy

P. McMullan said development of the OM policy had been greatly helped by the Service having developed a Policy policy and he noted that SY was one of the few Areas in the country to have an OM policy.

S. Scott commented on the content of the policy A copy had been sent to the Unions but to date she had not received any comments. She went on to answer Members' questions and said communication between the Service and the Prisons would be crucial. P. McMullan added that C-NOMIS would be the shared database and it would start to be rolled out nationally later in the year.

RESOLVED: That the Offender Management policy be noted.

9. Annual Report on Diversity 2005/06

R. Brown said her report provided an overview of SY's commitment to and brought together the key elements of its responses to the diversity agenda. She noted that whilst SY was in a reasonably healthy position there was still a lot of work to be done. After commenting on the key issues in her paper and the attachments she answered Members' questions. J. Tarr circulated a 'mock-up' of a proposed glossy publication on diversity and commented on its likely final content. S. Harrison asked him to send it to Members via e-mail and asked Members to send him any comments on the draft text.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report on Diversity 2005/06 and the note regarding future management arrangements be noted.

10. Review of Health & Safety activities 2005/06

R. Brown submitted her report on work undertaken in 2005/06 and answered questions.

S. Harrison thanked Rosemary on behalf of the Board for her service over 32 years and noted that Members would be able to say their individual farewells at her 'leaving do' the following day. She added that Rosemary would be greatly missed and hoped she would have a long, healthy and happy retirement. R. Brown thanked the Board for their kind words and wished Members well in the future.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

11. Board Member responsibilities

RESOLVED: That the list of bodies and responsibilities be approved subject

to the addition of:

- i) Regional Business Development Board – Representative: John Hinchcliffe,
- ii) SLA meetings with the ROM – Representatives: Shirley Harrison and John Hinchcliffe,
- iii) Regional Partnership Forum – Representatives: Owen Gleadall and John Hinchcliffe.

S. Harrison said a number of Members would cease to serve in March 2007, although existing Members may be asked if they wished to continue for a further year during the proposed transition to Probation Trusts, scheduled for April 2008. She asked those concerned to let J. Fox know if they wished to cease serving on the relevant bodies and, if so, when this should take effect, and other Members to let him know if they were interested in serving on those bodies. She also asked Members to let him know if they wished to join the JNCC ‘pool’ and noted that A. Khayum, B. Maslen and H. Williams had indicated earlier (Minute 4(v)) that they were interested in observing the Audit Committee. She and the Chief Officers would take on board Members’ requests for appropriate training and she said that new Members in particular may wish to contact established Members with a view to arranging mentoring sessions. They may also wish to consider undertaking visits to parts of the Service in company with an established Member and proposals for this would be circulated. There was also a Regional event for new Members on 11th May and whilst she did not yet have the details she asked them to let her know at the end of the meeting whether they would be able to attend.

12. Verbal report on JNCC held on 31st March 2006

P. McMullan said the meeting had been quite constructive and referred briefly to the issues discussed. A report would be submitted to the May Board meeting on transport matters and Bank Holiday Tuesdays. J. Fox said the Unions had asked to see copies of the SLAs (Service Level Agreements) and, following confirmation from the ROM that he had no objections, copies had been sent. P. McMullan added that the Unions had also asked to see copies of recent Serious Further Offence (SFO) reports and he had sent them. S. Harrison asked those Members interested in ‘shadowing’ JNCC members to note that the next meeting was at 2.00 p.m. on Thursday 22nd June.

13. Visits of Board Chair to the Service

S. Harrison said that together with J. Fox she had visited most parts of SY and had found the visits both interesting and instructive. She detailed the premises visited and gave a résumé of her findings. It was her intention to visit the premises twice each year. J. Fox added that whilst they were at Town Moor there had been clear evidence of good inter-agency communication.

14. Expenditure monitoring

B. Kerslake said his report represented work in progress on closing the Accounts and he noted that the near final net expenditure was just within the total agreed by the NPD.

RESOLVED: That the near final expenditure position for 2005/06 be noted.

15. Reports back from Members and Working Groups

J. Hinchcliffe commented briefly on business discussed at the Regional Business Development Board in March. O. Gleadall and B. Maslen also commented on their experiences at the recent Sentencers' Conference in Wakefield.

16. Chair's diary

S. Harrison said a lot of documents had recently been received on current developments e.g. regionalisation, Boards becoming Trusts. She would prepare a report and e-mail it to Members and suggest that a small group look at the issues with a view to bringing a paper to the May Board meeting. She added that when she, H. Harker and J. Fox had concluded their round of meetings with the four District Council Chief Executives a report would be submitted to the Board.

RESOLVED: That the diary be noted.

17. Chief Officers' Report

i) 'Public Protection' – Oral Ministerial statement by Home Secretary

RESOLVED: That the Home Secretary's statement, and the PBA's response in the press release which had been tabled, were noted.

ii) Director of Operations

RESOLVED: That the anticipated departure of P. McMullan be noted. H. Harker said that the May Board meeting would be his last one.

iii) Job evaluation – progress report

RESOLVED: That the progress report be noted.

iv) Board Seminar – Wednesday 24th May 2006

RESOLVED: That the draft programme be approved.

v) Workshop for Senior Managers and Board Members – 9th June

RESOLVED: That S. Harrison, J. Hinchcliffe, B. Maslen, F. McCready, H. Redhead, L. Taylor, H. Williams, K. Wyatt and J. Fox authorised to attend the Workshop.

S. Harrison said that those attending may wish to consider car-sharing or travelling by train if that was more economic than travelling alone.

vi) Probation Centenary

RESOLVED: That J. Tarr convene a group, including representatives from the Unions, to consider how best to mark the centenary.

vii) Grievance and Appeal Hearings

RESOLVED: That the decisions of the various Panels be noted.

viii) Schedule of likely Board agenda items - May to December 2006

RESOLVED: That the schedule be noted.

18. Disclosure of Board Member's remuneration

B. Kerlake reported that a change in the disclosure requirements for the 2005/06 Accounts meant that it was now necessary to report on the remuneration that individual Board Members had received over the year in that capacity. Disclosure was subject to the consent in writing of the individual and he would write to Members following the meeting. He noted that consent to disclose could be withheld.

19. Rotherham M.B.C. – Children's Board

J. Fox said that Rotherham M. B. Council was setting up a Children's Board and had invited the Board to send a Member to be a member of the Strategic Board.

The Board discussed with its Officers whether it was appropriate to be represented on the Strategic Board and, if so, at what level. H. Harker said her preference was for representation and by a senior operational manager e.g. a Divisional Manager or the Chief Officer, one of the Directors or the Secretary to the Board.

RESOLVED: That representation be at Officer level and H. Harker, B. Kerlake, P. McMullan and J. Fox discuss who should attend, subject to appropriate strategic issues being referred to the Probation Board.

20. Future senior management arrangements

S. Harrison said she had discussed this at length with H. Harker and in the exceptional circumstances facing SY it would be important to ensure that the Service continued to function effectively and that performance was sustained. She asked H. Harker to outline the options for filling the posts of Chief Officer and Director of Operations and the likely implications if either was filled by an internal candidate.

H. Harker outlined the options and likely implications and after very lengthy discussion it was

RESOLVED:

1. That once H. Harker was certain about her future, and the timescale became clear for the filling of the vacancy of Chief Officer, the Board propose to fill the post of Chief Officer for SY from within the Region only; and that the NPD be advised of this proposal.
2. That M. Wright, currently ACO, be offered a six month act-up post of Director of Operations (with effect from 1st June 2006) and towards the end of that period consideration be given to placing an external advertisement for the post.
3. That D. Thomas be given act-up Director level responsibilities, particularly on SLAs and performance reporting on SLAs, for the same six months period.
4. That during their 6 months act-up roles D. Thomas and M. Wright attend meetings of both the Board and the JNCC.
5. That J. Kerr be offered a six month act-up post of ACO, with effect from 1st June 2006, and S. Scott be confirmed a substantive ACO with immediate effect.
6. That should the circumstances warrant it, any or all of the six months act-up arrangements be reviewed before their planned termination, with a view to possible extension.

21. Next Meetings:

Seminar – Wednesday 24th May at 2.00 p.m. in the Board Room at Division Street, Sheffield.

Meeting - Thursday 25th May at 10.00 a.m. in the Board Room, Division Street, Sheffield.

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