



PROBATION BOARD
14th December 2006
10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

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

Also in attendance: J. Fox, B. Kerslake, M. Wright

135. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from A. Khayum, M. Murphy and D. Thomas.

136. Declarations of interest

J. Fox, B. Kerslake, M. Wright and L. Taylor declared a pecuniary interest in 'Pension Regulations – Discretions' (Agenda item 11)

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

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded during consideration of the following items by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted:

- i) Approved Premises (Agenda item 7),
- ii) The draft Sub-contracting Plan (Agenda item 8),
- iii) Unit costing exercise (Agenda item 9),
- iv) NPS – SY secondments (Agenda item 10),
- v) Pension Regulations: Discretions (Agenda item 11).

138. Minutes of last meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November 2006 be approved.

139. Matters arising

i) Disability Equality Scheme (Minute123)

J. Fox thanked those Members who had sent in comments and reported that the draft Scheme had been submitted to the NPD deadline.

ii) NOMS Bill (Minute 130(i))

A copy of the 'PBA critique (in summary) of the NOMS Bill Regulatory Impact Assessment' was handed to those present. J. Fox said he would also send to the Members for information a copy of a further paper on the Bill prepared by a colleague Secretary.

iii) Mandatory retirement age (Minute 130(iv))

It was noted that this policy did not apply to Members because they were not employees of the Board. R. Brown said that any decisions in this regard would be made by the Home Secretary.

140. Chair Designate

J. Fox said that he had recently met the Chair Designate, Gordon Wordsworth. He was currently undergoing security and other checks and a formal announcement of his appointment would be made in due course. Mr. Wordsworth was a former Vice-Chair of the Police Authority and was keen to take up his new role, and would meet R. Brown on the 15th December. S. Harrison said she also hoped to meet him in the near future. J. Fox added that interviews for new Board Members would be held in early January and Mr. Wordsworth would be involved. S. Harrison thanked Members who responded to the questions about Board strengths and weaknesses.

141. Approved Premises

A. Regional Management of Approved Premises

R. Brown gave a brief history of how this matter had evolved over recent years and explained the rationale behind the proposal outlined in P. Johnston's paper. After a lengthy discussion of the implications and potential difficulties of approving and implementing the proposal, and after the Officers had answered Members' questions, it was

RESOLVED:

1. That no decision be taken at this time and the Board return to the matter in the light of the results of the forthcoming mock

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contestability exercise (on Approved Premises) and when the NPS-SY budget for 2007/08 was known.

2. That the proposal for a central referral system be supported in principle, subject to the checks referred to.

O. Gleadall said that he would offer advice outside the meeting on software which would allow a central referral system to operate as outlined during the discussion, providing 'real time' data and the other features desired.

B. 'Soft services' delivery planning

R. Brown said that the NPD had confirmed that 'soft services' would not come back in-house.

142. Draft Sub-contracting Plan

Copies of the draft Plan were tabled. B. Kerslake said it had to be submitted to the Regional Offender Manager (ROM) by 22nd December. The ROM saw Plans as a key component of the Service Level Agreement discussions which would be held in February/March. B. Kerslake suggested that the Plan be sent to the ROM and NPS-SY staff and the Unions at the same time. It would also be submitted to the JNCC on 18th January.

B. Kerslake said the Plan was based on SY being sole provider of Offender Management services. He noted that low risk offenders had been taken out (as had been indicated in the 'direction of travel' document which the Board had previously approved) but that the ROM may disagree with this aspect. SY would be the lead provider of services which it would supply in co-operation with others e.g. as a consortium. It was possible for instance for SY to provide 30% and seven others in the consortium, 10% each. The delivery plan on page 8 set out the challenges in the next 18 months or so and he noted that the figures were only indicative.

RESOLVED: That the draft Area Sub-Contracting Plan be endorsed.

143. Unit costing exercise

B. Kerslake said that SY's position in the recent 'Pricing for Commissioning' exercise was encouraging when considered against the national picture and he noted that the move nationally appeared to be towards an NHS model. He said the importance of accurate unit costing should not be underplayed.

RESOLVED: That the current outcomes from the 'Pricing for Commissioning' exercise be noted.

144. NPS-SY secondments

The Board considered R. Brown's report on secondments and the potential business risks involved.

RESOLVED: That the Board's decisions on secondments be based on the recommendations of the Chair and Chief Officer.

145. Pension Regulations: Discretions

The Board considered B. Kerslake's report and

RESOLVED:

1. That the deletion of current Discretion 1 be noted.
2. That the continuation (and re-numbering) of current Discretions 2-9 be endorsed, and the changing environment within which they applied be noted.
3. That the introduction of a flexible retirement Discretion be supported.
4. That applications for Early and/or Flexible Retirement continue to be considered by the Board Chair and the Chair of the Audit Committee.

146. Offender Management Phase 2

M. Wright introduced J. Kerr's report on Phase 2 of Offender Management and R. Brown noted that approximately 300 prisoners would come within its scope. It was noted that SY was in the very early stages of Phase 2 and it was not yet clear what the real impact would be.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

147. Serious Further Offences (SFOs): 6 months review

M. Wright submitted a six-monthly review of the 22 SFOs covering the months April to September 2006. She noted that the main issues for action and learning from each SFO were taken to SMM on a monthly basis for feedback to Divisional Management Meetings and via Team Briefings. All of the learning points in the report had been shared with staff for action. She noted that the MAPPA Strategic Management Board had agreed to hold an away-day to look at issues raised by SFOs, so that the agencies involved could share learning.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

148. Audit Committee – 5th December 2006

J. Hinchcliffe reported on the main business transacted at the Audit Committee. D. Clark said the session with J. Kerr on managing high/very high risk offenders had been excellent and she (JK) had also referred to a recent report on avoidable deaths. D. Clark wondered if this may be a topic which the Board should follow up as part of its understanding of the work of the Parole Board. S. Harrison said she would discuss this with R. Brown outside the meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That in order to fit with the timetable for the closure of the 2006/07 Accounts, a meeting of the Board be arranged on 21st June 2007.

149. Reports back from Members and Working Groups

i) Race Convention 2006: A catalyst for change

H. Redhead submitted a report on the two-day Race Convention and picked out the messages from the main speakers. Members noted that some 'race' issues appeared to be created by the media e.g. that faiths other than Christianity did not like Christmas. It was acknowledged that many of the issues raised in the report should be subjects for debate and should not be avoided because they were 'too difficult' or because discussing them meant that people were 'racist'.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

150. Chair's diary

S. Harrison said the Regional Transition Board on 12th December had been excellent and Julie Taylor, Commissioning Manager, had been particularly good. She noted that the Board did not have a recognised arena for discussion of Regional meetings and said she would be happy to discuss them with any interested Members.

RESOLVED: That the diary be noted.

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151. Chief Officers' Report

- i) NPS Performance Report 22 (November 2006) and Q2 Weighted Scorecard 2006/07

RESOLVED: That D. Thomas's commentary on the above be noted.

- ii) Probation Boards' Association (PBA)

RESOLVED: That the PBA E-Bulletin No. 33 be noted.

- iii) South Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board (CJB)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the CJB held on 14th November 2006 be noted.

- iv) Schedule of likely Board agenda items – February and March 2007

RESOLVED: That the schedule be noted.

152. Grievance Panel

RESOLVED: That J. Hinchcliffe, B. Maslen and L. Taylor form a Panel to hear two unrelated grievances on 9th January 2007.

153. Next Meeting: Board Seminar, 1.00 p.m. Wednesday 24th January 2007, Meeting Room 4, 4th Floor, Division Street, followed at 3.30 p.m. by an Awards Ceremony in the Board Room.

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