



SOUTH YORKSHIRE

PROBATION BOARD
21st February 2008
10 am

Present: B. Maslen (Chair),
R Akroyd, R. Brown, N. Cadet, A. Khayum,
F. McCready, M. Murphy, P. Smith, H. Williams,
K. Wyatt.

Also in attendance: J. Fox, B. Kerlake, J. Tarr and D. Thomas (item 12)

147. Chair of Board

P. Smith introduced himself to the meeting. He thanked the Board for keeping things going in the absence of a permanent Chair. He told the Meeting of what he hoped to bring to the Board and also what he hoped members would bring, expressing the hope that members would help in areas where he lacked experience. He said that he wanted to spend some one to one time with each member.

B. Maslen advised the Board that Mark Ellis, a Probation Officer in Barnsley had died unexpectedly. The meeting stood for a minute's silence as a sign of respect.

148. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from B. Fatogun

149. Declarations of interest by members

RESOLVED: There were none.

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

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from items 154 and 160 which were "work in progress".

151. Minutes of meeting held on 17th January 2008.

Minute 114 VII - J. Fox pointed out an error on this item; the date should read 20th March not 10th March.

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152. Matters arising

i) Expenditure Monitoring (Minute 141)

B. Kerslake reported that he had made enquiries with other regions about the prison sickness arrangements, and had discovered that the Yorkshire and Humberside region suffers an extreme version of this compared to other areas. He and R. Brown intended to write on behalf of the Chief Officers of the region to the Prison Service Area Manager to try to resolve this issue.

153. Service Level Agreement

R. Brown told the meeting that since the last update there had been a number of meetings on this topic. She said that it was still work in progress however, and that the draft SLA documents had now been received from the centre. She said that J. Fox had looked at it and they were both concerned with a number of aspects of it.

R. Brown said that negotiations on targets were continuing, and that the ROM has indicated no problems with the proposals. A further meeting was to be held the next day (22nd February).

R. Akroyd asked whether, if the Board signed, it agreed the document, despite the issues with it. R. Brown said that she would presume that the same assurances would be given as last year, and that we could consider an additional letter as we did last year. J. Fox advised that the document was not intended to be legally binding.

154. Budget 2008 / 09

B. Kerslake presented his report, and said that it was an update on what had previously been reported. He highlighted his concerns and reported that additional funding had been granted to compensate for the loss of Pathfinder money. The amount was not yet known.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the position.

155. Business Plan 2008 / 09

R. Brown presented her report to the meeting. She felt that at present, the Business Plan was too long, but was still work in progress. She explained that it has been decided to have two separate plans, an internal one and an external one. She said that in the past it has been one document that had failed to inspire internal staff and had been too full of jargon for the external audience. She hoped that the new idea would be useful. She explained that this year the process of the plan would also change in that she would do the High Level Business plan, the ACOs would then do a functional one, a Divisional one will be done by DMs and then each team would have their own. She said that she planned to visit each office to introduce the Business

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Plan and that there would be an opportunity for each team to present their Plan to her. K. Wyatt and H. Williams both thought this was a good idea. H. Williams asked whether there would be a template for each team to work on so as to avoid mismatched plans. R. Brown replied that J. Tarr had already made the templates. R. Akroyd asked if the 3 year Business Plan was still in abeyance. R. Brown said that she was awaiting the opportunity to discuss with the new Chair plans for a Board working session/seminar where the Board would consider some longer-term plans.

R. Akroyd commented that he hoped this would be useful in terms of the HR review and strengthening middle management, but pointed out that there was lots of reference to leadership in the document and it seemed to overlook developing the skills of middle management. R. Brown thanked him for this comment and agreed that it should be included. She asked that any further comments from members be sent to her.

RESOLVED: The Board considered the document and agreed to let R. Brown know of any changes they would like to see.

156. Carter Review / Secretary of State's Announcement to Parliament on 29th January

R. Brown introduced this item and said that the announcement indicated that NOMS would include the Prison Service. She said that that was good news, as when NOMS was originally started it changed the Probation Service but not the Prison Service. She said that she was delighted to welcome Phil Wheatley as the new Chief Executive of NOMS and explained that NOMS would be the Head Office but the Probation Service and Prison Service will continue to exist underneath and keep their own brand names. P. Smith told the Board that he had attended a meeting the previous day where Phil Wheatley had given a speech in which he had said that NOMS Head Office was going to be reduced in size, which should generate savings. He had also said that too much time was spent measuring performance, rather than on delivery. R. Brown said that she supported Phil Wheatley's ideas, and that Jack Straw had said that he did not think that the core business should be put out for competition. She believed that Areas that were not performing would be looked at first if competition happened. In the interim Boards would be answerable to the ROM.

K. Wyatt commented that these would be interesting times and hoped that the NOMS Head Office down sizing would be accomplished, and that they would be successful in making efficiency savings as other Public Sector Departments had done.

A discussion took place on how the new development would affect the front line.

157. Trust Self Assessment

R. Brown said that the copy sent with the agenda was her final submission. She explained that she had found the document difficult to fill in for a variety

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of reasons, but she had done her best. She told the Board that the assessment went to the ROM and the Regional Improvement and Development Manager. It would then be put with the performance figures from the last quarter IPPF for this year and used to determine whether we could apply for Trust Status. She said that if it was not good enough, we would be ineligible to apply. If it was good enough, we would be given a choice. She said that she would like the Area to be able to make the decision rather than it being made for us.

158. Performance Quarter 3

D. Thomas presented his report. He said that there were 2 parts to his presentation. The first part was the internal picture; he referred to the table in his report and said that the main area of concern was still sickness, even though lots of effort had been put in to try to improve this. He went through each aspect reported on, and said that overall performance was improving. A discussion took place about the DRR target and other aspects of the report R. Brown said that the target of reducing re-offending over-arched all targets.

The second part of the presentation was the IPPF which had only become available very recently. D. Thomas tabled this report. He said that there were no significant differences between what we think our position is and what the centre thinks. He was confident that we would stay in the green and the final version was due to be issued the following Monday. He told the Board that there were only 2 Areas that were currently green star nationally and only 1 of these was a first wave trust Area. He said that by the year end he expected the Interventions part would be entirely green. He explained that the IPPF was based on the relative performance with other Areas, so he could not be sure, but was possible that we would emerge as a green star Area by the end of the financial year. He said that if it was achieved, it would be a significant development, as last year we were amber. B. Maslen said that the Board recognised that achievement. In response to a question from R. Akroyd, D. Thomas explained that the acceptable absence figure depended on our performance against other Areas.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the report.

159. Expenditure Monitoring

B. Kerslake, in presenting his report, said that at this stage, he was not able to report detailed figures, but wanted to give members an appreciation on what was expected. He said that extra money was expected from the Centre to cope with the extra demands being made, and that overall, the expected deficit should be manageable. He reported on the ongoing threats, and said that the Service was still being charged the £85,000 Chief Officers' pensions deficit, but it would now receive a matching allocation that would cover the extra cost in 2007/08. He said that the other threat he had referred to at the last meeting was still present and he had no news on that. He advised that a new threat has arisen but could not give details that day, although there would be more information for the next meeting.

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RESOLVED: That the Board note the improving financial position.

160. Reports back from Members and Working Groups

i) JNCC 5th February 2008

R. Brown gave the meeting feedback from the special JNCC which had been held to look at the "Responding to Change" document. She reported that the outcome of the meeting was that all parties had agreed to put more clarity into the document about consultation, and that J. Fox was in the process of drafting a new document that would be taken to the JNCC for approval.

161. Chief Officers' Report

I PBA Items

i) Pay Round 2208/2009: Incremental Progression

R. Brown reported that the position of the PBA was that there was a right to an increment in the terms and conditions of employment. However the amount of that increment needed to be negotiated. She said that the Unions were seeking a judicial review of this. Her advice to the Board was that as it is part of a Joint NNC, it needed to be guided by that body. J. Fox reported that he had received a bulletin from the PBA which was available to members.

ii) Summary of PBA Meeting held on 17th January 2008

K. Wyatt advised that the next meeting was to be held on 20th March. He thought it important to attend as there was an issue about the membership of the Council and the proposed change of name. A discussion took place and K Wyatt agreed to represent the Board's position at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That this item be noted.

II Home Office Race Equality Report

RESOLVED: That this item be noted.

III Ministry of Justice Announcement on Partnership Model for the Operation of Her Majesty's Court Service

RESOLVED: That this item be noted.

IV Regional AGM of Probation Boards 23rd May 2008

RESOLVED: The Board supported the attendance at this meeting. J. Fox said that there were no restrictions on numbers and every

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member was invited to attend. He asked for those who wanted to attend to let him know by the end of the month.

V Probation News

R. Brown commented that this was an extremely professional looking document. B. Maslen said that it had been well received in Doncaster.

RESOLVED: That this item be noted.

VI LSC Procurement Opportunity

B. Kerslake said that notification was going through PQQ at the moment, Although it was highly unlikely that we would tender for it, he wanted to keep options open.

RESOLVED: That this development be noted.

VII Replacement of Telephone Systems

RESOLVED: That this development be endorsed.

VIII Decision of Panel held on 17th January 2008

RESOLVED: That this item be noted.

IX Decision of Panel held on 14th February 2008

RESOLVED: That this item be noted.

X Probation Circulars

RESOLVED: That this item be noted.

162. Any Other Business

K. Wyatt informed the meeting that he had a received an invitation from the Islamic Society of Great Britain for the retirement function of Bishop Jack. He proposed to attend on behalf of the Board.

RESOLVED: The Board agreed that K. Wyatt attend.

163. Date of Next Board Meeting

Next meeting to take place in the Board Room, Division Street, Sheffield on Thursday 20th March 2008 at 10 am.

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