

PROBATION BOARD

26th January 2006

10.00 a.m. to 12.42 p.m.

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

Also in attendance: J. Fox, B. Kerslake, P. McMullan and J. Tarr.

128. Beryl Seaman, former Chair – award of CBE

S. Harrison said that she had written to Beryl congratulating her on the award of her CBE. Beryl had responded thanking her and the Board for their best wishes and Shirley circulated both letters. She had also met Beryl the previous evening and Beryl had expressed her delight at receiving the award.

129. New Members

S. Harrison said she understood that the Minister would confirm the names of the three new Board Members in the near future.

130. Declarations of interest

L. Taylor, H. Harker, J. Fox, P. McMullan, B. Kerslake and J. Tarr declared an interest in the Local Government Pension Scheme (Agenda item 11).

J. Fox, P. McMullan, B. Kerslake and J. Tarr declared an interest in principle in the car allowance element of the report back on the special LNCC (Agenda item 9). H. Harker declared no interest in this matter because she received car allowance payments from the Home Office.

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

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded during consideration of ‘Special LNCC on 19th January 2006’ (Agenda item 9) and ‘Human Resources – future arrangements’ (Agenda item 17). (Minutes 132 and 133 refer).

132. Special LNCC on 19th January 2006

H. Harker referred to the views expressed by the Unions at the recent LNCC on the question of car user allowances, reported the position in neighbouring

Areas and also referred to the local review mechanism (a copy of which was tabled). The mechanism had not been followed as systematically in the past as it might have been and the Unions had agreed at the LNCC to a joint review with management using its provisions. Members offered management a steer on how, and suggested parameters within which, the review could be undertaken. H. Harker thanked them for the guidance and undertook to report back to the April Board.

133. Human Resources – future arrangements

The Board considered H. Harker's report and discussed with the Officer advisers the desirability and implications of approving the proposals outlined.

After discussion it was

RESOLVED:

1. That the redundancy proposal be approved.
2. That the consequent fundamental review of the HR function be approved and H. Harker bring the outcome of that review to the March Board for endorsement.
3. That the Board place on record its thanks to Rosemary Brown for her enormous contribution to the work of the HR Department in South Yorkshire.

134. Minutes of last meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15th December 2005 be approved.

135. Matters arising

i) Strategic responsibilities of K. Morris, former ACO (Minute 116)

H. Harker confirmed that all the responsibilities had been covered, as a result of local allocations and with assistance from other Chief Officers in the Region.

ii) Re-structuring Probation Service (Minute 117)

S. Harrison said references to re-structuring both the Probation Service and Boards had been removed from the Police and Criminal Justice Bill currently before Parliament and it was uncertain when those provisions would be reconsidered.

RESOLVED: That S. Harrison write to Roger Hill asking whether it was proposed that advice would be issued to Services/Boards on the current position.

iii) Weighted Average Measure of Performance (WAMP) (Minute 119(ii))

B. Kerslake said he had been advised that Areas would be sent details of the methodology for calculating the WAMP by the end of the week.

iv) Sentencers' Group (Minute 126)

S. Harrison said she had not yet circulated dates and intended to discuss a date for a preliminary meeting with those Members concerned at the conclusion of today's Board. That meeting would discuss Terms of Reference and the future of the Group and report back to the Board.

136. Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS): update

B. Kerslake submitted a detailed report on OLASS developments since the October Board seminar, when John Orange, the Learning Skills Council (LSC) Offender Operations Manager, had given a presentation. Slides, prepared for the presentation by the LSC and which summarised the background to and process for the establishment of the new service, were appended to the report. He noted that the ultimate objective of OLASS was to provide a service to offenders in prisons or serving sentences in the community, to get them ready for economic employment.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received and the extension of existing arrangements be supported.
2. That a further updating report be submitted in May unless an earlier report is necessary.

137. European Excellence Model (EEM) Self-Assessment 2005

P. McMullan presented D. Thomas's report on the 2005 EEM self-assessment process. He noted that because it was conducted using the 2004 report as a base-line and source document, it was likely that this had served to narrow the focus and had contributed to the score of 268 being lower than in 2003, the last time when scoring had been undertaken. The self-assessment had identified a number of strengths and areas for improvement (AFIs) and he asked the Board to approve work on three of the latter in particular. A further self-assessment would be carried out in 2006 by which time a number of the AFIs would have been resolved.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report on the 2005 self-assessment be received.

2. That the AFIs to concentrate on be: policy and strategy framework, a staff survey (to assess their perceptions of SYPA as an organisation) and visibility of senior managers in general.
3. That Members be invited to take part in the 2006 self-assessment process at the stage considered most appropriate by management.

138. Financial review

B. Kerslake submitted an update on the financial position for the current year (2005/06) and future year (2006/07) and noted that following a conversation with an NPD representative on the day prior to this meeting there may be nothing concrete regarding the 2006/07 budget to share with the Board before its meeting in March.

RESOLVED: That the current position be noted.

139. Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

The Board considered a report on further changes to the LGPS and a proposed change to local arrangements for staff wishing to retire before their Normal Retirement Date (NRD).

H. Harker said that whilst more young Officers were joining SY, particularly through the TPO scheme, many were still in the 50+ age range. If the latter applied to retire early, which many were doing, the Service had to balance the loss of expertise in the total workforce and the costs to the Service of them leaving early but also take into account the personal circumstances of those applying.

RESOLVED:

1. That the current and proposed changes to the LGPS Regulations be noted.
2. That the Director of Finance and Partnerships be authorised to respond to the current consultation proposals (once the Local Government Pension Committee's response is available).
3. That the change in the local guidance to the operation of the early retirement discretion be supported.

140. Audit Committee on 13th December

J. Hinchcliffe said his written report covered the items on which he had reported verbally in December.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

141. Chair's diary

RESOLVED: That the diary be noted.

142. Chief Officers' Report

i) Probation Boards' Association (PBA)

RESOLVED: That J. Fox write to Members asking them to indicate interest in attending the NPD/PBA HR Conference on 1st/2nd March 2006.

ii) Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) appointment

RESOLVED: That the update on the appointment process be noted.

iii) Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Action Plan

RESOLVED: That the update on the Action Plan and the potential for action by other organisations to create workload demands on Probation Areas be noted.

iv) PS Plus 3

RESOLVED: That the PS Plus 3 initiative be noted and supported.

v) Regional Reducing Re-offending Action Plan

RESOLVED: That the report on the steps being taken to deliver the Action Plan be noted.

vi) Regional Group on Value for Money (VFM)

RESOLVED: That the update on the approach to the VFM exercise be noted.

vii) Unpaid Work

RESOLVED: That the report on the restructure of Community Punishment/Unpaid Work be noted.

viii) Minutes of the South Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board (CJB)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the CJB held on 6th December 2005 be noted.

ix) Panel to hear a Grievance

RESOLVED: That when potential dates have been identified J. Fox write to Members seeking volunteers to form a Panel.

x) Panel to hear a Disciplinary Appeal

RESOLVED: That O. Gleadall, J. Hinchcliffe and B. Maslen form the Panel to hear the appeal on 22nd February 2006.

xi) Schedule of likely Board agenda items – February and March 2006

RESOLVED: That the schedule be noted.

xii) Documents received

RESOLVED: That the documents received be noted.

143. Next Meeting: 10.00 a.m. Thursday 23rd February 2006 in the Board Room, Division Street, Sheffield.