



PROBATION BOARD
22nd March 2007
10.00 a.m. to 12.55 p.m.

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

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

174. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from A. Khayum and G. Wordsworth (Chair Designate).

175. New Members

S. Harrison said the new Members, who would officially commence on 1st April, would have been invited to observe today's meeting, had confirmation been received earlier. J. Fox added that e-mail confirmation had only been received the previous day, when he had been out of the office. He read out the names of the new Members.

176. Declarations of interest

J. Fox said that the officers present declared an interest in the Essential Car User discussions in the JNCC (agenda Item 10) and he and B. Kerslake declared an interest in the Hay Pay Review (agenda Item 15). F. McCready declared an interest in Pricing for Commissioning (agenda Item 8) because of her close involvement with the voluntary sector.

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

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded during consideration of the feedback from the JNCC meeting (agenda Item 10) but be not excluded when the resolution was announced.

178. Minutes of last meeting

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RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd February 2007 be approved.

179. Matters arising

i) Regional Partnership Board (Minute 168)

R. Brown said that the constituent Areas had approved the Constitution. There would be one further meeting of the Regional Strategic Steering Group (RSSG) and that Group would then disband. The Partnership Board would commence on 1st April.

ii) Butler Trust Award for Excellence (Minute 171(ix))

M. Wright said that following the Awards ceremony R. Hill, National Director, had asked S. Chu to prepare a paper on the future of psychology in the Probation Service.

180. Business Plan 2007/08 and Update on Service Level Agreement Negotiations

R. Brown said that unfortunately the Business Plan was not yet ready in its final form but the comments from Board Members had been taken into consideration in preparing the latest version of the draft.

The initial Service Level Agreement (SLA) submission presented to the Regional Offender Manager (ROM) on 5th March was submitted for Members' information. R. Brown noted that the ROM had indicated that SY's were the best proposals he had received in the Region and she went on to pick out some of the major issues dealt with and, together with colleague Chief Officers, answered Members' questions. B. Kerslake pointed out that the figures for the financial years in the table at paragraph 4.2 had unfortunately been transposed. Following a comment from B. Maslen, R. Brown undertook to reconsider the wording of the foreword.

RESOLVED:

1. That the content of the SLA initial proposal be noted.
2. That the current or new Board Chair be authorised to sign the SLA when the Chief Officer advises that its content is acceptable.

181. Budget 2007/08

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B. Kerlake tabled his report and said the Service still did not have details of the resource allocation for 2007/08, though certain indicative allocations had been supplied. The officers had met the day before this meeting and had identified a potential £20,000 contribution to the funding deficit by offering one extra bed in each of the Approved Premises. B. Kerlake added that the new Board would be asked to approve the budget when figures were received from NOMS and SLA targets had been agreed with the ROM (referred to in the previous item).

RESOLVED: That the unsatisfactory and difficult financial position for 2007/08 be noted.

182. Pricing for Commissioning

B. Kerlake submitted a report which provided the 'finished picture' to one he had submitted to the December Board meeting. He noted that the Intervention Services figures were below the national average benchmark but those for Offender Management were above, which may indicate that there were efficiency savings to be found. He considered that the whole exercise needed to be more sophisticated and noted that the figures had now been shared with ROMs. He added that he felt that the title 'pricing' was incorrect because the figures were really 'costs' and they were very different things.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

183. Expenditure monitoring

B. Kerlake submitted a report on the Service's actual and projected net expenditure positions as at the end of February. The second schedule appended projected a £60,000 overspend at the financial year end and he noted that whilst this was lower than that projected at the end of January, there remained some uncertainties which might impact on that figure.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

184. Feedback on JNCC held on 22nd February 2007

The Members present at the JNCC commented on the negotiations with the two Unions about essential car user allowances and their understanding of the Union responses. R. Brown explained that this matter had had to be referred to the JNCC because of the provisions of the disputes procedures.

After a lengthy discussion of the issues, the Board and its officers went on to consider possible next steps in order to take this matter forward.

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RESOLVED: That the Board issue a statement to all staff on the offers made in respect of essential car user allowances, their affordability and possible implications for the budget and the officers also take the steps now discussed.

185. Audit Committee – 6th March 2007

J. Hinchcliffe reported on the main items of business dealt with by the Audit Committee. The Committee was particularly pleased that the Service now had a robust system for implementing audit recommendations.

R. Brown said a future Audit Committee may wish to consider 'NPS self-auditing' which was included in the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Regional Offender Manager (ROM). No-one appeared to know at this time what this meant in detail but it could entail as many as 22 audit days.

Members and officers paid tribute to the Audit Committee members and to J. Hinchcliffe in particular as Chair, for the work undertaken and the comprehensive way in which it had been reported to the Board.

F. McCready asked whether the Audit Committee could co-opt members. J. Fox said he thought it could and he would check outside the meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Internal and External Audit Plans for 2007/08, as commended by the Audit Committee, be approved.

186. Reports back from Members and Working Groups

No reports were submitted.

187. Chair's diary

S. Harrison referred to the High Sheriff's Community Awards ceremony on 9th March, which she had attended in R. Brown's absence on leave. Awards had been presented to a very diverse range of people who had undertaken work for the community and the ceremony had been very enjoyable and informative. If Members had the opportunity to attend in the future she recommended that they should make every effort to do so.

RESOLVED: That the diary be noted.

188. Chief Officers' Report

i) Consultation on Probation Trusts

R. Brown referred to her draft response and asked any Members who had any comments to contact her outside the meeting. S. Harrison added that comments should be submitted by 22nd April.

RESOLVED: That the draft response be noted.

ii) Summary of NPS Performance Report

R. Brown said the improvement across the whole range of targets was very encouraging and potentially set the Service up very well for the new financial year and the more regional target environment. She was passing on her congratulations to staff as she visited teams to discuss the Business Plan.

RESOLVED: That the improved performance position be noted and welcomed.

iii) Audit Committee

RESOLVED: That in order to provide continuity, and in particular to deal with the process regarding closure of the Annual Accounts, an interim Audit Committee should meet until 30th June. The interim membership would be K. Wyatt (Chair), A. Khayum, B. Maslen, H. Redhead and H. Williams.

iv) PBA subscription

RESOLVED: That for the reasons now discussed the PBA subscription be renewed, subject to their justifying the increase.

v) Board Hearing Panels

RESOLVED: That the decisions of the Panels be noted.

vi) Ethnicity of staff

B. Kerslake said the data had been produced following a question at the February Board meeting. Whilst the data did show ethnicity of staff it did not show corresponding data for the community in SY. A. Cullen, who would take up her post as Director of HR and Organisational Development in April, would bring comparative figures to a future meeting.

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L. Taylor noted the huge imbalance between male and female employees. O. Gleadall said there were similar imbalances in staff in teaching and the NHS. He understood that many males regarded salary levels in some public services as too low when trying to raise a family.

189. Hay Pay Review – Treasurer and Secretary

RESOLVED: That in the circumstances reported the Chair of the Board and the Chair of the Audit Committee be authorised to determine on behalf of the Board the salary banding and scale point for the two officers, following advice from the Chief Officer.

190. Member attendance at the Probation Centenary

Responding to a question from K. Wyatt about Member attendance at the Probation Centenary event, R. Brown said that she would follow this up with J. Tarr outside the meeting.

191. Member representation on internal and external bodies

O. Gleadall said he was the Board's representative on the county Health and Safety Committee and asked about the future position. J. Hinchcliffe similarly raised a question about JNCC representation. J. Fox said he would prepare a paper for the inaugural meeting of the new Board to deal with such 'administrative' issues.

192. Minutes of this meeting

J. Fox confirmed that minutes of this meeting, the last of the current Board, would be sent via e-mail to all retiring Members for information.

193. Next Meeting: 19 April 2007 at 2pm in the Board Room, Division Street, Sheffield.

194. Shirley Harrison

R. Brown thanked Shirley for her work as Chair. Whilst she herself had only been with SY for six months she had known Shirley at a Regional level for much longer and her approach had been one of the factors in convincing her to apply for the post of Chief Officer in the county. She paid tribute to Shirley's personal qualities, thanked her on behalf of the senior management for supporting SY, and presented her with a leaving gift and a bouquet of flowers.

Shirley thanked Roz for her kind words and the officers for their gifts. She said she had really enjoyed being Chair and working with a very talented group of people, both officers and Members. She felt that the future would be very interesting for the new Board and wished the

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continuing Members and the officers the best of luck and thanked them for their support in the past.

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