

PROBATION BOARD

25th May 2006

10.00 a.m. to 1.15 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, J. Tarr and M. Wright.
P. Wilson (ROM), D. Elaine and H. Mills (Item 35 only).

22. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from A. Victory

23. Declarations of interest

No interests were declared.

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

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded during consideration of the items “ESI follow-up inspection”, “Transport review”, “Bank Holiday Tuesdays”, “Excess Travel Allowance” and “Reports back from Members and Working Groups” due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted and because they were currently work in progress. (Minutes 25, 26 and 31 refer)

25. ESI follow-up inspection

H. Harker said that the results from the follow-up inspection had been disappointing and she wanted further clarification on a few points before she gave a full feedback. The Board noted the position as reported and discussed how the response should be made public.

26. Transport Issues and Bank Holiday Tuesdays

P. McMullan reported on Bank Holiday Tuesdays. He briefly explained the reasons behind why the issue had been raised and went through the history and context to explain the reasons for the change. He listed options for the Board to consider. He recommended consolidation and asked the Board for their views. S. Harrison asked P. McMullan to clarify that if staff wanted to, they

could still ask for the Tuesdays as leave. He confirmed that this would be the case. After some discussion it was

RESOLVED: That the two Bank Holiday Tuesdays be consolidated into staff annual leave.

In relation to the Transport Review, P. McMullan said that he had met with the Trade Unions to discuss the topic. B. Kerslake went through the various options he had costed out in a paper that was tabled, demonstrating the savings to the Service that could be made by using a single car user band and also by introducing an annual mileage ‘qualification’ for essential user status. This was an alternative to the total removal of the essential car user allowance. Together with P. McMullan he answered Members’ questions. K. Wyatt said he would like comparators with other public sector organisations.

RESOLVED: That the proposal to use a single car user band and an annual mileage qualification be supported by the Board and be put forward via D. Thomas and K. Griffiths officially to the Unions prior to the next JNCC. S. Harrison added that she wanted to retain flexibility to change the mileage allowance in the future.

B. Kerslake outlined the position on Excess Travel Allowances and said that it applied to about 30 staff at present. He answered Members’ questions and a brief discussion followed.

RESOLVED: That the general direction of the proposed changes to excess travel allowances be supported and be progressed also via the discussions with the Unions referred to above.

27. Minutes of last meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 27th April be approved subject to the following amendments:

- i) Minute 9 – in the first line addition of the word “diversity” between “to” and “and”,
- ii) Minute 12 – in the fifth line “had been” be replaced by “would be”

S. Harrison congratulated A. Victory for capturing so accurately in minute 20 the complicated discussion that had taken place.

28. Matters arising

- i) Serious Further Offences (Minute 4.3)

P. McMullan reported on the conference regarding SFOs. He explained that technology remained a significant challenge and that L. Hurrell was now the single point of admin contact.

ii) Annual Report on Diversity (Minute 9)

J. Tarr had circulated an e-mail version of the proposed glossy publication on diversity the evening before the Board meeting. He described the booklet and its size to the Members and offered to send a hard copy to Members on request. S. Harrison asked for Members' comments to be sent direct to J. Tarr by the 9th June 2006.

iii) Confirmation of JNCC "pool" (Minute 11)

K. Wyatt said he wished to join the pool.

RESOLVED: That the 'pool' comprise: A. Abbasi, D. Clark, O. Gleadall, H. Harker, S. Harrison, J. Hinchcliffe, B. Maslen, H. Redhead, L. Taylor and K. Wyatt

iv) Workshop for Senior Managers and Board Members – 9th June (Minute 17.5)

B. Maslen asked for further information on this event and S Harrison replied that nothing had as yet been received. H. Harker explained that attendance by SMM at this event might be limited as it clashed with a national training event on Risk in London.

v) Future senior management arrangements (Minute 20)

H. Harker handed out draft charts detailing changes and responsibilities of management and working groups in South Yorkshire. She asked the Board to note the new structure and, and proposed to finalise the charts shortly.

29. 2006/07 Business Plan

The Plan was noted by the Members and H. Harker said it was to be circulated to the ROM, NPD, Chief Officer counterparts in the region, the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), the County Managers' Meeting and partner agencies. It would also be posted on the website.

30. Performance

i) Performance Report

P. McMullan went through the Performance Report, highlighting areas of achievement (there was no red on the traffic lights for the first time) and explaining the reasons behind the amber lights. The critical areas now were the high risk of harm measures. The success of the performance bonus scheme was noted. H. Harker reported that although the year end performance report was still awaited from the NPD, by the end of the year South Yorkshire would be 30th in the weighted score card and that the Service would be well above the

“nought” line. S. Harrison added that it was a great achievement to produce such an upward trajectory and thanked P. McMullan on behalf of the Board for having done an excellent job. He had been a pleasure to work with and she wished him all the best for his new life in Australia.

O. Gleadall asked about DTTO/DRR starts and what the problem was. P. McMullan said that there were many factors that were contributing but that many “customers” were diverted early, thus resulting in the red on the traffic lights.

ii) Offender Management – progress report

RESOLVED: That the progress report be noted.

iii) Review of Top Ten Business Risks

RESOLVED: That the schedule be noted.

31. Reports back from Members and Working Groups

J. Fox’s letter to H. Harker about implementation of custody plus was considered by the Board. S. Harrison asked H. Harker to raise the points made in the letter with the LCJB. It was agreed that a copy of the letter be sent to the NPD and the PBA.

J. Hinchcliffe commented briefly on the SLA Review Meeting he had attended at Division Street the previous week. He said that matters discussed at the meeting had been operational and therefore more useful for managers than Board Members. He also questioned the need for so many officers to attend the meeting. H. Harker agreed that discussions at SLA Reviews did not warrant the attendance it received and that it was costly.

RESOLVED: That the Service liaise with the Areas in the region to determine appropriate attendance.

J. Fox’s paper on the “Boundaries Meeting” was tabled. He informed the Board that it had been an interesting meeting but that the ideas were not set in stone. H. Redhead supported the idea that the region should remain as it is for the time being. S. Harrison confirmed this topic would be included on the agenda for the Board meeting on 22nd June.

J. Hinchcliffe reported on the meeting of the Audit Committee from the previous week. Gratifyingly, all observers had been present. There was the possibility of an extension of membership being considered for current members. The Committee had approved the draft accounts for submission to the NPD and the external auditor. A formal report to the Board would follow in due course.

RESOLVED: That the approval of the draft accounts be endorsed.

S. Harrison said that she was conducting individual sessions with new Members and if any other Member wished to hold a one to one meeting with her, they should let her know.

H. Redhead reported on the Med Hughes Portal Lecture and said that the key points that Med Hughes had made were that he was keen on the proposed changes for the Police, that the focus was on youth, that the youth be engaged at school level and the Police should get involved and finally that the Police and CPS should join forces.

H. Redhead and S. Harrison had attended the Institute for Public Policy Research event in London on 3rd May. S. Harrison said that there had been some criticism of the changes taking place and especially of the prospect of contestability.

32. Chair's Diary

S. Harrison reported on her activities and said that the PBA General Meeting and Annual Conference would be on 29th June. S. Harrison asked those who might be interested in attending to make a note in their diaries. Details of the event were awaited.

33. Chief Officers' Report

i) Serious Further Offence Review – Anthony Rice

H. Harker explained that a report was currently being considered and would be brought back to the Board meeting at a later stage.

P. McMullan reported on activity with foreign national prisoners. He said lists of names were being received on a daily basis and that the substantial amount of resource commitment was not only placing a huge demand on the ISU staff but also blocking up the system. He thanked the ISU staff for their hard work.

ii) Community Punishment Division

H. Harker briefed the Board on the launch. She said she felt the county was finally moving in the right direction with the Unpaid Work Division in place. There would be a further report on this subject in the near future.

iii) South Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the LCJB held on 11th April 2006 be noted.

iv) Likely Board agenda items – June to December 2006

RESOLVED: That the schedule be noted.

34. Any Other Business

i) Police Merger

K. Wyatt raised the question of South Yorkshire Police's proposals for merger of a "superforce". This was available on the Police website. K. Wyatt asked if the Board were to respond to this individually or as a whole. S. Harrison said that due to the lack of time, individuals were to respond to this if they wished.

ii) Heather Harker – resignation

H. Harker said she had submitted her letter of resignation to the NPD that day, intending to leave the Service at the end of August. S. Harrison was to get in touch with the NPD to discuss the way forward for recruitment of a new Chief Officer.

35. The ROM – Paul Wilson, accompanied by Dawn Elaine and Howard Mills

S. Harrison introduced the ROM to the meeting. P. Wilson acknowledged and congratulated South Yorkshire's current performance, thanking B. Kerslake for his contribution to the management of the Reducing Re-Offending Action Plan over the last few years.

He spoke at length about the national picture and about current and possible future developments in NOMS.

H. Mills spoke briefly about the last nine months and mentioned South Yorkshire's continuing performance improvement.

D. Elaine spoke to the Board about the Lindholme project, which was a series of joint events designed to improve relationships and communications.

P. Wilson and his team answered questions from Members. S. Harrison thanked P. Wilson and his colleagues for their time and for attending the meeting.

36. Next Meeting:

Thursday 22nd June 2006 at 10.00 a.m. in the Board Room, Division Street, Sheffield.