



PROBATION BOARD
23rd November 2006
10.00 a.m. to 1.20 p.m.

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

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

115. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from A. Abbasi, M. Murphy, H. Williams and D. Thomas.

116. Declarations of interest

No interests were declared. S. Harrison reminded Members that in addition to this standing reminder about declarations at the start of meetings they could declare them at any relevant point during meetings.

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

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded during discussion of 'Towards an NPS-SY local sub-contracting plan' (the additional paper to be read alongside that already circulated as Agenda item 12) and 'Approved Premises' (Agenda item 16) by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. Minutes 127 and 131 refer.

118. Area Performance

i) Performance Report

M. Wright introduced D. Thomas's report and noted that overall the picture at the end of the second quarter was an improvement. There had been substantial improvements in some areas but the upward movement in days lost to sickness in particular was concerning. She had met representatives of the HR Department and plans were in place to deal with both long and short term sickness, particularly in terms of

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'consequences' when those who had been on short term sickness returned to work. She noted that approximately 30% of sickness was stress-related, though this may not be work-related, and that PSOs were the largest group of staff in terms of both sickness and stress-related sickness.

R. Brown drew attention to the extremely important development of the Regional Performance Improvement Group and the Humberside Service's decision to share its very robust management information system with Areas in the Region. She believed that this would improve SY's performance and ensure that its data was more accurate. She added that the NPD had been persuaded to change the targets for Court report timeliness in 2007/08 from its own arbitrary one, to one that would more appropriately reflect the Courts' requirements.

RESOLVED: That the report on performance be noted.

ii) Review of Top 10 Business Risks

J. Fox said the report represented the Officers' assessment of Business Risks and invited Members to comment. Replying to a question from L. Taylor, R. Brown said she had only recently become aware of the number of senior staff on secondments and the potential Business Risks which this could entail. She would consider this and may bring a paper to a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

119. Minutes of last meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 26th October 2006 be approved.

120. Matters arising

i) Butler Trust Award (Minute 101(iv))

M. Wright said that S. Chu had been to London for a personal interview and would hear at the end of December whether she was to receive an Award.

ii) Probation Performance Framework (Minute101(v))

S. Harrison said that J. Furniss, Director of the Probation Performance Framework Review of NOMS, had presented the latest draft version of the Framework at the PBA Council meeting and it was still 'work in progress'. J. Fox said he understood that there was now a very short timetable for further

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amendments before the Framework was presented to the Minister.

iii) Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development
(Minute 104)

R. Brown said that she was grateful to those Members who had responded to her e-mail and said the advertisement for the post would be placed in the first week in December.

iv) January Board meeting (Minute 113(vii))

RESOLVED:

1. That the monthly business meeting scheduled for 25th January be cancelled.
2. That instead a Seminar be held at 1.00 p.m. in Meeting Room 4, 4th Floor, Division Street, on Wednesday 24th January, to be followed by an Awards Ceremony at 3.30 p.m. in the Board Room, Division Street.

121. Annual Business Plan: Six month review

M. Wright and B. Kerslake presented a half year review of progress against the key objectives and targets set out in the Business Plan and answered Members' questions. M. Wright said the Workload Management Tool (WMT) had resulted in many staff being notionally 'in the red' and the national napo AGM had passed a motion suggesting that Branches meet with Areas to review workload prioritisation agreements. Managers were addressing this. R. Brown added that the Criminal Justice Board's Victims and Witnesses Sub-Group intended to do a launch of the agencies' work with victims in January because of a recognition that it was an area about which the public knew very little.

RESOLVED: That the progress against the targets and objectives in the Business Plan be noted.

122. Financial forecast 2007/08

B. Kerslake said that he had seen some indicative figures from the NPD since his report had been prepared and these showed a national uplift of 4.27% and SY's at 4.95%. He stressed that they were indicative and that they could be reduced and pointed out that the pension funding dilemma referred to in paragraph 4 had been resolved and funding for it would continue. He also explained the elements of expenditure which the 4.95% would be expected to cover. In summary he believed the position would remain extremely challenging.

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RESOLVED: That the emerging financial position for 2007/08 be noted.

123. Disability Equality Scheme

A second draft of the Disability Equality Scheme (DES) was tabled. After a brief discussion of some of its contents it was

RESOLVED: That Members send comments on the draft to J. Fox by 1st December.

124. Staff survey results analysis

R. Brown said this was the first time a full staff survey had taken place in SY and she commented on the 'headline' messages, which would be considered when SMM held its business planning event. There were both negative and positive comments but in general she felt that staff were happy to work in the county. She undertook to follow up with D. Thomas some of the questions about detail in the results reported. The Board felt that the survey had been a very good initiative.

RESOLVED: That the content of the report be noted.

125. Unpaid Work Division – implementation update

B. Kerslake introduced G. Jones's update report, picked out the main themes and answered Members' questions.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Board place on record its thanks to M. Turvey for her enormous contribution to setting up the Division.

126. Towards a local sub-contracting plan

B. Kerslake said his paper reflected the content of four major documents: PC 33/2006, 'Public Value Partnerships', the National Commissioning Framework (which was still in draft form) and the Regional Commissioning Plan, and he commented on their content and inter-relationship. He noted that the nine Reducing Re-Offending Action Plan (RRAP) Pathways would be very important.

R. Brown said a lot of the developments highlighted would depend on when legislation was introduced. She believed that Boards in the higher performing Areas would be invited to become Trusts, followed by a 'second wave' of those mid-performing Areas, and the lower performing ones would not be invited to become Trusts.

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RESOLVED:

1. That the draft NPS-SY Sub-Contracting Plan be submitted to the December Board meeting.
2. That the background to the development of Sub-Contracting Plans be noted.

127. Towards an NPS-SY local Sub-Contracting Plan

B. Kerslake said this addendum to the last report built on a confidential schedule presented to and agreed by the Board in September, as representing a 'direction of travel' towards the 5% and 10% voluntary and private sector expenditure targets.

He went on to comment in some detail on the 'direction of travel' currently being considered, answered Members' questions and noted their comments. R. Brown said she had hoped to discuss the paper considered under the previous item with Staff Side at the LNCC earlier in the week but unfortunately UNISON had not been represented. She noted that UNISON had previously indicated that they would oppose the 10% target and, whilst napo had not been as vociferous in their opposition, she believed they would not be in favour of the moves. She added that if it did not reach the 10% after legislation was introduced, the ROM may take 10% from the Service.

RESOLVED: That the 'direction of travel' be endorsed to inform the development of the Area's Sub-Contracting Plan.

128. Reports back from Members and Working Groups

i) Review of Staff Recognition and Merit Award Scheme

D. Clark and J. Tarr reported on the issues on which they would welcome Members' views as part of the review process and answered their questions.

RESOLVED:

1. That the awards ceremony, referred to in Minute 120(iv) above, include presentation of those awards that would otherwise have been presented at the 2006 Staff Conference.
2. That Divisional Managers be asked to nominate the latest round of Reward and Recognition winners, with the decision to consult staff and Divisional Management Teams being left to their discretion.

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3. That Members send any comments on the options outlined in the paper to J. Tarr by 22nd December.

(NOTE: O. Gleadall voted against resolution 2 above)

ii) Probation Centenary Group update

K. Wyatt presented a report to update colleagues on proposals to date. The Group was mindful of plans nationally and would seek to ensure SY's Centenary programme avoided duplication and benefited where possible from those arrangements. J. Tarr added that he had applied to the Arts Council for funding for the work by the Geese Theatre Company and noted that the NPD had also agreed funding.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

129. Chair's diary

S. Harrison referred to matters discussed at the recent PBA Council, which she had attended together with K. Wyatt. She noted that she and R. Brown would progress work in respect of 'Neighbourhood by neighbourhood' and would contact local MPs. They would also raise it with the Local Authorities in SY when they held their next round of meetings with them. She noted that there was a forthcoming vacancy for a PBA Director and invited any Member who was interested to contact J. Fox by 1st December. She also asked colleagues to note that she would be on jury service in January 2007 and that she may seek assistance with covering her duties as Board Chair. She said the recent SLA meeting with the ROM had gone well and R. Brown noted that the ROM had put West Yorkshire into rectification but had not done so with SY, and that this would be reviewed at the next SLA meeting. S. Harrison said the first meeting of the Regional Strategic Steering Group (RSSG) had taken place but that she had unfortunately been unable to attend. There was nothing significant to report, other than the matters dealt with in the Approved Premises item later in the agenda.

RESOLVED: That the diary be noted.

130. Chief Officers' Report

i) Queen's Speech – NOMS Bill

RESOLVED: That the material provided to the media following the Queen's Speech and G. Sutcliffe's letter to Chiefs and Chairs be noted.

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ii) Home Secretary's speech at Wormwood Scrubs

RESOLVED: That the letters from D. Prentis, General Secretary, UNISON, and J. Raine, Chair, PBA to J. Reid, Home Secretary, and that from G. Sutcliffe to J. Raine be noted.

iii) Probation Centenary - 2007 International Conference 1st/2nd May 2007

RESOLVED: That representation at the Conference, including attendance by front line staff, be considered and agreed outside the meeting.

iv) Mandatory retirement age

R. Brown referred to the Board's previous decision, on 22nd June 2006, and explained that following publication of detailed guidance on the Age Equality Regulations, and advice from both the Service's HR Division and the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS), she recommended the Board to change its decision and suggested revised wording. She added that the Service currently employed a very small number of staff who were already over 65 but had been advised that no action was necessary in respect of them because they had been employed before the new Regulations came into force.

RESOLVED: That the resolution to Minute 54(i) on 22nd June 2006 be varied by the following:

- a) That no requests to work beyond the planned retirement age be approved.
- b) That no applications for employment be considered where the jobseeker was aged 64 years and six months or over.
- c) That no offers of casual or sessional employment be made to people who were aged 65 years or over.

v) Bluebell Wood calendar

Members were handed a complimentary copy of the calendar which had been produced using photographs taken by residents at Town Moor Approved Premise. Those who wished to make a contribution to Bluebell Wood were asked to contact J. Tarr after the meeting.

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vi) Documents received

RESOLVED: That the documents received be noted.

vii) Schedule of likely Board agenda items – December 2006 to March 2007

RESOLVED: That the schedule be noted.

131. Approved Premises

RESOLVED: That consideration be deferred to the December meeting.

132. PBA Member survey

J. Fox reminded Members that they should return their completed survey forms by 11th December.

133. Re-grading Appeals Panel

RESOLVED: That F. McCreedy, H. Redhead and K. Wyatt form the Panel to hear two appeals on Friday 26th January 2007.

134. Next Meeting: 10.00 a.m. Thursday 14th December 2006 in the Board Room, Division Street, Sheffield.

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