



PROBATION BOARD
26th October 2006
10.00 a.m. to 1.05 p.m.

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

Also in attendance: M. Wright, D. Thomas and J. Tarr.

97. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from L. Taylor, J. Fox and B. Kerlake. S. Harrison reported briefly on the circumstances of L. Taylor's absence and said she had passed on to him the Board's best wishes for a speedy and full recovery.

98. Declarations of interest

No interests were declared.

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

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded during discussion of 'HR strategy' – Agenda item 17 – by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. (Minute 104 refers).

100. Minutes of last meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 28th September 2006 be approved.

101. Matters arising

i) Accuracy of Weighted Scorecard figures (Minute 80)

Replying to a question from H. Redhead on progress, R. Brown said that D. Thomas had worked very hard on checking figures which were believed to be inaccurate. She had also spoken to the National Director, who had agreed that SY could re-submit corrected figures. Some revised figures had been submitted in October and they had shown a significant improvement in performance. D. Thomas also commented on steps he had taken to try to ensure that data was accurate in the future. R. Brown added that performance would remain at the top of her agenda.

O. Gleadall said he had recently spoken to some senior staff and had been told that at any one time a large enough number of staff were missing through ill-health to cause workload difficulties. S. Harrison said the Board would address this in November.

ii) Board recruitment (Minute 84)

S. Harrison said she understood that applications for Chair and Member posts were 400+ and 700+ respectively.

iii) Supervision and appraisal (Minute 85)

R. Brown said she had discussed this with S. Harrison. A staff survey had been undertaken in 2002, on both matters, and a further survey undertaken this year had also touched on both. Both had revealed similar findings. Supervision was being undertaken to a good standard and staff felt supported. Appraisal was seen in a positive light but less so than supervision. Some staff had expressed concern about how SY handled poor performance. S. Harrison said that supervision and appraisal had received high scores in the Investors in People (IiP) re-accreditation, which would be referred to later in the meeting. D. Thomas added that SY also now had an electronic system to monitor both.

iv) Reward and Recognition Scheme (Minute 90(i))

R. Brown said that a report would be submitted to the November or December Board. She added that Sam Chu, SY's Senior Forensic Psychologist, had been nominated for a Butler Trust Award and she had written on behalf of the Board to congratulate her.

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v) Probation Performance Framework (Minute 90(i))

S. Harrison thanked O. Gleadall, M. Ismail and H. Williams for dealing with this on behalf of the Board in conjunction with J. Fox.

vi) Diversity event – Bradford 5th October (Minute 92(v) a)

R. Brown said she had been led to believe that no-one from South Yorkshire was to attend and S. Hall had therefore attended from West Yorkshire. She understood that many of the concerns expressed at the Board's last meeting had been raised at the event and that the NPD had admitted that there may have been an element of lack of sensitivity regarding timing.

102. South Yorkshire MAPPA Annual Report 2005/06

Copies of the Annual report were tabled. R. Brown said that M. Wright had contributed to an item on the Report on local radio. J. Tarr outlined plans to circulate shortly a summary and posters to staff, partners etc. and noted that there had been no Serious Further Offences at level 2 or 3 in 2005/06. Coverage on local radio and in the local press had been positive.

103. Effective Supervision Inspection (ESI) follow-up report

M. Wright submitted a report outlining steps taken to ensure that the Action Plan was taken forward. She went through the updated Plan in some detail and answered Members' questions. In many cases the local picture mirrored both the Regional and national ones.

A. Abbasi asked how progress would be monitored if there was not to be a further follow-up inspection. M. Wright said it would be reflected in the Weighted Scorecard and routine monitoring. R. Brown added that it would be included in the Annual Report and she would also be called to account for progress periodically by the National Director. Further monitoring would also be devised to ensure that improved performance was maintained. O. Gleadall asked what would happen if performance did not improve. R. Brown said that information coming to the centre would identify any staff who did not improve. She would meet with Divisional Managers and SPOs and discuss a more robust management culture and the use of mentoring, to share good practice. B. Maslen said that both appraisal and addressing poor practice needed to be an ongoing process and a 'buddy system' for DMs may prove useful. R. Brown said she could not agree more about appraisal and poor practice.

RESOLVED: That the progress report be noted.

104. Strategic advice for Human Resources (HR) in South Yorkshire

R. Brown submitted a report on the desirability of SY having a strategic HR post at Chief Officer level and explained the rationale behind the proposal detailed and how the postholder would link closely to the developments on HR in the Region. She also explained why she saw such an appointment as an urgent matter and gave the Board an assurance that such an appointment would not lead to an increase in the budget for strategic managers in 2007/08. After she had answered Members' questions at some length it was

RESOLVED:

1. That the establishment of a post of Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development be approved in principle.
2. That an e-mail be sent to Members inviting expressions of interest in contributing to the discussion of the job description and personnel specification for the post.

105. Draft Alcohol strategy – progress report

M. Wright picked out the salient points from G. Jones' report and said it was pleasing that efforts to reduce the adverse effects of alcohol were again receiving attention because it was a contributory factor in many offences. She answered Members' questions.

RESOLVED:

1. That the six strategic objectives outlined be agreed.
2. That because it had approved the 'direction of travel', the final strategy be not submitted to the Board, but a progress report be submitted in six months' time.

106. European Excellence Model (EEM) self-assessment 2006

D. Thomas said that EEM linked closely with liP; the former was an internal assessment and the latter an external one. EEM was meant to measure and drive forward improvements in the Service and he felt that the level of consistency recorded was very pleasing and the improved score, approximately 30% higher than in 2005, was also worthy of note. He said the areas for improvement (AFIs) would be considered as part of the SMM's business planning days and he outlined how some of them were likely to be progressed. He went on to comment on the scoring system and noted that some of the areas relating to customers and stakeholders scored quite highly. Together with R. Brown, he then answered Members' questions.

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RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Board place on record its congratulations to the Service on its score in the EEM Self-Assessment.

107. Investors in People (IiP) re-accreditation 2006

D. Thomas noted with pleasure that the recent re-accreditation was unconditional whereas the last re-accreditation, in 2003, had been conditional on an action plan. He reiterated that IiP linked very closely with the last item, EEM, and the findings of each supported those of the other. He thanked those Members who had attended for interview as part of the process. S. Harrison added that the use of the IiP logo on Service letterheads etc. would be followed up.

108. Expenditure monitoring report

R. Brown said that she was concerned about the position regarding a potential overspend outlined in B. Kerslake's report and commented on the steps already being taken or planned to improve it. She then answered Members' questions.

RESOLVED:

1. That the actual and projected expenditure position, and particularly the potential year-end overspend of £150,000, be noted.
2. That the approach to minimising the overspend be supported.

109. Audit Committee report for 3rd October 2006

J. Hinchcliffe said he did not wish to add anything to the written report which had been circulated.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

110. Verbal feedback on JNCC held on 28th September 2006

S. Harrison said there were no significant items to report on but mentioned that Staff Side had raised some concerns about workload.

There was a discussion about whether the Board needed to be represented at JNCC meetings by as many Members as normally attended. The consensus was that since a new Board would be formed in April nothing should be done to change the current practice.

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R. Brown said she would look in detail at the constitution before the matter was considered further.

111. Reports back from Members and Working Groups – none submitted.

112. Chair's diary

S. Harrison said she was now unable to attend the Rotary Club lunch on 29th November and asked Members to indicate at the conclusion of the meeting whether they were able to attend. (POST MEETING NOTE: J. Hinchcliffe was nominated to attend) She added that she had been invited to address the Chapelton Over 50s' Club in July/August and would respond that the invitation would be passed to the new Chair.

RESOLVED: That the diary be noted.

113. Chief Officers' Report

i) Recruitment of the future Probation Board

RESOLVED: That when S. Harrison and K. Wyatt attend the PBA Council on 9th November, they express the Board's views about the Government's changes to the composition of the Board.

ii) Pension Fund – interim valuation

RESOLVED: That the outcome of the interim review be noted.

iii) Outcome of a recent Employment Tribunal (ET) case

S. Harrison thanked J. Hinchcliffe for giving evidence at the Tribunal.

RESOLVED: That the outcome of the Tribunal be noted.

iv) Probation Boards' Association (PBA)

S. Harrison said if any Member wished her to raise any issues at the Council meeting on 9th November they should contact her after today's meeting.

RESOLVED: That the documents from the PBA be noted.

v) South Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board (CJB)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the CJB held on 7th September 2006 be noted.

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vi) Islam Awareness Week – 20th to 26th November 2006

RESOLVED: That the Members referred to below represent the Board at the events listed:

- a) 'One world' – Monday 20th: H. Redhead and K. Wyatt,
- b) 'Climate justice, social justice' – Friday 24th: F. McCready, H. Redhead and K. Wyatt.

vii) Dates of Board meetings – 2007

R. Brown said that the meetings of SMM and the Board from April onwards may change from the traditional pattern and explained the rationale behind the proposal.

RESOLVED: That Board meetings be held on the following dates:

January 25th, February 22nd and March 22nd 2007.

viii) Schedule of likely Board agenda items – November 2006 to March 2007

RESOLVED: That the schedule be noted.

ix) Documents received

J. Tarr referred to the first edition of 'Interventions News' and said he might produce something similar for sentencers.

RESOLVED: That the documents received be noted.

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

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