

MINUTES SUBJECT TO THEIR
ACCEPTANCE AS A CORRECT
RECORD AT THE NEXT MEETING



GLOUCESTERSHIRE

GLOUCESTERSHIRE PROBATION BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT PROBATION HEAD OFFICE, BEWICK HOUSE

Wednesday 4 February 2009

Present: Mr T FitzSimons Mr J Bensted (Chief Officer), Mr R Burns, Mrs C Ellson, Mr M Blockley, Ms J Robinson, Mr M Howe, Mr S Pritchard), Mr C Youngson

Also in attendance: Mr G Limbrick (Board Secretary), Mrs Charlie Baker (Assistant Chief Officer), Mrs N Cryer (Assistant Chief Officer), Mrs D Bennett (Treasurer)

01/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mrs S McGrath, HHJ Picton.

02/09 INTRODUCTION

Mr FitzSimons welcomed Mr Bensted to his first meeting as Chief Officer

03/09 CHIEF OFFICER'S UPDATE

Mr Bensted updated the Board on local and national matters.

Mr Bensted is in his fifth week of his new role, and had been finding the support of SMT to be excellent. The change has had an impact on various roles. He is making visits to all teams. He has some concerns about capacity. A consultant to advise on Trust application matters will be available from the end of the month. The new Single Equality Scheme has to be in place by 31 March, and this will entail a lot of work, which is to be undertaken by Julia Oulton, a former ACO, on a consultancy basis. A GCJB seminar had been held, with Board members present. It was felt to have been a good event. Mr Bensted had been appointed Chair of the Protect and Prevent sub-group. The annual sentencer liaison meeting had taken place with senior magistrates. It was a small group, but feedback on the Area's work was positive. There was a need to target resources with increased caseloads.

Regionally, he had spent two days with the other Chief Officers in the region, and together they were developing a shared vision for the region. A new DOM had been appointed, Colin Allers, who will manage the Chairs and Chief Officers of the five Areas.

Nationally there had been a meeting with the Minister of Justice, Jack Straw.

04/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

SECTION A STANDING ITEMS

05/09 MINUTES

(i) Minutes of the Meeting Held on 5 November 2008

The Minutes were accepted as accurate and were signed by the Chair.

(ii) Actions arising from the previous Minutes

All actions from the last meeting were either on the Agenda, or completed.

SECTION B PERFORMANCE

06/09 i) Operational Performance

Mrs Charlie Baker reported on Performance.

Mrs Baker advised the draft IPPF for quarter 3 was good, showing a green star rating, although she cautioned that this might fall to green when the draft is finalised, depending on the performance of other areas around the country.

The poor result for unpaid work stand-downs had been expected, but was improving again. There are issues also with sickness absence. All these will be picked up at the next Performance Panel meeting.

ii) HR Report

Mrs Naomi Cryer reported on HR issues.

There had been a seasonal sickness pattern, which was similar to that across the SW region. The HR project co-ordinator is examining if there is any link between sickness and capability and performance.

iii) Financial Report

Mrs Darrill Bennett presented the financial report which was considered in confidence.

The budget monitoring paper had been seen by Audit Committee. There was a need to declare any projected underspend at this stage, and £200k had been identified, and the report identified this. There was as yet no confirmation from NOMS that this could be kept for 2009/10. There was a need to identify the staff resource for 2009/10, and the possible level of vacancies and the Chief Officer and SMT would advise the Board about this. **Action: Chief Officer and SMT.**

The indicative budget was based on figure from NOMS received just before Christmas. The projected deficit of £572k is considered to be manageable, and did not include the possible carry forward of £200k. £156k of savings were required because of the SBC report, but GPA has already achieved half of that.

NOMS were only funding £194k of the pay award, which had actually cost about £300k. GPA has to find the shortfall. There may be potential attrition savings but these have not been included, nor has a possible performance bonus. Mr Pritchard suggested that there a limitation on non-pay expenditure should be imposed, and Mrs Bennett indicated that as much expenditure as possible will be frozen in the light of the inflation figures.

A Capital Budget and Expenditure 2008/09 was also presented for noting.

RESOLVED

THAT the Financial and Capital Budget and Expenditure reports be **NOTED**

SECTION C ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

07/09 BUDGET MONITORING FRAMEWORK AND DEVOLVED BUDGET MONITORING PLAN

Mrs Bennett introduced these two reports together. Both had been seen by the Audit Committee which was satisfied with them. The Board was asked to approve them. Mrs Bennett pointed out that because of changes to the SMT structure the Monitoring plan would not be implemented until 1 October, rather than 1 April, and it was agreed that this was probably wise.

RESOLVED

THAT the budget monitoring framework and devolved budget monitoring plan be **APPROVED**

Mrs Bennett also referred to a report detailing the actuaries' assumptions that need to be made in respect of the Pension Scheme. The Board agreed these assumptions.

08/09 ESTATES STRATEGY

This report had already been previously considered, and was recommended to the Board. The Board recognised reluctantly that it had limited ability to do all that it wanted, would base its Trust application on an assumption of fit for purpose buildings within the Business Plan timeframe. It also noted that the focus needed to be on the Cheltenham office replacement.

RESOLVED

THAT the strategy be **APPROVED**

09/09 PARTNERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY

This was deferred owing to the absence of Mr Holden. **Action: G.Holden for next meeting.**

10/09 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT PUBLICATION SCHEME

The revised publication scheme was considered. The Board Secretary indicated that it was based on the national model, and was being used by other Boards. The Board asked that the web site should make it clear that information can be requested even though it is not on the web site itself. **Action: Tim Fogarty**

RESOLVED

THAT the Publication Scheme be APPROVED.

SECTION D ITEMS TO NOTE

11/09 AUDIT COMMITTEE

(i) Draft Minutes of the Meeting Held on 19 January 2009

The minutes were considered and it was

RESOLVED

THAT the minutes be **NOTED**

The draft Annual Audit Letter had been received, and Mr Burns said that its recommendations were being adopted. It needed a few minor amendments and the Board

RESOLVED that Mr Burns be authorised to agree the final version, and to report back to the next Board meeting. **Action: Mr Burns**

12/09 SAFETY COMMITTEE

(i) Draft Minutes of the Meeting Held on 22 January 2009

Mr Youngson suggested that there should be an Annual report to the Board on this topic. It was also felt that Health and Safety work was a little reactive, and needed to be more proactive. The Safety Committee will look at this at its next meeting. **Action: Safety Committee**

RESOLVED

THAT the minutes be **NOTED**

13/09 JNCC

(i) Draft Minutes of the Meeting Held on 22 January 2009

RESOLVED

THAT the minutes be **NOTED**

14/09 TRUST APPLICATION UPDATE

Mr FitzSimons reported that he had attended a meeting of Chairs in the preceding week, and the whole process appeared to be on track. The National Management Board was functioning well, and going through all issues that needed addressing. Some matters were still in draft and being considered by the Minister. He described the application process, and how applications would be evaluated. It was intended that there would be SLA's with Trusts, which would not be legally binding, and a partnership approach was to be favoured. Dispute resolution would be by an escalation process, without access to legal proceedings.

Changes in the way of doing business would either be discretionary, by agreement, or mandated. The latter changes would be subject to an evaluation process to assess their impact.

Appraisal would be on the basis of the Trust financially and organisationally showing that it could operate on a stand-alone basis. Its efficiency would also have to be demonstrated. It would also need to show that it was influencing the local community on the role of reducing re-offending.

Mr Bensted emphasised that the local delivery unit was the building block for all this. Boards were sharing ideas regionally. Wiltshire would be making their application in February.

There was some discussion on the split of work between SMT and the Board. It was recognised that SMT were the practitioners, but that the Board was accountable for service delivery. SMT will produce material for the Board to scrutinise and comment on. A consultant will put all the detail together.

The basic information need was unit cost data, and the organisational model. It would be important in any bid to set out clearly the assumptions on which the application was made, for example in relation to having property fit for purpose.

A workshop would be held on 9 February to look at this topic in more detail.

Action: SMT and Board

15/09 OFFENDER MANAGEMENT & NATIONAL PLAN QUARTER 3 UPDATE

Mr Bensted reported that everything was on track, and all three targets had been achieved.

THAT the report be **NOTED**

16/09 BUSINESS PLAN & RISK REGISTER 2008-09 QUARTER 3 UPDATE

This had been considered by the Audit committee and was generally good. The only concern was in relation to sickness. Generally the service was achieving what it had set out to do.

17/09 SBC UPDATE

Target savings were being identified nationally. GPA was already doing well with the use of FDRs.

18/09 DEVOLVED BUDGET MONITORING PLAN

This was dealt with at Minute 07/09 above.

19/09 INTERVENTIONS QUARTER 3 UPDATE

This report was **NOTED**

20/09 CP STRATEGY UPDATE

A report was tabled. It was agreed that information from the Performance Panel needed wider circulation, and bringing to the Board. **Action: Chief Officer**

SECTION E – EXEMPT ITEMS

21/09

In accordance with paragraph 3(a) 3(c) and 3(i) of the National Scheme for Meetings in Private approved by the Secretary of State it was **RESOLVED THAT** the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items because of the confidential nature of the business considered.

22/09 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 November 2008

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

23/09 SFO QUARTER 3 REVIEW

A report was received and noted.

24/09 COMPLAINTS QUARTER 3 REVIEW

A report was received and noted.

25/09 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

An amendment to the GPA Bank mandate was agreed

26/09 FUTURE MEETING DATES

18 March 2009
13 May 2009
24 June 2009

The meeting closed at 13.15

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CHAIRMAN