

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 10 September 2008

Present: Mr T FitzSimons, Mrs Y Ball, Mr R Burns, Mrs S McGrath, Mr M Blockley, Ms J Robinson, Mr M Howe, Mr G Limbrick (Board Secretary), Mr C Youngson

Also in attendance: Mrs D Maloney (Finance Manager), Mr J Bensted (Assistant Chief Officer), Mrs Lynne Schoen (HR Manager), Mrs Charlie Baker (Assistant Chief Officer), Mr Ted Yates (DIP Manager)

95/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

HHJ Picton, Mrs C Ellson, Mr S Pritchard,

96/08 INTRODUCTION

Mr FitzSimons advised the Board that Liz Hill, ROM, will be attending today and will talk about the NOMS structure, Trusts, Performance Metrics in relation to Trusts and the Regional structure.

Today's meeting will concentrate on the Financial report and the draft 3 Year Strategy.

97/08 CHIEF OFFICER'S UPDATE

Mrs Ball updated the Board on local and national matters.

Mrs Ball advised the Board that there was Chief Officer leadership meeting in August. A lot of attention was spent on performance metrics. There was an introduction by Elaine Lumley (CO of Teesside) and her message was how we engage with staff so they understand why and what we are measuring and use re-offending data to promote compliance and reinforce community sentences. Also present at the meeting was Paul Ibrahim; Head of Performance Management Unit who gave a general introduction. He advised that Quarter 1 Public Protection data will not be used and that Quarter 2 may be used but it will be decided at a later date. Mr Ibrahim stated that the 2009-10 metrics are being developed. The Chief Officers were asked what current strategic issues are and were asked for their improvement suggestions. The following were given;

- More robust reporting on re-offending
- Impact assessments on changes to IPPF before implementation
- More joint targets e.g. LAA's and LSC
- How do you measure partnerships?

At the meeting public and sentencer confidence measures and sickness not being a robust performance measure was also discussed.

There was a short input on finance from Kay Wood stating the 2009-10 budgets will be tight. The scheduled publication of the budgets is November. Roger Hill told the Chiefs that they need to look at the headline figures to assess whether the additional £40 million from 08/09 has been incorporated. Efficiencies would be needed. The worst position for 08/09 would be to under perform with an under spend. R.Hill advised that they would be using the old budget formula which concerned Mrs Ball in regards to damping.

After the meeting with Stuart McPhillips in August, and being invited to engage with the centre, there has been no contact from the PIU despite Mrs Ball following up for a response. The Board asked Mrs Ball to write to Ben Emm stating that the Board has been briefed and requesting a response. **Action: Mrs Ball**

Mrs Ball advised that performance has not been as good as other Areas in quarter 1 and robust action is needed. Mrs Charlie Baker will discuss further. Mrs Ball advised the Board that Mrs Baker's portfolio has been reduced to enable Mrs Baker to focus on performance.

There was recent media interest by BBC Points West regarding Ryecroft Approved Premises and UNISON. UNISON had claimed that they had not been consulted regarding the restructure, but they have been fully consulted since June 2008. The report was balanced and the situation has calmed down since.

The Prison contract has not been signed but after negotiation with the regional office we have been assured that there will not be any impulsive actions in terms of reducing staff. A review is under way and will be finished at the end of month. The relationship between Probation and the Governor is yet to be repaired, though bridges are starting to be being built.

The Payroll contract has run into some difficulties, the regional Shared Services agreement does not seem to have been confirmed. Gloucestershire County Council has failed to deliver. Mrs Darrill Bennet has checked that GPA is secure and each Area is taking individual action.

The review of the finance team has been completed and extra resources are clearly necessary. Recruitment is being actioned.

The Budget Devolution Plan is completed in draft but is not yet ready for Board approval. It will be presented at the November meeting.

Mrs Ball and Mr FitzSimons recently attended a meeting with local MP's. The meeting was successful and future meetings will be held.

98/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

SECTION A STANDING ITEMS

99/08 MINUTES

(i) Minutes of the Meeting Held on 2 July 2008

The CP Strategy was not approved as it was only in a draft format. To be presented to the November Board.

After amendments the Minutes were accepted as accurate and were signed by the Chair.

(ii) Actions arising from the previous Minutes

77/08 - The monitoring of the capability assessment will be featured quarterly on the Board agenda. Budget Devolution & Project Plan to be carried over to November Board. Due at 5th November meeting

82/08- It was asked that there is a quarterly review of CP presented to the Board against the mandate agreed, via the CP Link, Mr Sid Pritchard and that the final Strategy will be approved at the November meeting. **Action: Mr Pritchard. Due at 5th November meeting.**

84/08 - Mrs Ball has spoken to the auditors regarding the acceptability of amending the ACO template. **COMPLETED**

87/08 – The Statement has been adopted and is available to all staff. **COMPLETED**

100/08 Liz Hill, ROM – South West

Mrs Ball introduced Liz Hill and the Board members gave a brief introduction of themselves.

Ms Hill briefly explained the structure of the new NOMS Agency and that Prison and Probation are the two delivery arms. Phil Wheatley has made it clear that he wants to keep individual characteristics of both services with each service developing an understanding of the other building on the end to end offender management theory and principles.

It is expected that a DOM will be in place by April 2009 who will cover Probation and Prison for the region. Ms Hill commented that efficiencies and improvements to gain by joining will not be yielded overnight but efficiencies are the driver. There is a clear process of slimming down the centre.

The Regional structure is being consulted on and KPMG will come up with a structure by the end of the month. The priority is the drive towards Trust Status. It is a complicated exercise deciphering what is needed for Trust status, which will also work within the NOMS set up. A Ministerial statement is expected after 6th October. The background for Trusts are from the KPMG study completed earlier this year. The report will be published when completed. Jack Straw has already stated that there will be no forced mergers; however, Areas are to work out what makes most sense between them. Trusts will not be deliverable by April next year; the end date is currently April 2011. There will be a series of tests yet to be devised which Areas will need to work to. The tests are;

- Emphasis on local unit structure, accountability and local engagement
- Performance
- Capability: finance, people
- Efficiency
- Comprehensive change programme and best value

This will not be internal exercise and Ministers have been in discussion regarding external validation via the National Audit Office. Ms Hill said that Areas need to see this as an opportunity.

There was some discussion regarding Trust status and the change programme. Mr Burns said that there needs to be clear tactical planning emanating from the centre and the ability to execute the programme efficiently. Ms Hill advised that Phil Wheatley has a track record for delivery and things will change rapidly.

Mr FitzSimons thanked Ms Hill for attending on behalf of the Board.

SECTION B PERFORMANCE

101/08 i) Operational Performance

Mrs Charlie Baker reported on Performance.

Mrs Baker advised that performance in the last quarter has not been as good as it has in the past, though there are still some inaccuracies in IPPF in GPA's favour. The inaccuracies include the top red on interventions should be green and will, in fact, make the interventions domain green star. Mrs Baker explained that nationally, GPA are in the bottom half. A lot of work needs to be done. In the Public Protection domain, though it will not be part of the IPPF, GPA has been given scores for Quarter 1 and nationally GPA is in the top half.

Mrs Baker is focusing on performance and will be working directly with Offender Managers, the ROM, the Performance Panel and networking with green star Areas to push up performance. Further resources are currently being recruited which will not only fill the gaps but will also motivate staff. Projections for the rest of the year are looking good and improvements are evident in at least 3 areas. Mrs Baker predicts that by December GPA will be green or green star in all domains and by March GPA will be green star as an Area.

Mr FitzSimons advised the Board that the Performance Panel have been through the performance plan of action in detail.

ii) HR Report

Mrs Lynne Schoen reported on HR issues.

The updated sickness figures for August have reduced to 14.1, a substantial decrease. This is due to concentration and proactive management of short term sickness. Mrs Schoen predicts that long terms sickness will continue. There are currently 6 long term sickness cases, 3 will return this month, however, other cases have become apparent. Mrs Schoen has contacted other South West Areas on how they manage sickness and this is being looked into. Mr Mike Howe congratulated the HR team on their hard work regarding sickness.

There has been a big push on recruitment, 8 vacancies being advertised. Mrs Sheila McGrath commented that the link www.jobsinprobationco.uk did not prominently feature Gloucestershire. **Action: Mrs Schoen to look into.** The

Board asked that the FTE and budget allocation be produced for each Board meeting as it would add clarity to the discussion. **Action: Mrs Cryer and Mrs Schoen.**

iii) **Financial Report**

Mrs Debra Maloney presented the financial report

Based on the actuals at the end of June plus up to date projections for March 09, the projected outturn is to break even. There is an under spend of £157,000 and this will be used to recruit more staff. GPA will hold vacancies in 09/10 to offset any overspend, if necessary. Additional monies received are £97k from NOMS for the pension contribution and the National Plan. Staff attrition has also been higher than estimated so accruing further savings. Mr Burns and the Audit Committee went through the financial report at Audit Committee and the Committee were content with the report. The biggest concern is an under spend and under performing. There was some discussion regarding using the £157k now for recruitment, however it was agreed that the risk was low.

The Board requested a report of projected figures for recruitment, a clear account of where GPA are and where GPA are going to be by the end of year for the November meeting. **Action: Mrs Darrill Bennett**

RESOLVED

THAT the report be **NOTED**

SECTION C ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

102/08 DISCIPLINARY, CAPABILITY AND GRIEVANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The policies and procedures have been approved via Employers Side and JNNC. The Board were content with the policies and procedures.

RESOLVED

THAT the guidance be **APPROVED**

103/08 WELL BEING STRATEGY

The Strategy was prepared by Mr Chris Westhead and has been discussed at the Safety Committee.

RESOLVED

THAT the Strategy be **APPROVED.**

104/08 ETE POLICY AND STRATEGY

The ETE Policy and Strategy was discussed at the recent Business Development Group and agreed.

RESOLVED

THAT the Policy and Strategy be **APPROVED**.

105/08 ETE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY

The ETE Business Development Policy and Strategy was discussed at the recent Business Development Group. More focus is needed in getting more income in, possibly via Europe with more captive schemes.

RESOLVED

THAT the Policy and Strategy be **APPROVED**.

106/08 DRAFT 3 YEAR STRATEGY

Mr FitzSimons invited comments from the Board about the draft strategy prepared by Mrs Ball. A discussion ensued.

It was agreed that the strategy focusing on reducing reoffending, was the correct angle. Mrs Ball's report fairly reflects the focus. Mr Robert Burns thought that the document lacks the desire to empower front line Offender Manager's, to have the element of risk taking and having an open minded approach. Mrs Ball to include more detail on this element.

Mr Mike Howe raised a discussion about whether more was needed on how GPA support and reduce reoffending via housing provision and employment. It was noted that there is a broad range of factors that address offending behaviour and these are included in the strategy.

Mr Youngson discussed how GPA doesn't measure stakeholder feedback. Mrs Ball advised that it is in the plan but currently there is no capacity to do it. Mr Youngson said that it is important to communicate to staff the strategic aspirations and key messages but in a more comprehensible way.

It was asked that if there were any other comments, that they are emailed to Mrs Ball, Mrs Ball will then make changes and reissue for the final draft for comment. The final draft will be formally tabled at the November meeting including a discussion on what the plan will be used for. **Action: All.**

SECTION D ITEMS TO NOTE

107/08 BOARD MEMBER UPDATE

Mr FitzSimons – There is a Probation Association Council Meeting next week and Phil Wheatley will be present. There is a Chairs presentation on Productivity Improvements. Mr FitzSimons will be talking about Sentencer Liaison and FDR's.

Mr Pritchard - **Sentencer Liaison**

- 1 Training days for 280 magistrates in September to be addressed by GPA staff
- 2 Sentencer Forums now well established 8 so far attended by 40 magistrates. Issues covered in John Bensted's report.
- 3 Next newsletter due out in September
- 4 GPA involved in training of 30 new Magistrates in next couple of months

Community Payback

- 1 Met with Allan Thompson to discuss working of CP unit ,Board comments and review of strategy
- 2 AT now revising strategy with a view to reporting any suggested changes and action plan to November 5th Board meeting
- 3 Active involvement in Magistrates training

Mr Burns is meeting with the Finance team after today's meeting. Contact has been made with the MAPPA team but has not yet met. Mr Burns has also completed a complaints investigation.

Mrs Robinson is linked with Ryecroft and will be attending a team meeting in October. Mrs Robinson has contacted Christine Smeaton, Support Services Manager, but has yet to meet.

Mr Blockley has attended an ETE team meeting and was impressed by their commitment. He attended the ETE away day in August and has been involved in their forward planning. Mr Blockley has attended the Estates team meeting.

Mr Howe has met with Lynne Schoen and the HR department. Mr Howe is due to meet with Kathy Kerr-Rettie. Mr Howe has also attended meetings with Chief Executive, Christine Lawrie, of the Probation Association regarding performance targets. There is still some uncertainty on how to address this issue.

Mrs McGrath has met with Keith Barrett. Mrs McGrath has also met with Ted Yates and has had an interesting meeting regarding the oversubscribing to DDR's.

Mr Youngson is linked with IT, Process Management and OM West and has met with all the managers. It was noted that there is a high degree of commitment but there are signs of overload/stress at Barbican.

It was concluded that Members are getting an understanding of teams and service provided. It was asked that members report on a quarterly basis.

108/08 AUDIT COMMITTEE

(i) Draft Minutes of the Meeting Held on 30 July 2008

Mr Burns advised that at the last Audit Committee he was asked to write to the Audit Commission re report formats and this letter has now been passed to NOMS. There is currently an audit underway on security.

The Constitution of the Audit Committee requires 4 members. Mr Youngson advised he will act as a sub.

RESOLVED

THAT the minutes be **NOTED**

109/08 SAFETY COMMITTEE

- (i) **Draft Minutes of the Meeting Held on 17 July 2008**

RESOLVED

THAT the minutes be **NOTED**

110/08 JNCC

- (i) **Draft Minutes of the Meeting Held on 6 August 2008**

RESOLVED

THAT the minutes be **NOTED**

111/08 NATIONAL PLAN UPDTAE QUARTER 1 REVIEW

A Report was delivered by Mr John Bensted

Mr Bensted reported that all is going according to plan. The key areas are;

- To ensure we deliver Community Sentences effectively
- Greater offender compliance
- Reduce the number of recalls to prison

Nationally the plan has gone satisfactorily and the South West has performed noticeably well. Future funding has not been confirmed but the indication is that it will be in next year's budget.

In quarter one GPA have achieved 6 Community Sentences rather than custodial sentences, with the target being 4. There has been a decrease in recalls and an increase in ACO Warnings. In quarter 1 there were 8 ACO warnings compared to 1 in quarter 1 last year. There has been an increase use of curfews; court staff have been persistent with curfew use.

It was noted that GPA are doing well in FDR's. 70% of court reports are FDR's. Last year GPA were doing 40% FDR's. The Centre want to quote GPA Strategy as it is performing well.

The Board congratulated Mr Bensted on an exceptional report with exceptional achievements.

RESOLVED

THAT the report be **NOTED**

112/08 SUBSTANCE MISUSE

A Report was briefly discussed by Mr Ted Yates, in the absence of Garry Holden.

Mr Yates summarised the report by stating the main issue is does GPA deliver what we are commissioned to do or do GPA commission on our own target tailored to need?

It was asked that members read the report and email questions/comments to Mr Yates and there will be a full discussion at the November meeting.

RESOLVED

THAT the report be **NOTED**

SECTION E – EXEMPT ITEMS

113/08

In accordance with paragraph 3(a) 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.

114/08 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 JULY 2008

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

115/08 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

116/08 FUTURE MEETING DATES

5 November 2008

4 February 2009

18 March 2009

The meeting closed at 13.30

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CHAIRMAN