

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 14 March 2007

Present: Sir William Wratten (Chair), Mrs Y Ball (Chief Officer) Mr D Cook, Mr P Rowe, Ms J Robinson, Mr D Gooch, Mrs E Abderrahim, Rev A Davies, Mr C Marshall, Ms H Middleton, Mrs C Jago, Mrs M Gardner, Mrs C Ellson

Also in attendance: Mrs C Baker, (Assistant Chief Officer), Naomi Cryer (Assistant Chief Officer), Mr G Holden (Assistant Chief Officer), Mrs D Maloney (Finance Manager)

26/07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr M Howe, Mr G Limbrick (Board Secretary), Mr P Stott (Board Treasurer),

Mr Tony FitzSimons was welcomed and introduced as the new Board Chair from 1/04/07.

Mr Mark Blockley, Mr Sid Pritchard and Mr Robert Burns were welcomed and introduced as new Board Members from 1/04/07

27/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

SECTION A STANDING ITEMS

28/07 MINUTES

(i) Minutes of the Meeting Held on 10 January 2007

Minutes were an accurate read.

(ii) Actions arising from the previous Minutes

All completed.

29/07 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Sir William reported that ACO interviews has been successful and that John Bensted, previously of Avon and Somerset Probation Area, had been appointed to the position of ACO – Offender Management.

On the 15th February Sir William attended a meeting of the Probation Board Association. Previous to the meeting, members had been advised of concerns from West Yorkshire. West Yorkshire Chair, John Colvill raised concerns that clause 2.3 and clause 16.3 of the Service Level Agreement between NOMS and Probation Boards were contradictory. Clause 2.3 states:

'For the avoidance of doubt, the parties do not intend that this SLA be legally binding.'

And Clause 16.3:

'The decision of the Chief Executive of NOMS shall be binding on both Parties.'

It was agreed with the other Probation Boards that these clauses were indeed contradictory. Sir William gave West Yorkshire the support of GPA to take this forward. The PBA want a national template with changes to the SLA. The Boards cannot agree SLAs until these issues are ironed out. It was also noted that the Judiciary were the customers of Probation, not the ROM

30/07 CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

Mrs Yvette Ball, Chief Officer, reported to the Board on the following items:

Mrs Ball expressed her delight in welcoming John Bensted back to GPA in his new role. Mrs Ball explained that Mr Bensted's portfolio would consist of Offender Management, Sentencer Liaison, Prison, MAPPa and other items.

The NOMS Offender Management Bill has passed its third reading and is on its way to the House of Lords. The Bill encourages the establishment of Probation Trusts and is supported by Gerry Sutcliffe, Home Office Minister. Amendments have been proposed that state that a local council member should be a member of the Trust; however Magistrates were not put forward. It is also proposed that court work should stay within Probation as should supervision for the next few years.

Regarding the 07/08 budget and Efficiency savings, Mrs Ball advised the Board that GPA have 7.5% less than what is required. GPA is currently working with other areas in the region to develop Regional projects for streamlined delivery, eg Finance and HR.

Mrs Ball advised the Board that Performance Report 23 has now been published. GPA is currently 12 in the National table and the lower position is due to poor sickness record. GPA's robust attendance management has been acknowledged by NPD.

During November it was noted that there were 11 long term sickness cases and that Mrs Ball has contacted NPD regarding the number of long term sick cases which are out of the control of GPA.

Mrs Ball informed the Board that negotiations of SLA's for 07/08 are ongoing and complex. The metrics have been agreed and the Specific Programme Plans are on their way to be agreed. Mrs Ball also advised the Board that the ROM is chasing for detailed budget information but as we only have indicative figures GPA cannot yet give the figures they want.

Sir William commented that the fine details are beyond the ROM's remit and this was also brought up at the PBA meeting.

31/07

PERFORMANCE

Mrs Charlie Baker, Assistant Chief Officer, tabled latest draft figures for February. She advised that GPA is currently 12th in the league table. Though this a slippage in position, GPA have increased the performance score overall.

Two targets have slipped, one of which is Drug Rehabilitation Requirements. This was expected as there were not enough starts. A new provision was implemented in February which will increase the number of starts and therefore completions.

Sickness is still a concern and GPA's weakest area. Mrs Baker is actively working with HR and Middle Managers to address this area.

Court Reports have improved significantly and may hit target overall.

Mrs Baker advised the Board that GPA are subject to an OM Inspection in January 2008. GPA has already been data validated this year and have come out well.

Mrs Jago commented that the new DRR system is beneficial, more referrals equals more commencements. Mrs Jago advised the Board that GPA retain 60% of DRR's compared to a National average of 30%, which is excellent for GPA.

UPW is on target.

Enforcement is on target.

Risk Assessments on target.

Race and Ethnic Data on target.

Programmes and ETE on target. ETE employment starts have exceeded target.

Victim Contact is still lower than expected and is being investigated.

RESOLVED

that the report be **NOTED**

32/07 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

- i) SLA's 06/07**
Mrs Charlie Baker reported that the ROM is happy with this years SLAs performance and GPA is meeting requirements.
- ii) SLA's 07/08**
There is a lack of clarity regarding next years SLA's. It was originally thought that Areas could negotiate targets with the ROM, but final details and measures are still awaited from NOMS. There is a general assumption that there will be 20 targets, 7 of which are new. GPA is not yet aware of final details as they have not yet been produced, but will be included in SLAs once clarified.

RESOLVED

that the paper be **NOTED**

33/07 AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING

Audit Committee Minutes – 28 February 2007

Minutes not prepared and therefore unable to be approved

Mr Peter Rowe delivered an oral report on future financial provision on behalf of Mr Peter Stott, Treasurer.

GPA's future financial provision was discussed in February's Audit Committee. The SLA with Gloucestershire County Council is set to change due to GCC introducing a new system. In October 2007 GPA would have to migrate to the new system. The other option would be to join a Regional system such as Pegasus or Sage. The full details of cost to a Regional system are not yet known. Mrs Ball is to attend a meeting on 13th April to discuss and a decision will be clearer. The Audit Committee recommended that:

- (1) The Board should approve that in the short term GPA should begin the 2007/8 financial year by remaining with the present GCC system; and
- (2) The Board should delegate that task of recommending to the new Board the appropriate option to which GPA might migrate in the long term to the Chief Officer once the issues are clear

Mr David Cook asked why Region could not use Devon and Cornwall as a host system. Mrs Naomi Cryer advised that Devon and Cornwall were unwilling to be the host as it is not to their financial advantage.

RESOLVED

that the report be **NOTED**

34/07 BUDGET UPDATE

Mrs Debra Maloney delivered a report on behalf of Mr Peter Stott

- i) 2006/07
The original estimated Job Evaluation deficit was £41k (6.5%), this has increased and now stands at £130k (9.2%). This includes figures for Job Evaluation appeals.
Due to a payroll error Mrs Maloney was unable to give final figures.
Mrs Maloney advised the Board that GPA are still within the 2% Carry forward budget deficit.
Savings were found in employees' budget.
- ii) 2007/08
GPA has received their second indicative budget but has not yet received final figures.
The estimated cost for pay award is 6%
The estimated figure for 06/07 adjustments is £250K
- iii) There are estimated savings from employees budget of £150K
Estimated savings from external ETE funding of £80K
Savings from Joint Commissioning Group of £20K
- iv) Mrs Maloney advised the Board that in the budget for 2008/09, GPA may need to increase pensions contribution and that the Estates mechanism will be given back to Areas in April 2008.

Mr David Cook advised the Board that Gloucestershire is not the only Area which has been hit with this deficit through to the Job Evaluation.

RESOLVED

that the report be **NOTED**

35/07 MEMBERS FEEDBACK

Mr David Cook – No items to note. Mr Cook expressed his thanks to all Board Members for their friendship and professionalism over the past few years.

Mrs Catherine Jago – Mrs Jago has attended a Performance Panel meeting. It was noted that Mrs Jago will remain a seconded member of the Performance Panel. Mrs Jago is due to attend a disciplinary hearing in March.

Ms Jude Robinson – Ms Robinson has met with Garry Holden and noted his commitment and hard work in involving community partners. She also met Sally Herniman, whose support role has changed considerably and was impressed by her enthusiasm for improvement in process and performance.

Mrs Mary Gardner – Mrs Gardner has met with Naomi Cryer for a HR update. There is a lot of work being undertaken locally and regionally. Mrs Gardner is attending a disciplinary hearing in March.

Rev. Alan Davies - Rev Davies has attended a CDRP meeting in the Forest of Dean. He expressed that there is a lot of funding available from the CDRP and Operational staff need to be involved with CDRP's. Rev. Davies also expressed his concerns that

there are no Sentencers as new Board Members. Initially, Rev. Davies was under the impression that his fellow Magistrates had not applied, Rev. Davies has since been informed that they had applied but were not successful. Rev. Davies is astonished that after decades of Sentencers being apart of Probation that there is no Sentencer representation.

Ms Hazel Middleton – Ms Middleton has attended the Cheltenham and Tewkesbury CDRP meeting and advised the Board that as of 1st April 2007, the CDRP will be restructured and will be renamed the ‘Cheltenham Community Safety Partnership’. Ms Middleton endorsed Rev Davies comments about the funding available through CDRPs.

Mrs Lizzie Abderrahim – Mrs Abderrahim has attended the Cheltenham and Tewkesbury CDRP and reiterated Rev Davies comments that GPA need to be proactive towards CDRPs. Mrs Abderrahim advised the Board that the Disability Equality Scheme has been audited again and the score has increased which meant that a revised scheme did not have to be submitted. The scheme has also been filtered to GPA teams through the County Managers group. Mrs Abderrahim will be doing preparatory work towards a Gender Equality Scheme. Mrs Abderrahim did not attend the Independent Advisory Group due to the meeting being cancelled.

Mr Dan Gooch – Mr Gooch was initially investigating the misuse of GPA Business card. This has now been passed to Mrs Christine Ellson.

Mr Peter Rowe – Mr Rowe reiterated Rev Davies concerns over no Sentencers on the new Board and commented that NPD need to be reminded that the Judiciary are customers as per Sir Williams comments from the PBA meeting in February.

Mrs Christine Ellson – Mrs Ellson is the new investigating officer for the misuse of the GPA business card.

SECTION B – ITEMS FOR DECISION

36/07 BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

The continuity plan was brought before the Audit Committee. Some amendments have been done and in the view of the Audit Committee the plan should be approved.

RESOLVED

that the plan be **APPROVED**

37/07 FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT

The draft policy statement was tabled. A concern was raised about new employees buying additional years of service prior to joining GPA, making them potentially eligible for flexible retirement.

Action: Mrs Cryer to clarify and add a safeguard into the pension policy if appropriate.

Mrs Cryer has taken legal advice on the issue of employer consent retirements. It has been clarified that there has to be a policy statement by the Board and it is for Boards to manage the policy as appropriate.

The management and potential risks in adopting the policy statement were discussed.

The Board registered its concern that there is no national policy statement. The Board requested Mrs Cryer to seek confirmation from NOMS HR that there will be no national statement.

RESOLVED

that the paper be **APPROVED pending receipt of the above confirmation.**

38/07 HONORARIUM POLICY

To be approved ex-committee

39/07 SECONDMENT POLICY

To be approved ex-committee

40/07 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

To be approved ex- committee

41/07 OFFENDER TRANSPORT POLICY

To be approved ex-committee

SECTION C – ITEMS TO NOTE

42/07 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Mr Garry Holden updated the Board. The Contestability Group will change to become a Board led Business Development Group supported by a BD team.

Its purpose will be to identify and implement business development opportunities, e.g. partnership working, procurement and sub-contracting, bidding for external funding etc.

The terms of reference of the new group will be approved ex-committee.

RESOLVED

THAT the paper be noted

43/07 BUSINESS PLAN 07/08

The Chief Officer briefed the Board on the draft Business Plan 07/08. It will be finalised once the Service Progress Plans are signed off with the ROM and final budget information is available and will then be put before the Board.

RESOLVED

THAT the Draft Business Plan be noted

44/07 EUROPEAN EXCELLENCE MODEL

Mrs Naomi Cryer briefed the Board on the EEM report.

The score for 2006 was 368 (371 in 2005). To maintain this level of score in the context of the turbulent environment in which GPA is operating was commended by the Independent consultant who oversaw the assessment process. The key areas of improvement have been included as 07/08 Business Plan objectives. The involvement of Board Members in the EEM assessment was noted to be of great value.

RESOLVED

THAT the report be noted

45/07 WILTSHIRE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE HR PROVISION

Paper delivered by Mrs Naomi Cryer.

The context for a move to a joint HR service across two Probation Areas was outlined by Mrs Cryer. This will enhance expertise and HR cover as well as enhancing the efficiency of HR delivery in GPA. This arrangement fits with the SW Regional HR collaborative project to improve the quality of HR advice and achieve efficiency savings in the SW.

The GPA HR team currently comprises 3.2 HR advisors and Wiltshire has an equivalent number. This represents minimal cover for the staff population of each organisation. The Board raised the possibility of joint policies and a joint JNCC to add value to the arrangement. The new arrangement is planned to start from 1/06/07 and the recruitment of a middle manager is being planned.

RESOLVED

THAT the paper be noted

46/07 STAFF SAVINGS STRATEGY AND MANAGING THE GPA BUDGET 2007/08

Mrs Naomi Cryer briefed the Board on the report.

Mrs Cryer advised the Board that the full impact of the Job Evaluation is not yet known. It was noted that Mrs Cryer and the SMT continue to manage vacancies. The SMT will discuss if it is necessary to freeze recruitment. GPA cannot risk recruiting more staff unless staff turnover allows savings to be accrued through gaps in staffing.

SMT will bring the decision to the Board once made.

RESOLVED

THAT the strategy be noted

47/07 SECTION D – EXEMPT ITEMS

The Chair Designate and Board Members Designate were invited to remain for this item.

In accordance with paragraph 3(a) and 3 (i) respectively 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.

48/07 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 JANUARY 2007

These were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

49/07 REQUEST FOR EARLY RETIREMENT

Please see exempt minutes

50/07 SERIOUS FURTHER OFFENCES

Report delivered by Charlie Baker

RESOLVED

THAT the paper be noted

51/07 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- i) The Gender Equality Scheme requires Board approval by 30.04.07 prior to the next Board Meeting on 16.05.07.
It was proposed that the draft is approved by the Directing Diversity Group and the Board Chair Designate for ratification at the Board Meeting on 16.05.07.

The proposal was accepted.

52/07 DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

16 May 2007
18 July 2007
05 September 2007
28 November 2007

53/07 FAREWELL AND CENTENARY EVENT

The Board Chair outlined his farewell and his gratitude to GPA Staff and the Board for all their contribution to GPA and wished the new Chair and members every success.

The meeting closed at 12.50pm.

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CHAIRMAN

