



GLOUCESTERSHIRE

GLOUCESTERSHIRE PROBATION BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT PROBATION HEAD OFFICE, BEWICK HOUSE

Wednesday 17th May 2006

Present: Sir William Wratten (Chairman), Mrs Y Ball (Chief Officer), Mr G, Limbrick (Secretary to the Board), His Hon Judge Picton, QC, Mr P Stott (Financial Advisor), Mr D Cook, , Mr D Gooch, Mr M Howe, Mr C Marshall, Ms H Middleton and Mr P Rowe, Rev A. Davies, Ms. J. Robinson, Ms. Christine Ellson

Also in Attendance: Charlie Baker (ACO), Debra Maloney (Finance Manager), Mrs S. Purves (Board Administrator)

The Chairman welcomed 2 new members to the Board – Ms. Christine Ellson and Ms. J. Robinson.

38/06 Apologies for Absence: Mrs C Jago, Mrs M Gardner, Mrs E Abderrahim

39/06 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
There were none.

40/06 MINUTES

- 1) There was one minor change in the minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2006. They were accepted as a true record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.
- 2) The minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 6th April 2006 were accepted as a true record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.
- 3) Actions:
Minute Item no. 25/06 – All have been actioned.

41/06 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman reported that he attended the PBA meeting on 5th April where the SLA agreements were discussed. Final copies have been signed for GPA. The Chairman mentioned his ongoing concern of the Chief Officer's workload. Ms Meg Blumsom, Regional Manager (Southwest) has been involved and has been most encouraging.

The Chairman attended the Regional Forum of Chairs and Chief Officers from the Southwest region. He also reported on highlights of the Southwest Commissioning Conference.

42/06 CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

The Chief Officer updated the Board on current staffing at Head Office, it is now back to 50%. The new ACO - Performance is settling in well. The ACO – Offender Management has nearly reached the end of her phased return and will go back full

time in June. There has been further short term sickness absence in the SMT as well as the long term absence of the ACO – Resources. The consultant who is currently working on Performance Mentoring to Operational Managers will continue until July. Mrs. Yvette Ball is currently running both jobs, covering HR and Finance. We are behind in the Annual Report and budgetary overview.

The Chief Officer reported on the emergency Multi Agency Public Protection Panel Strategic Management Board meeting to discuss a complex potentially high risk offender. The purpose of the meeting was to focus agencies on the duty to co-operate and come up with an action plan which is now in place.

Probation figures regularly in the media , services are under re-sourced.

- Business Plan - Mrs. Ball informed the Board that the GPA Business Plan is now available. A Budget and staffing overview will be discussed at a meeting in June.
- Re-offending - There are new measures for reoffending rates devised by the NPD. The data available shows mixed success for GPA.
- SLA Monitoring – the first SLA monitoring meeting was held with Mr. Peter Blomley. Ms. Charlie Baker is the lead on this.
- Restructuring – 4 Offender Management teams have now been set up and will be up and running on 1st June 2006. We will try a pilot of a Management Structure which is led by an Area Manager – more thinking and planning is required on this.
- Meeting of Gloucestershire, Wiltshire & Dorset SMTs on 16th May 2006 - Mrs. Ball reported that the purpose of the meeting was to seek ways to work together and find economies of scale/efficiencies between the 3 Areas. Among the key potential areas to develop were:
 - Identifying areas where they can work together
 - Project team representing 3 areas to set up new IT system CNOMIS.
 - Conferences – send 1 representative to feedback to other 2 areas.
 - Hanson & White Report – to send out one response instead of 3

Sir William Wratten commented that this is something the region should have done a long time ago and added that the focus of the Southwest workshop was to discuss boundaries of activity within the region. The Board will be kept in the picture on further developments.

Mrs. Ball mentioned that Mr. Mike McGuire of Cardiff University is doing work on Accommodation.

Finally, the Chief Officer distributed the new GPA Organisational Chart to the Board members.

43/06 Performance

Ms Charlie Baker – ACO Performance joined in the meeting to provide an overview of GPA's Performance to date. The ACO reported that there has been an upward trend in performance last year and explained the results of the weighted scorecard and how we are performing in each of the 13 performance target areas. The Board was assured that Operational Staff are well versed and they know exactly what is being measured so they are aware of the implications.

One area of concern was employment of offenders, the results were not very good last year as staff were not clear how to record the data and who to inform, but this has been resolved this year and systems are in place to ensure accurate recording of data.

Another area is DRR completions, although starts for this year have gone down – completions are going up. There is a lot of work to be done but the ACO-Interventions and DIP Manager are working together to improve DRR Performance.

Some actions points:

- To review IT systems eg. late data submission
- Use weekly meetings to get timely data to and from Operational teams to enable speedy action on performance issues.
- SFO's (Serious Further Offences) – Ms. Baker is going to teams to discuss learning points and integrate this into practice.

Mr. Mike Howe asked if Basic Skills included approved training? Action: Ms Baker to verify.

Sir William Wratten asked Ms. Baker to lead in briefing the Performance Management Panel.

In response to a question, Mrs. Ball explained target weighting.

44/06 Final SLAs with the Regional Offender Management – Mrs Ball reported the Final SLAs have been signed by The Chairman and Mr. Kevin Lockyer, Regional Offender Manager. The first SLA monitoring was held with Mr. Peter Blomley and this will be followed by quarterly meetings with Mr. Lockyer.

Compliance monitoring – Mrs. Ball informed the Board that Mr. Kevin Lockyer wishes to talk to staff and Service Users. A date has been booked for 30th August. Sir William Wratten suggested that we invite him to tea with Board members and expressed his concern about the impact on staff in terms of workload. A time was set for 3:00pm for 30 minutes for Mr. Lockyer to meet with the Board.

45/06 Audit Committee – Mr Rowe began his report by highlighting point 29/06 Public protection from the minutes of 3rd May meeting. Mr. Rowe asked a series of questions

- What percentage of offenders re-offend?
- What numbers fall under SFO's?
- What is the number of sex offenders in the county?
- PPO's – is the scheme still live? Does it have value?

Mrs. Ball responded that the new GPA Reoffending Data will be circulated to Board members, and the MAPP Annual Report with information on sex offenders.

Action: Mrs. Purves

Information on SFOs and PPOs will be presented at the next Board including a quarterly report on SFOs thereafter.

Mr. Graham Limbrick reminded the members that where information is not in the public domain it should be discussed in a confidential session.

38/06 – Ability/process to vire money. Mr. Rowe stated that in future, the Board will deal with matters up to £66k to bring it in line with the SLA requirements.
40/06 Fee of Audit Commission - £24,300. We will be charged at this new high rate for the same amount of work. Mr. Peter Stott explained that the increase is due to extra work to comply with European standards. Mrs Ball informed the Board that she had negotiated the increase to be paid staggered over 2 years with 50% of the payment made this year and full amount next year.

Mr. Rowe explained the Financial reports timetable and that these conform with Audit Committee dates.

RESOLVED

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd May 2006 be noted.

46/06 Safety Committee and Estates Committee

RESOLVED

THAT the minutes of the Safety Committee dated 25th April 2006 and Estates Committee dated 11th April be noted.

47/06 Members Feedback

The Chairman explained to new members what Members Feedback is. The members reported as follows:

- Mr. Michael Howe informed the Board that he investigated 2 grievances.
- Rev. Alan Davies will attend the Forest of Dean CDRP meeting on 18th May
- Mr. Chris Marshall reported that Approved Premises are short of 300 beds nationally. There is a new bail strategy to reduce numbers remanded in custody. Also there is a concern about age profile of offenders where young men should not be placed with 60-year old sex offenders. Concern was also expressed that no details of medication are being passed on to approved premises.
- Mr. David Cook asked the Board's approval regarding an invitation to put an article in CDRP magazines at a cost of £395 + VAT. The Board declined the invitation due to cost.

Mr. Cook also attended the Public Protection Team meeting in April. Mr. Cook mentioned that Stroud has started text messaging offenders to remind them of their appointment. Mr. Cook will feedback to Ms. Baker.

Action: Mr. Cook

48/06 Revenue Budget 2005/06 Revised & 2006/07

Mr. Peter Stott reported no change to 2006/07 position - £2,000 less than indicative which is added to deficit for 2006/07 making the deficit £347k. For 2005/06 budget there is a £65k deficit – NPD advised that we can overspend £20k without being accountable, of the £65k overspent, £50k can be discounted for pensions.

2006/07 Budget – 7.2% increase in allocation, 8.2% average increase across all probation areas. We are not coming out badly this year. The Performance linked payments for 05/06 was £220k payment and for 06/07 - £113k (latest March figures).

Mrs. Debra Maloney, Finance Manager explained efficiency savings and that we are directed to spend 5% on the voluntary and community sector, this may also come from external sources. Mr. Rowe questioned this figure. Mrs. Ball explained that she is addressing the 5% as an aspirational amount and the ACO - Interventions is working on some ideas to pursue but defensible decisions must be made to ensure VFM in service delivery using community and/or voluntary agencies.

Mr. Dan Gooch added that we should only pursue partnerships that are of interest to the Board.

Mr. Rowe questioned 3.3. re Trainee Probation Officer – is it value for money, in terms of incoming new recruits? Sir William Wratten asked about the selection process. Mrs. Ball informed members that the results are not good for GPA – value is less every year in that the attrition rate for TPOs is high.

Mr. Stott continued his report on Annex B – cost pressures and Annex C – measures to balance the budget. Mr. Rowe added that out of £347k of savings - £300k is staff

related. Board members registered their concerns in regard to the link with performance and sickness absence.

RESOLVED

THAT the Board approve

- a) The revised budget for 2005/06.
- b) The base budget for 2006/07, including the proposed pay and price provisions.
- c) The proposed additional requirements and savings for 2006/07
- d) The proposals for savings necessary to achieve a balanced budget.

49/06 Business Plan 2006/07

Mrs. Ball informed the Board the current Business plan has been improved and aligned with the SLA's. Mrs. Ball will provide a quarterly report of the Business Plan for the July Board meeting.

RESOLVED

THAT the Business Plan be approved.

50/06 Board Member Links with Teams

- (i) Mrs. Ball to update consolidated list of teams and managers. Sir William Wratten will email members with revised list and for them to choose their team preference.

Action: Mrs. Ball and Sir William Wratten

- (ii) Sir William Wratten reminded members of their involvement with organisational tasks and to consult either The Chairman or Board Secretary on anything they are unsure about. Mr. Davies mentioned that Board members have been trained to do the TPO selection process but they are not being asked to do so. Mrs. Ball will check with Ms. Kathy Kerr - Rettie. **Action: Mrs. Ball**

51/06 Supervision of Staff Policy

RESOLVED

THAT the Supervision of Staff Policy be approved.

52/06 HR Information Report

Mrs. Ball has no written report on HR issues but informed the Board that the HR team are very pressed due to sickness absence. There is a current vacancy for an HR Manager, recruitment in place. The latest sickness absence data indicates a third in GPA is due to stress. Mrs. Ball proposes to run a County Manager's meeting on Stress Management. Mrs. Ball will email NPD to see if they can provide an experienced person to do the training. **Action: Mrs. Ball**

Rev. Davies informed the Board the JNCC was cancelled due to no business to discuss. Employers Side meeting was also cancelled due to no issues raised.

- (i) **2006 Pay Award** – In line with NNC directions, Mrs. Ball proposed to allocate 2 service days to relevant staff and requested the Board to Agree in Principle. The 2 days will be allocated within the person's leave year. Board approved and to be managed operationally.

53/06 Board meetings in Private Session

Mr. Graham Limbrick reminded the members that the general principle of Board meetings is to meet in public and should there be a topic of sensitive nature, the

meeting can be moved into a private session. Mr. Limbrick also informed the members that meetings can be moved in and out of private session but we need to record the fact and reasons why we are doing it. Mr. Limbrick suggested the Board carefully consider future agendas with Exempt items recorded on pink paper. It was noted that the minutes included in the Board Agenda i.e. Committee minutes thereby become public. Therefore they should not contain any confidential items.

54/06 Deaths of Offenders under Supervision

Mrs. Ball gave an overview of this report which enables the NPD to track and follow up on deaths whilst under supervision. Good practice is undertaken to prevent deaths, and to assist in managing the aftermath, eg support to staff. Deaths amongst Drug offenders are a relatively common occurrence unfortunately.

55/06 Any Other Business

Mr. Rowe suggested that the Audit Committee might usefully make use of a reserve member, to substitute whenever a regular member is unavailable. Sir William invited Mrs Ellson to assume this role.

Rev. Davies expressed an interest in attending the PBA Conference on 29th June.

56/06 Date of Next Meeting – The next meeting of the Board will be held on Wednesday 5th July 2006 at 9.45a.m. in the Boardroom.

The Meeting closed at 12:30pm

Chairman