

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 18 March 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, Mrs S McGrath (in part)

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

#### 27/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

HHJ Picton

#### 28/09 INTRODUCTION

Mr FitzSimons welcomed members to the meeting.

#### 30/09 CHIEF OFFICER'S UPDATE

Mr Bensted updated the Board on local and national matters.

It has been an eventful month somewhat dominated by Trusts, budgets and mergers etc. At times like these it is important to be reminded that the aims of the Service are to protect the public and reduce reoffending. Mr Bensted has visited the Community Payback Group at Prinknash Abbey last week and found it inspiring. The group have won the GCJB Partnership of the Year Award.

Trust Application – there has been a lot of activity and Mr Bensted now believes that SMT and the Board are all heading in the right direction. GPA are still intending to submit the application in the May submission. Wiltshire Probation Area has gone through to the next stage, which gives some hope to smaller Areas. WPA's situation is slightly different as they have been working on Trust Status for years as they originally wanted to go through as a pilot area. Brian Clarke is well engaged and is proving to be very positive. He has identified 9-10 plans that are being worked on including a Cost Improvement Programme e.g. Best Value, building costs. There has been further engagement with Sentencers, through the Bench Management Group which occurs monthly.

SMT Capacity is an ongoing concern. The SMT have additional capacity with Brian Clarke, Louise Newman is working with Mrs Darrill Bennett, and Julia Oulton has been brought in to work on projects such as the Single Equality Scheme. However, operationally, there is no one who can add additional capacity, internally or externally.

There is not the option of current staff acting up due to illness, though some work has been delegated and some staff are rising to the challenge.

BES – Mr Bensted is expecting contact from Colin Allars regarding if GPA keep or do not keep the BES. The DOM is fighting GPA's corner and is putting recommendation that we get all the underspend back. It was noted that there will be very tough times ahead. It was formally noted that the indicative budgets have been cut for the next 4 years. Year 4 indicative budget represents a cut of approx 17.9% in money terms from the 08/09 budget level.

### **31/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations.

### **SECTION A STANDING ITEMS**

### **32/09 MINUTES**

#### **(i) Minutes of the Meeting Held on 4 February 2009**

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

#### **(ii) Actions arising from the previous Minutes**

10/09 - There are various significant developments on IT. It was asked that Tim Fogarty does a lunchtime presentation to the Board on 13<sup>th</sup> May. **Action: Mrs Riches-Jones**

23/09 – Probation are preparing for a significant SFO which occurred in London and is due in court within the next month. It is anticipated that it will hit Probation nationally. GPA is waiting for national guidance. Mr FitzSimons asked that GPA's SFO data be circulated to Board members as well as a briefing note after national guidance has been issued. **Action: Mrs Baker.**

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

### **SECTION B PERFORMANCE**

### **33/09 i) Operational Performance**

Mrs Charlie Baker reported on Performance.

There are two reds in the Public Protection domain and these are not retrievable, though Mrs Baker hopes GPA is still better than national average. The other three ambers are greatly improved but still need work.

In the Offender Management domain, there is one amber which is End to End enforcement which is a joint target with HMCS. According to the IPPF we are green star, GPA were poor in 1<sup>st</sup> quarter but has improved in remaining quarters.

Interventions - ATR completions, current figures are out by 7 which needs clarification. It is believed that there is a reporting issue. **Action: Mrs Baker to clarify.**

It was noted that DRR commencements are worrying. There has been a huge push, and 12 have been proposed to date and it is hoped that another 4 can be

found via FDR's. Offender Manager's are being taken to task. There are a number of influential factors but it should not have dipped so low. Mr Holden needs to address with Ted Yates, DIP Manager. **Action: Mr Holden**

Unpaid Work stand downs have decreased in the last few months so an improvement will show in the next quarter.

All concerns are being picked up at the Performance Panel.

Mr FitzSimons acknowledged the hard work from Offender Managers regarding Tier 4 cases.

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the report be **NOTED**

ii) **HR Report**

Mrs Naomi Cryer reported on HR issues.

Sickness at end of February has decreased to 13.9. Barbican House is being managed successfully by Mrs Kathy Kerr-Rettie, previously a sickness 'hot spot'. Two long term sickness cases are expected to be resolved shortly

Mrs Cryer has received feedback from the Unions on the Sickness Management Policy and has agreed amendments and it will be going to the next JNCC for approval.

Mrs Cryer has been working with Capita on a Staff survey and it will be sent to staff by end of March.

The County Managers are beginning to engage with working with IMASS. There has been a mixture of positive and negative responses. Dr Yarnley will be attending a County Managers meeting to discuss how IMASS will work. The draft contract has come back from IMASS, there are a few amendments and they are looking at a information sharing protocol.

The Board received the EEM report. The good news that GPA's score has increased to 472.

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the report be **NOTED**

iii) **Financial Report**

Mrs Darrill Bennett presented the financial report.

Mrs Bennett advised at the previous meeting a underspend of £210k. There is some question regarding the £28k payment for the Chief Officer's Pension deficit. Mrs Bennett needs to clarify if the centre will be returning the £28k. The update for the underspend is that there have been additional savings from last minute maternity leave savings, regional post money not being required, an extra £27k ETE money and including the return of the £28k for Chief Officers pension, the underspend is this month forecast at £280k

A further breakdown was given at Audit Committee and was provided to the Board.

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the report be **NOTED**

### **SECTION C ITEMS FOR APPROVAL**

#### **34/09 VIREMENT REQUEST**

The virement was approved at Audit Committee.

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the Virement be **APPROVED**.

#### **34/09 CLOSEDOWN – DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO APPROVE ACCOUNTS**

Mr FitzSimons to attend the Audit Committee meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

#### **35/09 SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME**

The Scheme was discussed at the recent Employers Side/ GPA are required to have a SES by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 that should be able to accessed by general public. Mrs Cryer has received feedback from the Board, Directing Diversity Group, and a member of the Independent Advisory Group from the Police and the Staff Side.

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the Scheme be **APPROVED**

#### **36/09 PARTNERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY**

Mr Holden proposed that the policy be agreed electronically. Mr Holden will send out the policy and asked for comments by 27<sup>th</sup> March. Mr Holden apologised for delay but he has been working on a joint policy with Dorset Probation Area. The collaboration work will assist with Trust application. **Action: Board Members.**

There was some discussion regarding Community Engagement. Mr Pritchard asked if the policy and strategy could be delivered, does GPA have the capacity. Mr Howe asked if there are too many bodies and should it be narrowed down? It was suggested that GPA are over committing. Direct engagement will be directed through specific bodies and GPA should prioritise which bodies they worked with.

Mrs Sheila McGrath asked if there was some way we could get the community to come to us rather than us to going to them, i.e. forums. Mrs Robinson asked what the policy is for; it needs to be purposeful engagement.

Mr FitzSimons asked that the document that goes into the application is fit for purpose and distinguishes clearly between Engagement with the Community ( making the community aware and involved in our work) and Partnerships ( working with other organisations to align goals to common purpose and to meet our goals).

Mr Holden to revisit the policy and make amendments.in line with the comments expressed. **Action: Mr Holden.**

Mr Holden to work with Mrs Ellson to revisit the policy and make amendments. **Action: Mrs Ellson & Mr Holden.**

#### **SECTION D ITEMS TO NOTE**

##### **37/09 AUDIT COMMITTEE**

###### **(i) Draft Minutes of the Meeting Held on 4 March 2009**

Mr Burns reported that the GCC Payroll contract has not been received as yet. The Audit report on Information Security was discussed and was marked as adequate. There were further Audit reports though they were deferred or are awaiting comment. It was noted that the Internal Auditor, Gavin McArthur is leaving. There was some discussion regarding the Internal Audit programme, the programme is statutory.

The minutes were considered and it was

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the minutes be **NOTED**

##### **38/09 TRUST APPLICATION UPDATE**

Confidential item

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the update be **NOTED**

##### **39/09 DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN & RISK REGISTER 2009-10**

Mr Bensted advised the Board that it is based on last years plan and is at draft stage. The action plan is mainly around Trust Status. It contains all the necessary information such as headcount, budget and metrics. Comments and feedback is welcome. There was some discussion and it was suggested that there is a need to move towards developing rather than maintaining. The actions need to be specific to Trust application, though they read more as aspirations rather than actions. **Action: Mr Bensted to revisit the document, make amendments and send to the Board within the next two weeks.**

##### **40/09 SOUTH WEST APPROVED PREMISES PROJECT**

See confidential

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the update be **NOTED**

**41/09 NOMS STRATEGIC AND BUSINESS PLAN 2009-10, 2010-11**

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the plan be **NOTED**

**SECTION E – EXEMPT ITEMS**

**42/09**

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.

**43/09 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 FEBRUARY 2009**

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

**44/09 RETIREMENT REQUEST**

The request was discussed.

**45/09 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- i) Mr Tim Fogarty has put together a Business Case to replace the intranet system. The cost is £13.5k with an annual support cost of £2.5k

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the plan be **NOTED and purchase agreed in principle from capital reserve**

- ii) Mr FitzSimons asked that Board members to advise him or Mr Bensted of any links with MP's for co-ordination reasons as GPA will be contacting MP's re the future environment. Members will be furnished with a briefing of what needs to be said. Mrs Riches-Jones was asked to organise a meeting between MP's and Board Members. **Action: Mrs Riches-Jones**

- iii) Mr FitzSimons formally noted that Mr Mark Blockley and Ms Jude Robinson will be leaving. Mr FitzSimons advises members that he does not plan to replace Mr Blockley and Ms Robinson due to the uncertain times.

**46/09 FUTURE MEETING DATES**

13 May 2009  
24 June 2009  
2 September

The meeting closed at 13.10

.....  
CHAIRMAN