



GLOUCESTERSHIRE

GLOUCESTERSHIRE PROBATION BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT PROBATION HEAD OFFICE, BEWICK HOUSE

Wednesday 19th October 2005

Present: Sir William Wratten (Chair), Mrs Y Ball (Chief Officer) Mr D Cook, Rev A Davies, Mrs M Gardner, Mr D Gooch, Mr M Howe, Ms H Middleton, Mrs C Jago, Mr C Marshall and Mr P Rowe.

Also in Attendance: Mr C Westhead (Board Administrator) Mr G Holden (ACO), Mrs J Oulton (ACO), Mrs N Cryer (ACO), Mr P Stott (Board Treasurer) and Mr G Limbrick (Secretary to the Board)

Apologies for Absence: Mrs E Abderrahim

68/52 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

69/05 MINUTES

(I) Minutes of the Meeting Held on 1st September 2005

These were approved.

(ii) Actions Arising from Previous Meeting

37/05 This was held over in Mrs Abderrahim's absence

42/05 Work on a Secondments Policy was is being undertaken on a Regional basis. A document was being prepared for the next Regional HR Meeting.

58/05 (ii) The Chairman had forwarded this information to Roger Hill, Director, National Probation Service.

59/05 (vi) A letter had been sent to Roger Hill regarding the Area budget.

70/05 ESI Action Plan

This report was presented by Mrs Oulton and she explained the context of the Action Plan for the benefit of Members.

Mrs Oulton informed Members of the work that had been done in preparing the Action Plan which was before Members. The report did not give a full list of areas for improvement as there were too many, but Members could see all of them on request. Information in the document was accurate up to the end of August 2005. The following up inspection was now taking place and a file reading of 60 files was being done by a team of HM Inspectors and four members of staff.

Mrs Oulton highlighted some of the critical areas of concern, particularly recommendations 6 & 7, and the actions being put in place to address these recommendations. She then invited questions from Members.

The Chairman asked if any feedback had been given on the current inspection. Mrs Oulton responded that none had yet been received.

Mrs Ball thanked Mrs Oulton for the considerable amount of work that had gone into preparing the Action Plan and the preparation involved with the current inspection.

Mr Howe commented on the difficulties of achieving the improvements required in such a short amount of time.

71/05 Performance

The Chairman introduced this item and highlighted the need for Members to grasp what was required with regard to Area Performance.

i) Information Report

RESOLVED
THAT the report be noted.

ii) & iii) Performance Management & Strategy

Mrs Ball presented the papers and she explained how the Weighted Scorecard and league table were calculated. Mrs Oulton handed out a guide to the Weighted Scorecard to assist Members with their understanding of it and she then explained the Weighted Scorecard for August 2005.

Mrs Ball distributed an update paper on the Performance Improvement Action Plan (PIAP) and explained the basis of the figures to Members and the action being undertaken to improve performance. Mr Holden and Mrs Oulton then provided Members with greater detail on the proposed actions to improve performance.

Mrs Ball distributed a further 3 papers on Performance Management and explained them to Members.

Mrs Jago asked if there was a way of reporting performance quicker as the Board needed performance data much faster after the events. Mrs Ball commented that the Business Systems and Information Manager was looking at how we can speed up information flows.

The Chairman reported that the Performance Monitoring panel needed to look at the delays in receiving data when it first meets.

Mr Howe was concerned that there was no dedicated resource on Performance Management to support the Senior Management Team.
Mrs Ball commented that Area did not have the resources for this.

The Chairman asked Members to digest the 3 documents distributed at the meeting and respond to the Chief Officer within 7 days if they wished to raise any issue with the documents. He then thanked the Senior Management Team for the considerable amount of effort that had gone into producing the documents.

RESOLVED

THAT the Policy and Strategy be approved and that the three Performance Strategy Management Strategy documents introduced at the Meeting were approved in principal, subject to any further adjustments by the Performance Monitoring Panel.

iv) Complaints Monitoring

Mrs Ball reported that no information was at hand regarding the substantiated complaint.

RESOLVED

THAT the report be noted.

72/05 Chief Officer's Report

Mrs Ball referred to the Home Secretary's speech to Prison Reform Trust, which was likely to have an impact on the Probation Service in relation to the support and treatment of offenders. In his speech he talked about developing community Prisons and improvements to Offender Management. There was a clear message about the future delivery of services and the changing landscape.

The speech also referred to Police Force structures and it was evident that Gloucestershire was too small to be a force nationally. Mrs Ball felt that Gloucestershire needed to look closely at links with other Probation Areas.

Mrs Ball reported that there had been recent local protests regarding the changes in the categories of offenders accepted at Ryecroft Hostel. There was not enormous support at the protests but in response to increasing local concerns she had given two radio interviews and two television interviews.

Mrs Ball commented that the EEM review was proceeding well and she added that as part of Inside Justice Week the Crown Court was having an open day this Saturday.

73/05 Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported that he had attended a Regional Forum on 6th October 2005 which had been chaired by The SW Regional Manager. The Forum agreed that research would be undertaken as to how services could best be provided regionally. It was agreed that one of the Chief Officers would undertake this project, which would take up to three months, and the Chief Officer of Wiltshire volunteered to undertake this work. The plan had been floated to the NPD who did not give any positive comment on it.

The Forum also considered the development of SLAs and the Chairman felt that it was important for the Board to be fully involved with this. Mr Limbrick commented that there were significant legal queries regarding Regional SLAs, and there was a need to ensure the Board's interests were protected.

74/05 Audit Committee

The draft minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on the 6th October 2005 were distributed and Mr Rowe explained the contents to Board Members.

Mr Stott commented that the Annual Accounts for 2005/06 had to be submitted to the NPD by 14 July 2006. Currently a Board meeting was scheduled for 19th July 2006 and it was likely that this meeting would have to be brought forward so that the Board could approve the Accounts before the deadline date.

RESOLVED
THAT the minutes be noted.

75/05 Estates Committee

Mr Marshall presented the draft minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 13th October 2005. Mr Marshall commented that Anthony Pennant had been at the meeting and he indicated that there was a possibility of Ryecroft Hostel being refurbished.

Mrs Cryer reported that Chris Westhead would be attending a meeting in London tomorrow regarding the re-tendering of FM and EM contracts, She added that the Divisional Estates Manager had commented that he would shortly be looking at some details of buildings that might provide alternative accommodation for the Cheltenham office. He also planned to look at relocating the staff of Barbican House and Bewick House in 2006/07 but Mrs Cryer advised the Board to proceed with care as the move to new accommodation would almost certainly result in an increased cost to the Board.

RESOLVED
THAT the minutes be noted.

76/05 Health & Safety

i) Safety Committee

Mrs Ball presented the Minutes of the Safety Committee held on 11th October 2005.

RESOLVED
THAT the minutes be noted.

ii) Health & Safety Update.

Mrs Ball referred to the letter received from Gary Mead, Offender Manager. She commented that Gloucestershire County Council's Asbestos Manager had attended the Safety Committee Meeting and he reported that all the correct procedures for removing the asbestos had been complied with.

77/05 Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee

Mrs Ball presented the minutes of the meeting held on 11th October 2005 and she reported that the meeting had been very useful as there had been a good dialogue with the Staff Side. The Staff Side raised a number of concerns about staffing issues, but unfortunately they did not have detailed information on these issues available for the meeting.

The Committee agreed that informal meetings would be re-established which would take place prior to the Committee meetings.

RESOLVED
THAT the minutes be noted.

78/05 Business Plan 2005/06

Mrs Ball introduced this and highlighted issues of particular note in the business plan. Mr Cook requested that Mr Blomley's name be removed from future reports.

Action: Mrs Ball.

Mrs Ball then updated Members on amendments to the Risk Register.

RESOLVED
THAT the reports be noted.

79/05 Members Feedback

Mr Gooch reported that he had given a talk to a school in Bourton on the Water on the work of the Probation Service for Inside Justice week. The talk had been very well received.

Mr Howe distributed a note on proceedings of the Contestability Group which met on 22nd September. He had also had a meeting with one of the West Offender Managers and the Senior Support Manager (West) which had been very useful.

Ms Middleton reported that she had attended a recent meeting of the Cheltenham Local Criminal Justice Board and commented that an issue had been raised about publicity arising from the naming and shaming of offenders. The appropriateness of the publicity was the issue.

Mr Davies had visited Ryecroft Hostel on 17th October 2005 and had met the new Deputy Manager and other staff on duty. He reported that staff morale was high and the Hostel was at full capacity. He added that the building was in need of re-painting externally and that if this was done it would give a good message to the local community.

Mrs Jago reported that she had attended meetings of the Disability Discrimination Group and the Contestability Group. She would also be giving a talk at the Crown Court open day on 22 October 2005.

Mr Cook distributed a note he had prepared on three recent meetings he had attended and briefly commented on the proceedings of each meeting.

At this point the meeting was adjourned because of subsequent Board arrangements. However it was decided that the recommendations in respect of the following items of business be agreed, unless any members notified the Chair of any objection.

80/05 SW HR Regional Provision

RESOLVED
THAT the policy be approved

81/05 Customer Policy and Strategy

RESOLVED
THAT the policy be approved

82/05 Staff Health Screening

RESOLVED

THAT if the interim HR Manager undertaking the work for Wiltshire and Gloucestershire fails to support the introduction of Health Screening then GPA should introduce a voluntary Health Screening Service with immediate effect.

83/05 HR Information Report

RESOLVED

THAT the report be noted

84/05 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be held on 30th November 2005

The Meeting closed at 1.00pm

Chairman