



NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE  
for England and Wales

Gloucestershire

## GLOUCESTERSHIRE PROBATION BOARD

### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT PROBATION HEAD OFFICE, BEWICK HOUSE

Wednesday 20 July 2005

**Present:** Mrs Y Ball (Chief Officer) Mrs E Abderrahim, Mr D Cook, Rev A Davies, Mrs M Gardner, Mr M Howe, Mr C Marshall, Ms H Middleton and Mr P Rowe, His Hon Judge J Tabor

**Also in attendance:** Mr P Blomley (Assistant Chief Officer), Mrs N Cryer (Assistant Chief Officer), Mrs D Maloney (Finance Manager), Mr G Limbrick (Board Secretary), Mrs J Oulton (Assistant Chief Officer) Mr P Stott (Financial Advisor), Mrs E Moss (Board Clerk)

**Apologies for Absence:** Sir William Wratten (Chairman), Mr D Gooch, Mr A Hamblyn, Mrs C Jago

Mr C Marshall chaired the meeting in Sir William Wratten's absence. His Hon Judge Jamie Tabor was welcomed to the meeting.

#### 39/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

#### 40/05 MINUTES

The minutes were approved

##### (i) Minutes of the Meeting Held on 18 May 2005

The Minutes were approved subject to the following amendment:

23/05 *Health and Safety*  
(08/05)

Mr Marshall's name was replaced with Mr Westhead.

##### (ii) Actions Arising from Previous Meeting

14/05 *Gloucestershire's Supporting People Programme*  
Mrs Abderrahim reported that the Supporting People Strategy had been ratified. The Strategy was now lodged with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and feedback was awaited. Mrs Abderrahim also reported on a proposal that the Supporting People Partnership Board and the Supporting People Members' Reference Group be merged.

22/05 *Address by John Raine, Chair of Probation Boards' Association*  
Thanks for a very useful session with Mr Raine were noted.

- 25/05 (v) *Race Equality Scheme*  
This had been completed and forwarded to the National Probation Directorate (NPD). A copy of the revised Scheme was circulated to Members and would be brought to the September Board meeting for approval. The Senior Management Team's efforts in producing this document in a short timescale was appreciated and noted.
- 25/05 (vi) *Contestability*  
Mrs Ball reported that the final part of the contract between TRIBAL, Learning Skills Council (LSC) and GPA had been agreed. The document would be considered by the Contestability Group prior to signing off. Some debate took place regarding the advantages/disadvantages of staff TUPE.
- 26/05 *Audit Committee*  
It was reported that Mr D Cook had filled the vacancy on the Audit Committee.
- 31/05 (i) *Information Report – Mar 2004 – Apr 2005*  
Mrs Ball reported improvement on Pre-Sentence Reports (PSRs).
- 37 (iv) *Ambassadorial Role*  
Mrs Abderrahim reported that she and Mrs Jago had met. A report would be prepared for the September Board meeting.

**Action: Mrs Abderrahim/Mrs Jago**

#### **41/05 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

In Sir William Wratten's absence, there was nothing to report.

#### **42/05 CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT**

- (i) **NOMS**  
Mrs Ball reported on Martin Narey's departure as Chief Executive of NOMS leaving further uncertainty about the shape of the Service. The NOMS design was delayed. She also reported that NAPO had held NOMS seminars but that the local one had not been well attended.
- (ii) **Budget 2005/06**  
Mrs Ball reported on a meeting that had been held with Ms Janet Dowding, Acting Head of Finance, NPD. There would be no assistance with Pensions. More detail had been requested from NPD relating to efficiency savings and it was hoped that there would be some good news about estates. Mrs Ball confirmed that GPA had received both the Performance Bonus and the Improvers' Bonus.
- (iii) **Performance**  
Performance to date was mixed and it was noted that further staff savings could impact on this.
- (iv) **Contestability Sub-Group**  
Mrs Ball reported that the Contestability Sub-group had met and that a Regional Forum meeting with Mr David Griffiths, Head of Business Development, NPD had been useful. She also circulated a copy of a letter received from Mr Kevin Lockyer, Regional Offender Manager (ROM). There was a need for Regional Chairs and Chiefs to speak with one voice but it was recognised that work would be needed to achieve this. The East of England had appointed a negotiator to speak for them, a route that Mrs Ball would be interested to pursue but was mindful that it would be costly. Discussion ensued on the balance between working with the Region and maintaining GPA's strengths.

It was noted that Mrs Ball had raised the lack of an overall strategy and training plan on contestability with Mr Griffiths, who would said he would note this for the Contestability Workshop scheduled to take place on 25 July 2005.

**(v) Ryecroft Approved Premises**

Mrs Ball reported on local concerns regarding the revised Admissions Policy for the hostel. There had been much local media coverage (newspaper, radio and television). She and Mr Peter Blomley, Assistant Chief Officer, had been engaged with all. GPA had been liaising with the local community through scheduled meetings with local councillors, headteachers etc. Mrs Ball confirmed that there would be phased placements of more serious offenders at Ryecroft. It was noted that local MP, Parmjit Dhanda, was not supporting this change in admissions policy.

**(vi) Secondments**

Mrs Ball advised Members that Mr Blomley would be moving to the ROM office during August 2005. Interviews for his replacement would take place on 1 August 2005.

Mrs Ball informed Members of an approach by the Head of ICT at NPD for a full-time staff secondment to the National Offender Management Information Systems (NOMIS) Project. Discussion highlighted the need for a Secondments Policy and Strategy to be drawn up: Mrs Ball would ask Mrs Cryer to progress this.

**Action: Mrs Ball**

It was suggested that referral should be made to past minutes of Board meetings in relation to previous secondments; this might prove useful for reference purposes.

**Action: Mrs Ball**

Discussion ensued regarding the balance between maintaining expertise within GPA and progression of individual careers. It was agreed that requests for secondment should continue to be considered on an individual basis. If a secondment was not sustainable, then it should not be approved. It was further agreed that the recent secondment of an ACO should be approved on the basis of the special reasons previously notified.

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the secondment of an ACO be approved

**THAT** the secondment to the NOMIS Project should not be approved.

**(vii) SMT Surgeries**

It was reported that on a rota basis, one SMT member would attend each centre once a month to afford staff the opportunity to discuss any issues that they have.

**(viii) Public Confidence**

Mrs Ball reported that public confidence in Gloucestershire was not very good but that a lot of input was going into profiling the work of the criminal justice agencies during Inside Justice Week (week commencing 17 October 2005) culminating in a Crown Court Open Day on 22 October.

**(ix) Gloucestershire Reintegration Scheme (GRS)**

It was noted that GRS had received a Howard League Penal Reform Community Award for the work they do on reintegration.

**43/05 AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**(i) Draft Minutes of Meeting Held on 6 July 2005**

The Board was asked to approve a virement of £125,000 from the Contingency Budget to the Staffing Budget.

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the virement be approved.

A copy of the GPA Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy was circulated to Members who were advised that this was due for annual review. Mr Stott informed Members that he was not aware of any changes that needed to be made.

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the GPA Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy be approved for 2005/06.

Mr Rowe drew Members' attention to the document at Item 11 of the Board Agenda. This has been previously placed before the Audit Committee and it was commended to the Board.

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the draft Minutes be approved.

**44/05 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**(i) Draft Minutes of the Safety Committee Meeting held on 5 July 2005**

The minutes would be brought to the September Board meeting.

**Action: Mrs Moss**

**(ii) Update on Health and Safety Issues**

Mrs Abderrahim would be happy to return to the Safety Committee to fill the vacancy left by Mr Cook should there be no other expressions of interest received. Mr Marshall would pursue this with Sir William Wratten.

**Action: Mr Marshall**

In light of recent developments at Ryecroft, the gates were padlocked as appropriate and the installation of additional CCTV had been requested.

Mrs Abderrahim reported on an attempted theft of laptops from the ETE room at Oakes House. Individuals had secreted themselves in the loft area of the room but had failed to steal anything. Mrs Ball would pursue this with Mr Westhead.

**Action: Mrs Ball**

**45/05 PERFORMANCE**

**(i) Information Report – May 2005**

Mrs Oulton spoke to the paper circulated at the meeting, which she indicated was a new style report and requested feedback on it. She referred Members to the notes which provided detail as to where specific information had originated. The traffic light system would continue to be adopted for 2005/06. Discussion ensued. His Hon Judge Tabor advised Members that he would shortly be meeting with the Attorney General and invited them to raise any issues that he could take forward at that meeting. Any questions on the new format report could be addressed to Mrs Oulton by e-mail.

**(ii) Complaints Monitoring**

Mrs Ball confirmed that capacity to deliver Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) would be doubled as from September 2005 which would impact on waiting times. In discussion, it was noted that Judge Tabor was very impressed with GPA court staff.

#### 46/05 BUSINESS PLAN 2005/06

It was noted that the first quarter's report was incomplete owing to the fact that Mrs Cryer had been on leave during the period in which the report was produced. It was noted that target dates should be included on page 10.

#### Action: Mrs Ball

Discussion ensued and concern was expressed that there may be a degree of difficulty in achieving some objectives owing to staff shortages. Mrs Ball confirmed that thought had been given to appointing project managers/additional admin support but that a balance had to be sought between staff and budget. It was recognised generally that workloads were demanding but it was anticipated that with the introduction of SLAs, there might be some capacity to negotiate volumes and funding.

Mrs Ball spoke to the Risk Register and the following key points were noted:

- Risk 1: Budget risk remains very high. GPA is currently operating with 6 members of staff down and further vacancies may have to be held
- Risk 2: There is insufficient management capacity. Debate took place and concerns were noted regarding the heavy demands being made on a very small management team. Further refinement of ACO portfolios would take place. No professional support was available for special project work.
- Risk 4: SMT hosted staff surgeries are planned
- Risk 6: No impact as yet but a serious drain on probation resources is anticipated with up to 200 – 250 additional cases each year.

#### 47/05 MEMBERS' FEEDBACK

- (i) Mr Howe spoke to both his Contestability and Health Screening papers.
- (ii) Mrs Gardner reported on the TPO Assessment Centre which took place in June and advised Members that 51 contracts had been offered. GPA has received confirmation of 4 and is awaiting acceptance of a fifth.

Mrs Gardner also reported back on a day spent with the Connexions Team at the Prison.

- (iii) Rev Davies reported on the PBA AGM held on 30 June and advised Members that there had been nothing new forthcoming. The Home Secretary's speech was available to view on the Internet.

Rev Davies had attended a recent meeting of the Forest of Dean (FOD) Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and was encouraged by the greater degree of engagement on the part of other agencies. Concern was expressed over the number of PPOs allotted to the FOD.

- (iv) Ms Middleton spoke to her report and invited Members to contact her should they wish to have sight of the full version of the Cheltenham Crime Reduction Strategy. *(Further discussion is recorded at Item 52/05.)*

- (vi) Mrs Abderrahim reported on the possible merger of CDRPs as follows:

- Tewkesbury/Cheltenham
- Gloucester/Forest of Dean
- Stroud/Cotswolds.

Mrs Abderrahim had attended a recent Education, Training and Employment (ETE) Team meeting and wished to commend their performance in considerable stressful circumstances surrounding the OLASS issue. It was noted that the team was in a state of flux which understandably was affecting morale.

**48/05 MANAGING THE GPA BUDGET 2005/06**

Mrs Ball spoke to her paper. Discussion ensued and confirmation was given that resourcing issues/implications would be reflected in the quarterly reviews of the 2005/06 Business Plan. Debate considered the need for a strategy for staff retention and also the need to recognise and reward hard work, although it was noted that this was constrained by the National Pay and Reward Review.

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the management of the 2005/06 budget be approved.

**49/05 FINAL ACCOUNTS 2004/05**

Mr Stott circulated a revised copy of the Independent Auditor's Report and advised that the Auditors had indicated no specific problems with the GPA accounts and that they were fair and representative. Mrs Maloney and the Finance Team were congratulated on their meticulous management of the accounts during 2004/05.

Mrs Ball spoke to the Statement of Internal Control which had been expanded for 2004/05.

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the Statement of Internal Control be approved

**THAT** the outlined accounts be approved subject to the Auditors signing them off.

Mrs Maloney spoke to the Revenue Budget Outturn 2004/05 paper.

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the Revenue Budget Outturn 2004/05 be approved.

**50/05 REWARD AND RECOGNITION**

Mrs Cryer spoke to her paper. Discussion ensued relating to the many differing ways of rewarding staff but all had financial implications. It was noted that the resource implication for granting one day's additional leave was, in fact, a virtual cost. The need to convey a message of gratitude to staff for their hard work was recognised.

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the Reward and Recognition proposal be approved subject to it not becoming custom and practice.

**51/05 CDRPs and ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ORDERS (ASBOs)**

Ms Middleton opened discussion by explaining Cheltenham CDRP's policy of naming and shaming offenders subject to ASBOs. Mrs Ball advised that an offender had lost his job as a result of this naming and shaming policy, which actually impacted negatively on the work of the Probation Service. Mrs Abderrahim reported on Tewkesbury CDRP's policy of publicising what they hope to achieve through ASBOs and suggested that Ms Middleton might find it useful to liaise with the Tewkesbury CDRP Co-ordinator. Ms Middleton advised that Mr Phil Kendrick, YOS Manager, was Chair of the Cheltenham CDRP and it was agreed that it would be useful to invite Mr Kendrick to attend the next Board meeting to address this matter further.

**Action: Sir William Wratten**

It was noted that CDRPs were represented on the Gloucestershire Community Safety Partnership (GCSP) and Mrs Ball agreed to raise this issue at the next GCSP meeting.

**Action: Mrs Ball**

**52/05 ESTATES UPDATE**

Mrs Cryer spoke to her paper and advised that staff would be informed of the latest developments.

**RESOLVED**

**THAT** the update be noted.

**53/05 THE ROLE AND PURPOSE OF APPROVED PREMISES AND RYECROFT UPDATE**

Mr Blomley spoke to his paper. See also Item 42/05(v).

**54/05 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

**55/05 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Thursday 1 September 2005 at 9.45am in the Boardroom at Bewick House.

The meeting closed at 1.00pm.

CHAIRMAN