



NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE
for England and Wales

Gloucestershire

GLOUCESTERSHIRE PROBATION BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
HELD AT PROBATION HEAD OFFICE, BEWICK HOUSE

Thursday 1 September 2005

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

Also in attendance: Mrs E Moss (Board Clerk)

Apologies for Absence: Mrs E Abderrahim, Mr M Howe, Ms H Middleton, His Hon Judge Tabor, Mr G Limbrick (Board Secretary) and Mr P Stott (Board Treasurer)

Sir William Wratten thanked Mr Marshall for deputising for him over the past few weeks.

56/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

57/05 MINUTES

(i) Minutes of the Meeting Held on 20 July 2005

These were approved.

(ii) Actions Arising from Previous Meeting

37/05 (iv) *Ambassadorial Role*
This would be taken to the October Board.

Action: Mrs Abderrahim/Mrs Jago

42/05 (vi) *Secondments*
Mrs Ball advised that the drafting of a Secondments Policy was being progressed by the South West Regional Human Resources Group. It would address the principles of secondments.

Mrs Ball confirmed that in researching previous Board minutes, only information pertaining to specific secondments had been recorded. There was no record of reference being made to an overarching statement/policy. Concern was expressed for the need to maintain continuity where feasible in the Senior Management Team.

Discussion ensued and it was agreed that the first draft of the Secondments Policy prepared by the SW Regional HR Group would be shared with Board members as soon as it became available. Debate on this paper would be welcomed.

Action: Mrs Ball

Mrs Ball emphasised that there was a large volume of secondments being advertised by the National Probation Directorate (NPD). Several local expressions of interest had been received for various posts and subsequently refused. This was demoralising for staff. Mrs Ball advised that she had raised the matter with NPD, indicating the issues this raised for Areas.

44/05

Health and Safety

Mr Marshall confirmed Mrs Abderrahim's as the additional Board Member on the Safety Committee.

Mrs Ball advised security had been addressed in relation to the attempted theft of laptops from Oakes House.

46/05

Business Plan 2005/06

Mrs Ball confirmed that missing target dates in relation to the Community Punishment/Unpaid Work objective had been incorporated into the Business Plan.

51/05

Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs)

Mrs Ball confirmed that she had shared Gloucestershire Probation Area's (GPA) concerns in the wider context of the Gloucestershire Community Safety Partnership (GCSP). Mr P Kendrick, Youth Offending Service (YOS) Manager and Chair of the Tewkesbury CDRP would be addressing this meeting later in the agenda.

58/05 CHAIR'S REPORT

(i) Probation Boards' Association (PBA) Board Meeting

Sir William Wratten reported that the PBA's overall impression of Mr Martin Narey's departure as Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) would herald a slowing down of the process of the introduction of NOMS. He also reported that the widely distributed survey of Chief Officers in relation to the development of NOMS, which had included some unacceptable personal comments about the National Offender Manager (NOM), Christine Knott, had been the topic of some strong correspondence between Mr M Narey and Mr J Raine, PBA Chair.

(ii) Board Members' Re-engagement

Sir William Wratten asked Board Members to let him have the names of those considering a second term of office.

Action: All Members

(iii) Appointment of Assistant Chief Officer (ACO)

Sir William Wratten reported that Mr Garry Holden had been appointed as the new ACO and would take up post on 5 September 2005.

Mrs Ball advised Members that Mr Holden currently held an Area Performance Manager post in Avon and Somerset Probation Area. Latterly, he had been doing a lot of work on the Prolific and Priority Offender (PPO) Scheme, drug using offending and with CDRPs. He also had experience of raising funds and bidding.

(iv) Ryecroft Approved Premises

Sir William Wratten advised that the Head of the Home Office Public Protection Unit, Mr John Scott, had visited GPA on 31 August 2005. He brought with him a statement of affirmation from the Minister, Baroness Scotland, for the new Approved Premises Policy (see Appendix 1). The Policy would be phased in over the next two years. Mr Scott, Mrs Ball, Sir William Wratten and Mr Berry (Hostel Manager) had attended a meeting with Mr Parmjit Dhanda, MP, who confirmed his support for his constituents.

Mrs Ball reported that meetings had been held with local councillors, schools, faith leaders and members of the community. Membership of the Ryecroft Community Liaison Group (CLG) was being re-visited and local councillors had been invited to join the group. An invitation had also been extended to members of the Community Against Ryecroft Protest (CARP) to nominate representatives to sit on the Ryecroft CLG. Copies of the relevant invitations had been sent to Mr P Dhanda, MP. Meetings would be arranged more frequently than the previous quarterly arrangement.

It was important to continue to promote a positive message in relation to the hostel and its work.

(v) Board Vacancy

Interviews to fill the vacancy on the Board took place on 25 August 2005. It was anticipated that details of the appointment would be announced soon and that the new Member would be able to join the Board with effect from the October Board Meeting.

(vi) Performance

Sir William Wratten reported that GPA had dropped 15 places from 27th in the League Table to 42nd. Putting this into context, he advised that 8 areas had moved down more than 15 places and 5 had moved up more than 15 places. One area had moved up from 39th position to 2nd and 2 areas had gone down 33 places. Sir William had asked Mrs Ball to undertake an analysis of the recent local figures and requested that she report to the Board at its October meeting.

Action: Mrs Ball

59/05 CHIEF'S REPORT

(i) NOMS

Mrs Ball reported that legislation on NOMS would be later than anticipated.

(ii) Meeting between Chief Officer and Kevin Lockyer, Regional Offender Manager (ROM)

Mrs Ball reported that the key message from this meeting was that GPA could anticipate knowing its 2006/07 budget in October 2005. Negotiation on Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between the ROM and GPA for Offender Management (OM) and Interventions would be undertaken in the period October – December 2005. It was noted that the SW Prisons were taking a different approach to SLAs in that there would be one SLA incorporating 13 chapters (one for each prison) rather than individual SLAs for each prison as would be the case with Probation Areas. There would be a 65:35 split between OM and Interventions. Mr P Blomley (NOMS SLA Manager for SW) would be undertaking a baseline analysis of current activity and working on targets and budgets for next year. Any new directives for work emanating from NOMS would in future be fed through the ROM.

(iii) OM Model

Mrs Ball reported good progress was being made on the division between OM and Interventions. Mrs Cryer would be undertaking a financial audit trail by the end of the year. She also reported that there were no national job descriptions for OMs. These were being worked on regionally.

(iv) Effective Supervision Inspection (ESI)

A high volume of evidence had been collated and sent off.

(v) Contestability

Mrs Cryer would be the representative on the Regional Contestability Board. Mock contestability projects/contests were planned with the SW pitted against the South East (SE) in April 2006. The SW Region would have to submit a mock bid for Community Punishment.

(vi) Budget 2005/06

The required savings had been made and recruitment would now progress.

Mrs Ball confirmed that she had not received a formal response to the joint letter from herself and Sir William Wratten to Roger Hill, Director, National Probation Service regarding the budget. Sir William requested Mrs Ball to look into this.

Action: Mrs Ball

(vii) Attendance Improvement Figures

GPA had scored very highly. This measure would be included in the weighted scorecard for the last 6 months of the year.

(viii) European Excellence Model

Mrs Cryer would be undertaking this as a one-off additional piece of work for which she would be reimbursed.

60/05 HEALTH AND SAFETY

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

The minutes were noted

(ii) Update on Health & Safety Issues

Mr Marshall reported that building inspections at Barbican House, Oakes House, Cheltenham and Head Office had been carried out.

Mrs Ball reported that GPA was liaising closely with NPD regarding security at Ryecroft in light of the protest which was scheduled for 3 September 2005. Contingency plans relating to the housing of offenders and relevant staffing of Ryecroft, and other offices, for the duration of the protest were in place. Additional contingency plans had been drawn up should there be a need to evacuate the hostel post the protest.

61/05 MEMBERS' FEEDBACK

- (i) Mr Cook feedback on two meetings of the CDRP in Gloucester and that they had agreed to a local protocol for ASBOs for Gloucester and the Forest of Dean being drawn up by the Police.

Mr Cook also reported that the Substance Action Group (a sub-group of the Gloucester CDRP) was concerned about a shortage of accommodation for drug users coming out of prison. They were hoping to raise this issue with the ROM who was scheduled to attend their meeting at the end of September.

- (ii) Rev Davies reported that he had been involved with the interview process for the new ACO.
- (iii) Mrs Gardner reported that the ACAS Workshop had been very useful.

62/05 CDRPs and ASBOs

Mr Kendrick was introduced to the meeting and spoke to his paper (Appendix 2). It was noted that as well as being Chair of the Tewkesbury CDRP, he also attends the Cheltenham, Gloucester and Forest of Dean CDRP meetings. Discussion ensued and it was confirmed that there is local definition and accountability for ASBOs – what might constitute an ASBO in Cheltenham could differ to Gloucester and the Forest of Dean. There was also argument that ASBOs could be counter productive, some continuing for a ten-year period. There was call for a county umbrella approach to ASBOs, with some differences in definitions pertinent to areas. Discussions regarding a protocol were due to be held in Cheltenham and Tewkesbury in late September. It was suggested that consideration needed to be given to impact rather than behaviour. ASBOs were regarded as a very powerful tool, with some offences leading to custody in circumstances that would not normally warrant a prison sentence.

Strategic issues relating to ASBOs were noted:

- There was a need for a better assessment of effectiveness of ASBOs and sense of scale
- There was a need to establish where the responsibility for and control of ASBOs lie in gaining county-wide agreement for their application.

Discussion also highlighted the negative effect that ASBOs could have on interventions that Probation are responsible for, ie. offender on an Unpaid Work (UW) Order being excluded from a placement or the UW van having to re-route to avoid a particular area. The use of powerful and potentially damaging publicity of ASBOs in relation to individuals, ie. naming and shaming was also of major concern. Breaches of ASBOs were causing concern to sentencers with over 1,000 Gloucestershire citizens serving a prison sentence during the last 5 years.

Mr Kendrick praised the GPA Board for having taken up this issue and for its representation of the accountable body view at CDRP meetings.

Sir William Wratten thanked Mr Kendrick for his input and confirmed that ASBOs would continue to be discussed as appropriate at GPA Board meetings. The Board would look forward to seeing the protocol.

63/05 PERFORMANCE

(i) Information Report – July 2005

Mrs Ball spoke to the paper and explained that positions in the league table were defined not just by how well an Area achieved against its targets on elements in the weighted scorecard but also through comparison with family groups. Therefore, even if an Area was performing reasonably well in relation to the weighted scorecard elements, they could still drop down the league table if they were not performing as well as other areas within their family group. Mrs Ball confirmed that DTTO/DRR completions and CP completions were giving cause for concern. The SMT Strategic Thinking meeting scheduled for 6 September would focus in detail on performance and an analytical report would be produced for the October Board Meeting.

Action: Mrs Ball

Performance would be placed as the first item after the Chief Officer's report on the October agenda.

Action: Mrs Moss

64/05 RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

Mrs Ball presented the updated Race Equality Scheme (RES) which establishes duties and an Action Plan indicating how GPA proposes to enact those duties. Mrs Ball suggested that the Board might wish to approve the updated RES with a proviso that work on the Action Plan would need to be dovetailed with other GPA priorities.

RESOLVED

THAT the updated RES be approved.

65/05 RESETTLEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY

Mrs Ball confirmed that the Resettlement Policy and Strategy constituted part of the development of offender management, particularly in relation to protocols for working with other areas in the region. In response to being asked if the Race Impact Assessment could be replaced with a Diversity Impact Statement, Mrs Ball explained she would prefer to complete the minimum requirement as, with competing priorities, it would be difficult to put any more resources into this area of work at present.

RESOLVED

THAT the Resettlement Policy and Strategy be approved.

66/05 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Circulation of Documentation

Discussion took place regarding the best means of circulating material to Members but no conclusions were drawn. Circulation would therefore continue in the same fashion, ie. electronically and via hard copy as appropriate with Members sifting according to their own needs.

(ii) Budget 2006/07

Mrs Ball confirmed that GPA would receive a budget based on the same formula as previously employed but it was not yet clear whether it would be damped. The budget would be issued through the ROM presumably to fit with the OM and Interventions SLAs and to include a proportion of infrastructure costs. A small percentage of the budget would be negotiated between October – December 2005. Concern was expressed that GPA might find itself in the same financial position in 2006/07 as it has in 2005/06. It was yet unknown as to whether some costs might be recouped through SLAs. It was noted that there had still been no resolve on Morelands and no response received in relation to the buildings re-charging appeal.

67/04 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Wednesday 19 October 2005 at 9.45am in the Boardroom.
- A buffet lunch will be served from 1.00 – 1.30pm.
- Mr Mike Caldwell, Governance Manager, PBA will address the Board on Governance from 1.30 – 2.30pm
- Board Members are invited to meet with the ESI Inspectors at 3.00pm.

The meeting closed at 12.30pm.

CHAIRMAN

FOR INFORMATION - DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- Wednesday 11.01.06
- Wednesday 15.03.06
- Wednesday 17.05.06
- Wednesday 19.07.06
- Wednesday 06.09.06
- Wednesday 18.10.06
- Wednesday 29.11.06
- Wednesday 10.01.07
- Wednesday 14.03.07

All meetings to commence at 9.45am in the Boardroom at Bewick House.