

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 23 January 2008

Present: Mr T FitzSimons, Mrs Y Ball, Mr R Burns, Mrs C Ellson, Mr Mark Blockley, Ms J Robinson, Mrs S McGrath, Mr S Pritchard

Also in attendance: Mr G Limbrick (Board Secretary), Mr P Stott, Mrs D Bennett (Assistant Chief Officer), Mr J Bensted (Assistant Chief Officer), Mrs Naomi Cryer (Assistant Chief Officer)

01/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

HHJ Picton, Mr C Youngson, Mr M Howe

02/08 INTRODUCTION

03/08 CHIEF OFFICER'S UPDATE

Mrs Ball updated the Board on national and regional issues. Nationally, Mrs Ball attended a Chief Officer meeting on 15th January. Julie Taylor, Commissioning Manager, talked about the Ministry of Justice review. Helen Edwards and Phil Wheatley also spoke at the conference but were not forthcoming on what direction the Ministry of Justice is moving. There was a discussion on where Regional Commissioning fits in. It was said that regional commissioning has 2 functions; delivering management and commissioning services on a regional level. The results of MoJ review will be out at the end of the month.

Mrs Ball tabled an update on Trust status issued by the Probation Change Programme

Mrs Ball advised the Board that Michael Maiden, Cumbria Probation Area, has taken the approach of intergrating into LAA's and LCJB, by moving to create a Cumbria Probation 'Community Trust'. The concept of using the intelligence of local community is a useful umbrella to fit both local criminal justice agencies and local authorities. It is a good way to engage with the community, though community are often more interested in low key crimes and Anti Social Behaviour than Probation's work with medium and high risk offenders.

The Carter review recommended a more structured framework on sentencing and sentencing guidance.

The CNOMIS review was discussed. CNOMIS will be rolled out but it will be a limited version.

A summary of the Offender Management Strategic Review was tabled with proposals for improving the Offender Management model. The main concept is that Offender Management should be consistent rather than the Offender Manager themselves being consistent.

Regionally, Mrs Ball attending a meeting on the 11th January. Regarding the Regional Development Plan and Regional SLA's, the South West CO's have concerns about the ROM's Service Progress Plans and have brought these to the ROM's attention collectively

There is a regional South West OMI event on the 9th May 2008. The Regional Development Plan has been discussed as key for showing what we can learn from each other regionally. The Regional Development Plan will be issued when available.

Mrs Ball reminded the Board that GPA's OMI Inspection is next week.

04/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

SECTION A STANDING ITEMS

05/08 MINUTES

(i) Minutes of the Meeting Held on 28 November 2007

Mrs Ellson requested that detail on the Business card fraud be removed.

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

(ii) Actions arising from the previous Minutes

127/07 - Mr Howe asked Mrs Ball to convey the Boards thanks through a communications bulletin to all staff – **Completed.**

128/08 – Improved HR Reports – to be discussed in January meeting.

140/07 – Anecdotal concerns with Group 4 need to be followed up as appropriate. – **Mrs Baker has written to Group expressing GPA's concerns.**

142/07 i) – SMT to provide indicative ideas and costs/savings of the restructuring framework – **to be discussed in January meeting.**

06/08 PERFORMANCE

Report prepared by Mrs Charlie Baker and delivered by Mrs Yvette Ball

Mrs Baker tabled a report on how GPA is performing and the majority of targets are green. Joint targets with the Courts are still red but are improving due to the amount of work which has taken place with Court staff. All other targets that are 'red' are being looked into and improved. GPA is generally at a good a level within the region. Mr FitzSimons asked if the red targets regarding OASys risk assessments is due to the shortage of resources. Mrs Ball advised the Board that this is a factor and resources are concentrating on higher risk cases as low risk cases are the lower priority cases. This would be explained to the OMI.

Team performance is generally good, mainly green. Any issues are being addressed directly with the managers. Managers need to be more robust on performance management and Mrs Naomi Cryer is doing a seminar on how to gather evidence for poor performance and how to manage this.

Sickness has gone up in November and December due to various 'bugs'.

RESOLVED

THAT the report be **NOTED**

07/08 HR REPORT

After the JNCC Employers Side meeting on the 24th January a small group will be put together for the development of HR and Financial reports. The reports are currently a work in progress though the work has substantially moved on since the last meeting. Mrs Cryer sent examples of the reports to the Board and invited any comments. Mr FitzSimons asked if the figures shown (from PPWin) on the report had been audited. Mrs Cryer advised that they are more accurate, but are still verifying sickness figures. The starters and leavers figures are accurate. Ethnicity is up to date with the information that is available. The budgets for HR figures will be developed, including forecasts and actuals. A further sheet is to be developed and will show how staff are split across the organisation, will identify externally funded employees, agency staff and the number of frozen appointments. The reports will be completed by the March meeting.

Regarding sickness, since December four members of staff on long term sickness have returned and one member of staff is due back in February.

RESOLVED

THAT the report be **NOTED**

08/08 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

A Report was delivered by Mrs Darrill Bennett

07/08 Budget

In summary the estimated deficit is now estimated at £101k, which is a £19k reduction since last reported. Adjustments are due to an increase in Pathfinder monies, some additional costs and staff savings. The estimated figure does not include £24k potential extra funding for flood costs. On the downside the estimate also does not include possible NOMS central costs for pension liability. This is expected to be on average £100k per Area. Mrs Bennett has sent risk analysis to NOMS for 07/08 closedown which gives an analysis of risks which could potentially impact the close of 2007/08 accounts. Obtaining the required pension details from the actuaries on a timely basis were of high risk and high impact.

08/09 Budget

The estimated deficit for 2008/09 is currently £679k. The figure excludes 08/09 performance bonus and 07/08 deficit which will be brought forward. The estimate is based on the known main allocation and also reflects other savings and costs.

RESOLVED

THAT the report be **NOTED**

Mrs Bennett also discussed a report on actuarial valuation and pension rates 2008/09 and 2010-11. There were two options regarding employer contributions. After much discussion at Audit Committee, the Committee agreed and recommended the Board approved option one. The Board agreed with option one

RESOLVED

THAT the proposal be **APPROVED**.

09/08 AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING

R Burns commented that within GPA, estimates are seemingly always based on previous figures and a new approach might be considered to include a broader reflection of the impact of changes in organisational approach and potential impacts of commissioning and such things.

Mr Burns advised the Board that he and Christine Ellson will be meeting to discuss the Audit Committee Terms of Reference and schedule of meetings and will advise the Board of any amendments.

Mr Burns advised the Board that all Audit recommendations will be actioned/ completed within 12 months of issuance as has been previously requested and therefore no 2006/7 or prior items should be outstanding at the year end.

RESOLVED

THAT the minutes be **NOTED**

10/08 DIRECTING DIVERSITY GROUP

RESOLVED

THAT the minutes be **NOTED**

SECTION B – ITEMS FOR DECISION

11/08 AUTHORITY FOR YVETTE BALL AND DARILL BENNETT TO MAKE REVISED ARRANGEMENTS AS REQUIRED ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD FOR THE IMPREST BANK ACCOUNTS

The Board approved the authorisation of imprest accounts for the five sub offices to a total value of circa £5,500.

RESOLVED

THAT the request be **APPROVED**

12/08 PROBATION CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

The Board noted the development of ACECOP and that funding will be required, the amount is proportionate but yet unknown. The ACECOP is a 'voice' for CO's, and will also enable Areas to collectively raise issues about practice. The Board supports ACECOP and review via a VFM review in a year.

RESOLVED

THAT the request be **APPROVED**

13/08 DIRECTING DIVERSITY GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference have changed to incorporate a change to membership. It was requested that membership consists of 2 Board Members, Chief Officer, 2 Assistant Chief Officers and 5 staff members.

RESOLVED

THAT the amendment be **APPROVED**

SECTION C – ITEMS TO NOTE

14/08 DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN REVIEW

The Action Plan consists of the official objectives. Most objectives are works in progress. There have been developments on a impact assessment group of people who are trained in looking at policies and if they are negatively impacting on any diversity groups. The Action Plan has been reviewed within the resources availability and where appropriate.

GPA's Staff survey had positive responses and GPA actively address diversity issues at recruitment and induction. Mr FitzSimons requested that the DDG benchmark GPA figures against national norms where feasible.

RESOLVED

THAT the report be **NOTED**

15/08 BUSINESS PLAN AND RISK REGISTER – QUARTER THREE

Mrs Ball asked the Board if there were any questions on the Quarter three reviews on the Business plan and risk registers.

Business Plan - Mr Pritchard had some concerns that in Objective 12 there is a large proportion of funding in and costs out. There needs to be clarity and a more robust and explicit way of accounting. Mr Pritchard questioned what proportion is being defrayed from which budget head? Mrs Ball explained to the Board that with the change in the ACO portfolios it will make it possible for more focused attention on business development. The Board were also advised that at a recent Business Development Group meeting learning from commissioning of services in local authorities and within the voluntary sector had been discussed and also the level of achievements. At the meeting it was requested that a full action plan with a set target of 20% overhead contributions be devised.

Risk Register – the significant risks are the risks that are stable, high and those that are rising. There was some discussion on risk one and if it was stable or decreasing. Mrs Ball advised the Board that the register is a brief overview and full analysis of risks has been done in SMT meetings. Mr Burns requested that the register is ready for Audit Committee meetings so the Committee has more time to analyse it before the register goes to the Board. Mr Pritchard was unsure of the rating for risks. **Action: Mrs Ball to send Mr Pritchard the ratings booklet.**

RESOLVED

THAT the report be **NOTED**

16/08 OFFENDER MANAGER RISK LOG QUARTER THREE

Report delivered by Mr J Bensted. The following risks and contingencies were discussed.

- Mr Bensted advised the Board that a strategic review from NOMS has sought national prescription and local autonomy.
- There is now an increased pool of Probation Officers who are dealing with sex offenders.
- There is an increase in the use in oral reports and continuity.
- There has been vast amounts of work on Sentencer Strategy which will be discussed further on in the agenda.
- Restructuring of managers is being implemented today and will be discussed later on in the agenda.

RESOLVED

THAT the report be **NOTED**

17/08 SENTENCER LIAISON STRATEGY

There has been substantial activity with Sentencers. There have been 3 major developments. A meeting with HHJ Picton, John Bensted, Yvette Ball and Mr FitzSimons has taken place which has resulted in an improved and more rigorous strategy. Quarterly meetings with each of HHJ Picton and Michael Seath, Head of

HMCS, are being arranged and the Annual Sentencer Liaison Meeting has taken place which has reinstated GPA's commitment to Sentencer Liaison and to ensure that there is good communication. Mr Bensted is working on revamping activities with HMCS. There is a plan to roll out programmes for sentencers to be 'hands on' i.e. attend UPW groups, Programmes. A local sentencer forum will be held monthly in Gloucester and Cheltenham Magistrates Court at the end of court business. This will give sentencers the opportunity to meet with Probation court staff, a manager and a legal advisor to 'air' any issues. This will start 3rd March. GPA will also provide articles for the 'Dear Justices' letter, at least twice a year.

John Bensted is meeting with Sid Pritchard to discuss how sentencer liaison can be taken further. The first article for Probation to submit for the next 'Dear Justices' letter will be on the launch of the monthly sentencers forum. **Action: Mr Pritchard to draft article and pass to John Bensted.**

RESOLVED

THAT the reports be **NOTED**

18/08 INTERVENTIONS RISK LOG

A report was prepared by Mr G Holden.

The report stated that risks are either stable or decreasing.

RESOLVED

THAT the reports be **NOTED**

19/08 PR

Mrs Jude Robinson tabled a report on PR and Marketing. There needs to be clarification on the level of priority. A discussion ensued and the following was agreed

- The website is a priority for business and agencies. There is routine information but it needs revamping.
- Press engagement, what do we want to say and why? GPA's agenda is to establish ourselves as a credible organisation.
- A small team is required for PR and a budget needs to be put aside for the development of a prospectus. **Action: Mrs Robinson to look into if other areas have a prospectus, suppliers, costs etc. Key messages need to be decided. Local relationships need to be established.**
- Should GPA do more press releases such as National announcements? This would need to be closely monitored so that it does not have a negative effect.

Mrs Ball advised that PR would be added into next years business objectives.

RESOLVED

THAT the report be **NOTED**

20/08 OMI PREPARATION

Mrs Baker sent a report advising that OMI preparation is on schedule.

RESOLVED

THAT the reports be **NOTED**

21/08 BUSINESS PLANS AND SLA'S 08/09

It was noted that the initial SLA 08/09 meeting will take place tomorrow.

RESOLVED

THAT the reports be **NOTED**

22/08 SECTION D – EXEMPT ITEMS

In accordance with paragraph 3(a) 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.

23/08 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER 2007

These were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

24/08 SFO QUARTER TWO REPORT

RESOLVED

THAT the report be **NOTED**

25/08 COMPLAINTS QUARTER TWO REPORT

RESOLVED

THAT the report be **NOTED**

26/08 GPA RESTRUCTURE PROJECT

RESOLVED

THAT the report be **NOTED**

27/08 RETIREMENT REQUEST

RESOLVED

THAT the Request be **APPROVED**

28/08 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr FitzSimons expressed his thanks to Peter Stott for his valued service, effort and support.

29/08 FUTURE MEETING DATES

19 March 2008

21 May 2008

2 July 2008

The meeting closed at 14.00pm.

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CHAIRMAN