

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 26 September 2007

Present: Mr T FitzSimons (Chair), Mrs Y Ball, Mr R Burns, Mrs C Ellson, Mr C Youngson, Mr Mark Blockley, Mr M Howe, Ms J Robinson, Mrs S McGrath

Also in attendance: Mr G Limbrick (Board Secretary), Mr P Stott (Board Treasurer), Mrs C Baker, (Assistant Chief Officer), Mrs D Bennett (Assistant Chief Officer), Mr J Bensted (Assistant Chief Officer), Mr G Holden (Assistant Chief Officer)

102/07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr S Pritchard, HHJ Picton

103/07 INTRODUCTION

Mr Tony FitzSimons welcomed the Board.

104/07 CHIEF OFFICER'S UPDATE

Mrs Yvette Ball advised the Board of the content of the Communication Bulletin which had been sent to Board and staff in September.

The Bulletin informed staff on the status of moving towards a Trust. Legislation has now passed through to enable the Government to contract Probation services. Six Areas have been selected for the 'first wave' and they are West Mercia, South Wales, Dyfed Powys, Humberside, Leicestershire & Rutland and Merseyside. These Areas will plan and set the regulatory framework. The main bulk of Areas will become Trusts in the second wave in 2008/9. It is anticipated that Gloucestershire will be part of the second wave. However, the selection process for the second wave will be based on Quarter two figures which have been distorted in Gloucestershire due to the floods. GPA have been working with the ROM to ensure that our figures are reflected accurately and that the flood crisis does not hinder GPA. Mrs Ball and the SMT remain optimistic that Gloucestershire will be selected for the second wave.

Mrs Ball discussed the changes in the Regional framework and that the Regional Manager, Meg Blumsom, has changed role and is now under the direction of the NOMS Performance and Improvement Unit. The South West can purchase Mrs Blumsom's time through the SWPPB and Regional Chairs & Chiefs Partnership Board have decided that it would be beneficial to retain her services.

The new Finance and HR systems are currently being implemented in GPA, staff have been asked to show forbearance during the transition phase..

Ryecroft are now taking some sex offenders but not predatory sex offenders. The transition was well prepared and is being well managed. The local community groups have been updated.

At a recent Chief Officer meeting, information was given regarding the success of accredited programmes on reducing reoffending, a figure of 25% reduction in reoffending for offenders who complete specific programmes has been achieved.. These findings have not yet been published but are fantastic results.

The NOMS Estates Unit is being restructured. It has very little money for property improvements. The PBA are looking into this.

A new NOMS Public Protection Board is being established and will review the strategy to address child sex offenders and the disclosure of sex offender information to the public.

At a recent ROM/Chief Officer review it was concluded that there is a need for clarity on the commissioning of the ROM..

Mrs Ball advised the Board that GPA is reasonably compliant with diversity legislation. However, GPA are weak on up to date policies and functions and having them impact assessed. GPA does not currently have the resources to put into impact assessments.

Mrs Ball thanked Mr Colin Youngson for his key facts sheet.

105/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

SECTION A STANDING ITEMS

106/07 MINUTES

(i) Minutes of the Meeting Held on 18 July 2007

90/07 Minute should state virements over £72k and not under. Correction made.

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

(ii) Actions arising from the previous Minutes

88/07 – Actioned

89/07 - Actioned

107/07 PERFORMANCE

Report delivered by Mrs Charlie Baker

i) Performance Briefing

The IPPF figures for the South West were tabled. In relation to the other SW Areas, GPA have performed well for quarter one. Mrs Baker advised the Board that there were some errors on the IPPF report. These included victim contact, the report showed a rolling annual figure instead of a quarter figure and it will be amended for the next quarter; this means that GPA would have a green star in Public Protection. There is also an error in Interventions, it appears that that GPA have no completions in the Thames Valley Sex Offender Programme, the completions would not yet show as the timetable does not fit within a calendar month. GPA is on target for TVSOP completions.

The National Standards questions stated on the IPPF are a selection of those used for audit purposes and are not a target. All questions have been circulated to Managers, where they are part of the IPPF rating, in preparation. The main concern is the Interventions timeliness. Garry Holden has put together an action plan on how to improve timeliness.

Management information also does not count to IPPF, though there is an indication that it may be included next year. GPA do not fair well in Offender Manager consistency, averaging 1.4 Offender Managers per offender.

The August figures were tabled in comparison to Q1 national figures. One of the areas of concern is DRR starts. Garry Holden is working with Ted Yates, DIP Manager and the Treatment Commissioner and is looking at 'widening the net' to include cannabis use. Cannabis use has never been included as there is no specific treatment. At the last Board meeting it was mentioned that there was a breakdown of trust between GPA and the treatment providers, this has been addressed.

There are concerns with end to end enforcement, as offenders still on warrant after a long period of time still show on our figures which in turn suggest bad practice. Mrs Baker is having discussions with the Centre regarding this. The target is a joint target with the LCJB.

Mike Howe suggested that it is necessary to look at targets and underpin the targets that need to be questioned through a Regional and then National route. This will be discussed at the business planning stage at the Trust assessment meeting.

ii) Impact of Floods

Report delivered by Mrs Charlie Baker

Mrs Baker spoke to her submitted report. The ROM has provisionally agreed with the GPA suggestions to amend targets as a result of the floods. Some targets will be amended for example compliance. There are some figures that cannot be renegotiated until after quarter two, this is because they cannot be measured until that point. Nationally it is unknown how GPA's amended targets will be shown. Mr FitzSimons advised that clarity is needed.

Mrs Ball advised the Board that what has been achieved with the ROM is significant, and credit must go to Mrs Baker and Mr Tim Fogarty for their hard work. The Board formally acknowledged the efforts of the SMT and staff in extreme circumstances – Thank you.

RESOLVED

that the report be **NOTED**

108/07 HR REPORT

Report delivered by Mrs Yvette Ball on behalf of Lynne Schoen

Mrs Ball advised the Board that the report is accurate up until July and recommended that the Board ignore the further figures from that point. The report will be revised after the installation of PPWin and when Mrs Cryer returns. Mrs Ball has concerns that the Minority Ethnic Representation is inaccurate and will need to check. The sickness absence is monthly indication and not a cumulative indication.

In terms of temporary or agency staff they have not been properly tracked. Mrs Ball has asked HR to liaise with Finance and record agency staff on the employee spreadsheet to ensure they are accounted for. HR has not tracked people but finance has tracked cost, employees Vs financial layout. The system needs to be further improved.

Action: The Board requested that the HR report is overhauled and redesigned with the support of Mike Howe and brought back to Board when ready and fit for purpose. This is to be done to a realistic timescale. In the meantime the Board requested information on the number of resources deployed, vacancies, temporary staff and sickness.

RESOLVED

that the report be **NOTED**

109/07 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

- i) A Report was tabled and delivered by Mrs Darrill Bennett and Mr Peter Stott.

The Board welcomed Mrs Darrill Bennett, Assistant Chief Officer – Finance.

A shortfall of £329k has been identified at the 5 month point of the year which has been caused by a drop in turnover, increase in Job Evaluation costs, use of agency staff not being properly tracked, and assumed vacancies. The SMT have put immediate actions in place including the withdrawal of job offers to two Probation Officers, an invitation to staff to reduce their hours, no use of agency staff unless agreed by SMT, efficiency savings in utilities and stationary. The County Manager Group have been advised to look at how they can operate with a 15% cut in resources. The overall effect is that GPA needs to lose 20 FTE by the end of 2008/09. This is hoped to be achieved through natural wastage though GPA may need to face redundancy but are not looking at this option at this point.

GPA is allowed to carry over a 2% budget deficit.

Mr FitzSimons noted that this is the beginning of the financial issues and not the end. A firmer grip is necessary on resources to match the financial consequences. More specific forecasts and monitoring systems are required. These will be looked at in the Audit Committee meeting on the 10th October 2007.

Both NAPO and UNISON are aware and supportive to date of the current situation.

The Board acknowledged the risk operationally.

RESOLVED

ii) that the report be **NOTED**

It was requested that the Board approve that Darrill Bennett can be added to GPA bank mandate as a signatory.

RESOLVED

iii) **THAT** the request be **APPROVED**

Mr Peter Stott requested that Rachel Longbotham and Debra Maloney are given Board approval to become contacts for electronic payments, on the condition that Darrill Bennett provides oversight to transactions and ensures adequate segregation of duties is maintained.

RESOLVED

THAT the request be **APPROVED**

110/07 SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

Mrs Sheila McGrath raised concerns that the stress training could be arranged more cost effectively.

Action: Mrs Ball is to speak to Mr Chris Westhead.

The Cirencester office has moved to the Cirencester Job centre for a one month trial period.

RESOLVED

that the minutes be **NOTED**

SECTION B – ITEMS FOR DECISION

111/07 PBA CONSULTATION

Mr Mike Howe briefed the Board on the PBA's review of its role and structure.

It was acknowledged that the survey is sound in content. Mr Mike Howe is the GPA contact for the PBA and it was agreed that GPA will wait to get survey results and proposals.

SECTION C – ITEMS TO NOTE

112/07 HEALTH AND SAFETY INDUCTION

Report delivered by Mr Chris Westhead

Mr Westhead gave an overview of Health & Safety training available in GPA.

Action: The Board requested that Mr Westhead provide a note on the legal responsibilities of the Board.

RESOLVED

THAT the report be **NOTED**

113/07 PPWin

Report prepared by Mr Dean Hambleton-Ayling, Regional ACO lead.

There has been a 5 week delay on implementation. Data will be inputted by 31st October 2007. There is no direct impact on any other systems. Gloucestershire County Council has agreed to manually input payroll until 31.3.08.

RESOLVED

THAT the report be **NOTED**

114/04 PAYROLL

Report prepared by Mrs Lynne Schoen

The report was prepared to update the Board on the Regional payroll project and the effect on GPA. The system has been procured and implementation is happening, it will be live from 1 April 2008.

115/07 LIAISON WITH SENTENCERS

Report delivered by Mr John Bensted

Mr Bensted advised the Board the GPA do not currently have the right structure of relationship with Sentencers. The protocol of sentencer liaison needs to be reviewed and a new schedule of how both sides interact is required. A reduced programme opportunity to engage with sentencers has increased divide around mutual outstanding. The feedback from liaison meetings is that magistrates only receive fast delivery reports and not standard delivery reports due to resources constraints. This is a misconception. Mr Bensted proposes that an increase in formal and informal meetings is required and he will action. Mr Bensted requested that a Board link is re-established and that a Board member should attend the next Sentencer Liaison meeting. Mr FitzSimons advised the Board that Mr Sid Pritchard will be the Board link.

116/07 OFFENDER MANAGER RISK LOG

Report tabled by Mr John Bensted

The five key areas are around resources, budget and the impact of holding vacancies on performance.

The Board found the register effective and useful and have requested the register quarterly.

117/07 UNPAID WORK PRINCIPLES

Report delivered by Mr Garry Holden

The report underpinned the key principles which have been agreed by the South West. It identifies and implements best value and best practice.

Mr FitzSimons has the view that the Board should agree the principles that drive operational practice. The Board endorsed this view. Mr FitzSimons also advised that NOMS regards UPW primarily for contestability.

Mr FitzSimons and other Board Members visited an UPW project and found the project eye opening. It was clear UPW offers the cycle to address the issues of re-offending. Mr FitzSimons proposed that badging of work should be a contractual point with beneficiaries and feedback back to offenders from beneficiaries acknowledging what the offender has completed is essential.

118/07 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.

119/07 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 MAY 2007

These were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

120/07 BOARD APPRAISALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Board discussed objectives and appraisals.

121/07 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

RESOLVED

that the scheme be **APPROVED**

122/07 FUTURE MEETING DATES

28 November 2007
23 January 2008
19 March 2008

The meeting closed at 13.00pm.

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CHAIRMAN