

MINUTES OF THE GWENT PROBATION BOARD MEETING

HELD ON 22ND DECEMBER 2005 AT 2.00PM

AT PROBATION HEAD OFFICE

Present: Councillor J McIlwee (Chair)
Mr B Barr, Mrs J Coates, Mr R Doxey, Mr J Harray, Mrs J Morgan,
Judge D Morris, Mr S Smith, Mr P Walters, Mr H Williams

Officers Present: Mr A Blease (Assistant Chief Officer), Miss M Caple (Board
Administrative Officer), Mr A Gotley (Assistant Chief Officer),
Mr C J Langdon (Secretary/Assistant Chief Officer), Mrs C Seymour
(Acting Assistant Chief Officer), Mrs J Steven (Treasurer)

Preliminary Matters:

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Declarations of Interest

Mr Langdon declared an interest under Item 6 – Date of Next Meeting, as a member of the Greenmeadow Golf Club.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2005 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Arising from the minutes:

Mr Langdon advised that if the Budget Exchange Scheme was not agreed for the current year the Chief Officer and finance staff would need to meet with the Treasurer to identify what further options were available to spend any projected underspend.

4. Committees

The minutes of the following Committees were considered and approved by the Board:

- | | | | |
|------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| (i) | HR, Diversity & Training | : | 9 th November 2005 |
| (ii) | JNCC | : | 16 th November 2005 |

Arising from the minutes:

Mr Gotley reported that the Case Administrator posts were currently being advertised internally.

5. **Review of Community Based Board Meeting held on 24th November 2005**

Mr Barr, Chair of the Communications Committee, advised that the Committee, had reviewed the Board meeting held at the YMCA on 24th November 2005, and agreed that the intentions underpinning the event were excellent, with a very good presentation from the Team Manager and offender. However, the overall attendance from members of the public was disappointing.

The Committee agreed that there was a need to continue to hold events in the community and a range of possible alternative venues and locations were discussed.

Judge Morris joined the meeting at 2.45pm

The Board Chair proposed that the Communications Committee meet in January to progress this issue further and report back its recommendations to the next Board meeting. The Chair asked that Tredegar also be considered as a possible option and the Treasurer suggested, in view of the new offices, that Caerphilly also be considered for a future community meeting.

6. **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 2.00pm on Thursday 26th January 2006 at the Greenmeadow Golf Club, Croesyceiliog.

Strategic Matters:

7. **Offender Management Model Update**

The Board noted that the implementation of the Offender Management Model had been rescheduled to 6th February 2006.

8. **National and Local Probation Developments**

• **Sex Offender Thematic – “Managing Sex Offenders in the Community”**

The joint Thematic Inspection, undertaken by HM Inspectorates of Probation and Constabulary, was published on 6th December and involved five Probation Areas (Norfolk, Merseyside, Devon and Cornwall, West Yorkshire and Gwent). Although the results pointed to some encouraging developments in relation to sex offenders, some significant weaknesses were identified and, these were the issues which received most attention in the local and national media.

So far as MAPPA were concerned, some critical issues had been identified as requiring particular attention, most especially in relation to strengthening the Memorandum of Understanding between Police, Prison and Probation on confidentiality and the probable appointment of a MAPPA co-ordinator.

- **Community Punishment/Unpaid Work Visibility**

The deadline for nominations for the South Wales Argus campaign was 9th December; however, as yet it was not known how popular the campaign had been.

Following a visit to Wastesavers on 24th November (Brian Barr and Joyce Morgan represented the Board) the Mayor offered his support for the work of the Service and asked for a further meeting with the Chief Officer to discuss possibilities.

So far as Community Punishment/Unpaid Work was concerned, Mike King (Team Manager) represented his team and the Service on 1st October 2005 when he received special thanks and a certificate from the Order of St John for the work undertaken in connection with the Priory of Wales. The Board Chair suggested that a formal presentation be made to team representatives at a future meeting with an invitation extended to the Prior or Chancellor of the Order.

- **Service Level Agreements**

The Chair and Chief Officer attended a meeting with Carol Bernard (Director of Offender Management Wales), Jim A'Herne (currently Commissioning Manager for NOMS in Wales) and Ged Bates (Regional Manager with the NPD) on 23rd November to discuss the Service Level Agreements on interventions and offender management between the Gwent Area and the Director of Offender Management Wales, to be signed off in January. Members received copies of both draft SLAs for information.

In response to a question from Mr Walters, the Chief Officer advised that only limited guidance had to date been received and more definitive guidance was awaited from Roger Hill.

- **Video Conferencing**

The equipment was installed and had been tested on 8th December, when a Probation Officer interviewed an offender at HMP Wakefield.

- **Quadrant**

Quadrant had been made aware of the Board's expectation that their work was delivering concrete results so far as the Area's PR/Communications agenda was concerned and had proposed several new initiatives to that purpose, including:

- Giving local media access to a good news story on an offender or victim along the lines of the offender's presentation to the Board on 24th November, but with the identity of the individual revealed and details of his/her life and offending history "placed on record".
- Publishing a "day in the life" of a Probation Officer or other employee of the Gwent Probation Area so as to increase the public's awareness of the work of the Service and the contribution it makes to crime reduction and public safety.
- Publishing information on the current political debate around probation restructuring (along the lines of the recent Police story line) with comment invited on achieving a balance between responding to local need and ensuring that the organisational framework provides value for public money.

- **Police Restructuring**

The consultation exercise in relation to the reconfiguration of police services in Wales and England continues but Chief Constables in the Principality are not now being asked to select just one preferred option for the Home Secretary's consideration.

They are, though, required to undertake further analysis of current and potential future arrangements around three specific areas – finance, HR and governance – with a view to informing the Government's planning post-January 2006 when an announcement on next steps has been promised. In the meantime no dedicated financial provision has been included in the police's 2006/07 or 2007/08 budgets for restructuring and that will require clarification before any concrete changes can take place.

9. **Response to "Restructuring Probation to Reduce Re-offending" Consultation Document**

Members noted the Gwent Probation Board's response to the consultation paper "Restructuring Probation to Reducing Re-offending", which has been submitted to the NOMS Design/Bill Team. Members agreed to circulate the response to partners and other relevant organisations in the area.

Performance Matters:

451 **Performance, Exception and OASys Reports**

The Chief Officer reported on the performance for 2005/06:

Priority	Objective	05/06 Annual Target	05/06 Projected Performance	Nov 2005 Profiled Target	Actual Performance to November 2005*
High Risk Offenders	Timeliness of risk of harm assessments, risk management plans and OASys sentence plans on high risk offenders	90%	>90%	90%	12/17 (71%)
Prolific Offenders	Timeliness of risk of harm assessments and OASys sentence plans on prolific and other priority offenders	90%	>90%	90%	11/12 (92%)
Timeliness of Court Reports	Reports to the court provided within the time-scale required by the court	90%	>90%	90%	97%
Enforcement	Proportion of cases breached within 10 days	90%	>90%	90%	CommOrder=90% Licence=100% Aggregate=91%
Offender Compliance	Proportion of cases with no 2 nd /3 rd unacceptable failure plus orders allowed to continue	85%	>85%	85%	CommOrder=76% Licence=92% Aggregate=78%
Contact Levels	NS appointments arranged	90%	>90%	90%	Currently unavailable
	NS appointments attended	70%	>70%	70%	
ECP/Unpaid Work	ECP/Unpaid work completions	661	>100%	441	451 (102%)

Basic Skills	Basic skills starts	529	>100%	286	589 (206%)
	Basic skills awards	132	>100%	73	105 (144%)
DTTO/DRR	DTTO/DRR completions	66	>80%	44	31 (70%)
	DTTO/DRR commencements	212	>80%	141	139 (99%)
Accredited Programmes	Accredited programme completions	198	>90%	135	122 (90%)
Race & Ethnicity	Timely and correctly classified race and ethnic data on staff and offenders	95%	>95%	95%	93%
Staff sickness	Staff sickness not to exceed an average of 9 days/annum	9 days/annum	<11.2 days	9 days	13.3 days

* Actual Performance is a locally produced figure (subject to change); % calculated using NPD Profiled Targets

The Board noted the ITPR Regional Analysis for Wales for the period April – September 2005.

11. Meeting in Private

The Board agreed, in accordance with Regulation 8(4) of the Local Probation Boards' (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2001, to meet in private to discuss the following items.

12. New Capital Projects Update

- Caerphilly

Mr Langdon advised that building work was continuing. A lease agreement had not yet been signed between the NPD and developers although it is anticipated that this will be finalised in January 2006.

The projected date for completion of the building was August 2006 and a meeting with Caerphilly and Bargoed staff would be held in January 2006 to discuss the issues relating to the new building.

- Newport

Mr Langdon advised that the Regional Property Manager was still experiencing difficulties in taking forward the project. Work on the external design of the building was currently underway with the internal plans to be discussed in January 2006. The Regional Property Manager was not currently able to provide a definitive programme of work, although the worst case date for completion was currently September 2007.

The Board expressed their frustrations and concerns regarding the apparent lack of progress with the capital programme. Mr Langdon confirmed that the Regional Property Manager had accepted the invitation to attend the January Board meeting to explain to members the issues relating to the capital building programme.

13. **Home Computing Initiative**

The Board considered the minutes of the Contracts Committee meetings held on 9th and 15th December 2005.

Mr Langdon reported that it was the view of the Secretary and Treasurer that Board members would not be eligible for the Home Computing Initiative.

The Board agreed that Evesham Technology be contracted to be the single nominated supplier for the Home Computing Initiative for the period 1st February 2006 to 31st December 2008, based on their tender specification considered by the Contracts Committee on 9th December 2005

14. **Staffing Appointments**

The Board approved the three appointments made since its November meeting.

Mr Walters suggested that the Area may wish to consider some posts being advertised on a temporary, as opposed to permanent, basis in light of the implementation of the Offender Management Model.

15. **Correspondence**

The Board received the following correspondence for information:

- (i) Inventory of Probation Circulars and Reports received since November
- (ii) NOMS News Update (Issue No. 8/2005 – December 2005)
- (iii) NOMS: Annual Report for Accredited Programmes 2004/05
- (iv) HMIP: Managing Sex Offenders in the Community – A Joint Inspection on Sex Offenders (including Inspection Findings)
- (v) PBA: E-Bulletin (Issue 21 - December 2005)

The meeting terminated at 4.20pm