

MINUTES OF THE GWENT PROBATION BOARD MEETING

HELD ON 23RD FEBRUARY 2006 AT 2.00PM

AT PROBATION HEAD OFFICE

Present: Mr J McIlwee (Chair)
Mr B Barr, Mrs J Coates, Mr R Doxey, Judge D Morris,
Mrs R Passmore, Mr P Walters, Mr H Williams

Officers Present: Miss M Caple (Board Administrative Officer), Mr A Gotley (Assistant Chief Officer), Mr C J Langdon (Secretary/Assistant Chief Officer)

Mr Langdon advised of the death of Bruce Seymour, a recently retired probation officer employed by the Gwent Probation Board and the husband of Carolyn Seymour. The Board held a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

Preliminary Matters:

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr J Harray, Mrs J Morgan, Mr S Smith, Mr A Blease (Assistant Chief Officer), Mrs C Seymour (Acting Assistant Chief Officer) and Mrs J Steven (Treasurer).

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2006 were agreed as a true record subject to a change to Item 4 – Human Resources, Diversity & Training Committee minutes, to read "To terminate the employment of the Unpaid Work Supervisor", and signed by the Chair. There were no matters arising.

4. Communications Committee Meeting

The minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on 16th January 2006 were considered and approved by the Board.

Arising from the minutes:

The Board agreed for the next community based Board meeting to be held in Caerphilly in April.

Mrs Passmore joined the meeting at 2.15pm

Mr Barr asked members to contact him direct, prior to 16th March 2006, with their views on the timing of this meeting.

5. **Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy**

The Board considered and approved the Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy, which had previously been agreed by the JNCC.

6. **Probation Boards' Association Election of Chair for 2006**

The Board agreed to nominate Mr John Raine, the current Chair of the PBA, and Mr Langdon agreed to contact South Wales Probation Area to confirm if they would second the nomination.

7. **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the AGM was confirmed as 2.00pm on Thursday 30th March 2006 at Probation Head Office.

The Chair advised that he was looking to change the schedule of Board meetings from a Thursday to a different day and would consult with members before the Board AGM.

Strategic Matters:

8. **Budget Report for 2006/07**

Mr Langdon advised that revised budget allocations had been issued to Boards on the proviso that they were still subject to formal approval. The key change since the indicative budget notification in November was that the minimum increase in the main grant allocation had increased from 5% to 7%.

The indicative budget for 2006/07 totals £9,775,600 as detailed below:

	£
General Resource Grant	9,320,000
Performance Allocation (based on latest WAMP calculations)	191,600
Additional PAGES	53,000
Shire County Allocation	79,000
Basic Skills Allocation	<u>132,000</u>
	9,775,600

The current planned expenditure for 2006/07, based on current spending plans totals £9,817,000, showing an initial shortfall of £41,400 against the budget allocation.

The Board noted the indicative budget allocation for 2006/07 and agreed to receive a finalised and balanced budget at the AGM in March.

9. **A Five Year Strategy for Protecting the Public and Reducing Reoffending**

The Board noted the Strategy for information and acknowledged that it would become a useful reference document over the next 12-15 months.

Mr Walters was pleased to see a more formal process for nomination of community punishment projects under the Punishment, Reparation and Rehabilitation action points.

Mr Barr highlighted the need for a strategic plan for unpaid work and Mr Walters suggested that this needed to be dovetailed with the communications strategy.

The Chair proposed that members receive a presentation at a future Board Development meeting on community punishment projects to include:

- a geographical and unitary authority breakdown of hours worked and type of projects
- the criteria used for the selection of projects
- future plans

10. **National and Local Probation Developments**

• **NOMS Developments**

Both Houses of Parliament have been considering the implications of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and members received an out-take from January's Hansard which gave a flavour of the focus and level of debate over recent months from a Wales perspective.

On 3rd February the House of Commons considered at length a number of issues relating to the criminal justice system, including the development of NOMS and the role of Regional Offender Managers (ROMs). Members received out-takes from Hansard for that day which focussed on issues scanning the Wales/England landscape.

Judge Morris advised that the Gwent Circuit Court Judges undertook a co-ordinated response to the consultation document "Restructuring Probation to Reduce Re-Offending".

• **Police Restructure**

On 6th February the 4 Chief Constables in Wales met with the Home Secretary and were given a 3 week period in which to voluntarily move toward an all Wales Service or to undertake the amalgamation on direction from Government. The Chief Constable for Gwent, Mike Tonge, is on record as resisting any moves to absorb Gwent into an all Wales Police Service unless sufficient funding is made available to support the structural and personnel changes which would accompany that development.

Roger Hill (National Director for the Probation Service) and Helen Edwards (Interim Chief Executive of NOMS) are both clear that any alterations to police structures will have a knock-on effect for Probation Areas given that the Home Secretary remains adamant that coterminosity will be one of the "unbreakable

rules” of the new criminal justice framework. That position was re-emphasised in two recent meetings convened with Chief Officers on 27th January and 9th February.

Additionally John Hutchings (Assistant Chief Inspector of Probation) has been asked by the NPD to undertake a piece of work which will include:

- Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the reorganisation process of 2001 which led to the establishment of the National Probation Service.
- Analysing the impact of reorganisation on amalgamated Areas in terms of performance.
- Examining what mitigating actions which reduced business risk in 2001 are still relevant now.

The NPD has requested that this work be completed by the end of March in good time to inform any debate on the promised NOMS legislation now planned for late summer/autumn and, before that, to influence planning attached to the police reform agenda.

- **ESI Follow Up**

Sonia Crozier, of the Delivery and Quality Unit at the NPD, visited Gwent on 20th February to pick up issues arising from the ESI and emphasised that her role was enabling rather than inspectorial. Mr Gotley took a lead role in co-ordinating arrangements for the visit and sent a wealth of advance information outlining the progress Gwent had made in relation to the ESI recommendations, and risk management in particular, since the ESI Follow Up last year.

Mr Gotley advised that a written report would be submitted to the AGM in March for members’ information.

- **Ballot on Industrial Action**

NAPO and UNISON have contacted all Probation Areas to give notice of an intention to hold a ballot for industrial action (in the form of a strike) ‘in connection with a trade dispute over the retention of the rule of 85 for all existing members of the Local Government Pension Scheme including all matters arising out and in consequence of the dispute’.

Return of the ballot papers is required by March 10th but there is no indication, so far, as to when any action, if that is the outcome of the ballot, may take place.

An update on the position will be made available to Members at the March meeting of the Board together with, if relevant, the proposed dates for any strike action, the potential risks to Area operations which a strike would generate and proposals to counter the effects of any disruption to service delivery.

Performance Matters:

11. 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	Jan '06 Profiled Target	Actual Performance to January 2006*
High Risk Offenders	Timeliness of risk of harm assessments, risk management plans and OASys sentence plans on high risk offenders	90%	>90%	90%	18/24 (75%)
Prolific Offenders	Timeliness of risk of harm assessments and OASys sentence plans on prolific and other priority offenders	90%	>90%	90%	18/20 (90%)
Timeliness of Court Reports	Reports to the court provided within the time-scale required by the court	90%	>90%	90%	96%
Enforcement	Proportion of cases breached within 10 days	90%	>90%	90%	CommOrder=88% Licence=100% Aggregate=90%
Offender Compliance	Proportion of cases with no 2 nd /3 rd unacceptable failure plus orders allowed to continue	85%	>85%	85%	CommOrder=77% Licence=94% Aggregate=79%
Contact Levels	NS appointments arranged	90%	>90%	90%	83%
	NS appointments attended	70%	>70%	70%	69%
ECP/Unpaid Work	ECP/Unpaid work completions	661	>100%	551	535 (97%)
Basic Skills	Basic skills starts	529	>100%	397	691 (174%)
	Basic skills awards	132	>100%	98	132 (135%)
DTTO/DRR	DTTO/DRR completions	66	>80%	55	37 (67%)
	DTTO/DRR commencements	212	>80%	176	176 (100%)
Accredited Programmes	Accredited programme completions	198	>90%	165	145 (88%)
Race & Ethnicity	Timely and correctly classified race and ethnic data on staff and offenders	95%	>95%	95%	100%
Staff sickness	Staff sickness not to exceed an average of 9 days/annum	9 days/annum	<11.2 days	9 days	13 days

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

The Chief Officer reported that Gwent had slipped from its previous position of 14 to a disappointing position of 29 in the latest Weighted Scorecard results.

In response to a question from Mr Barr, the Chief Officer advised that the drop of 15 places in the Scorecard was a combination of other Areas' improved performance and Gwent's deteriorating performance in areas such as HRH assessments and DRR completions.

The Chief Officer advised that an action plan had been developed to address these issues and improve performance before the end of the financial year.

12. Workload Measurement Tool

The Board noted the progress report on the Workload Measurement Tool and several members expressed an interest in receiving a demonstration of the product as part of a future Board Development Day.

13. European Foundation for Quality Management Assessment for 2005

Mr Gotley advised that the process was becoming more robust each year. Gwent's score for this year was 497, a slight increase on the 482 score in 2004.

There was an increase in the score for the Key Performance Results criterion, with a decrease in the Customer Results score. Other increases or decreases were of a relatively small proportion, but the Chief Officer's decision to authorise additional financial and staffing resources to developing Business Process Improvements and Project Management projects including Leadership, People and Processes had a positive impact.

The Board were pleased to note that as a result of an All-Wales self assessment submission the Gwent Area, in partnership with the other three Welsh Areas, won the Wales Quality Award for the Public Sector.

14. 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.

15. Sickness Absence Review

The Board considered the sickness absence review report, noting the increase in long-term absence figures between 2004/05 and 2005/06 and the actions being progressed in relation to a number of members of staff currently on long-term sickness absence.

It was agreed that the Board would receive a presentation from the HR Manager on progress on the implementation of the PHAWS Strategy in September 2006.

16. Serious Further Offence

The Board considered and noted the full review of Serious Further Offence No. 51426.

17. Staff Appointments

The Board approved the one appointment made since its December meeting.

18. **Correspondence**

The Board received the following correspondence for information:

- (i) Inventory of Probation Circulars and Reports received since January
- (ii) PBA: Summary of issues discussed at recent PBA Board meetings
- (iii) The Joint Inspection of the Gwent Criminal Justice Area
- (iv) NOMS Wales News

The meeting terminated at 4.30pm