

STAFFORDSHIRE PROBATION BOARD

**Minutes of the Board Meeting
Held 10:00 Friday 29 January 2010**

Probation Head Office, Conference Room

194. Present	<p>Members – John Ryan (Chairman), Rob Mandley (Chief Officer), Alan James, Tony Johnson and Graham Morley</p> <p>Officers – Bob Simpson (Treasurer and Director of Business Resources) and Norman Stott (Board Secretary)</p> <p>Additional – Heather Sutton, Head of Staffordshire County Local Delivery Unit and Anne Coghlan (CO Secretary)</p>
195. Apologies	<p>Ann Holmes, Barbara Jones (Head of SoT Local Delivery Unit) and Mike Maiden (Chief Officer of West Midlands Probation Area)</p>
196. Minutes of Previous Meeting	<p>The draft minutes of the Board meeting held 8 January 2010 were agreed as accurate, with the Chairman being authorised to sign as such.</p>
197. Matters Arising	<p><u>Redundancy Policy (Item 179).</u> The Chief Officer confirmed the unions had been made aware of the board's acceptance of the Redundancy Policy operated by West Midlands Probation Area, in preparation of a merged organisation.</p>
198 Audit Committee	<p><u>Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting Held 22 January 2010.</u> Alan James reported the Committee had accepted the External Audit Plan and extended thanks to the Board Secretary for the prompt and efficient preparation of the minutes.</p>
(199)	<p><u>External Audit Fee</u> - Alan James raised issue with the level of the external audit fee which continued to rise without recognition of the severe budgetary pressures suffered by the Area. He reluctantly recognised that as the fee was set by the Audit Commission there would be little value in making a challenge; recommending the Board to accept the proposal.</p> <p>RESOLVED – Board agreed the acceptance of the External Audit fee.</p>
(200)	<p><u>Internal Audit Reports</u> – Concern was raised regarding the efficiency and quality of the work of the internal audit team this year; particularly about the lack of audit reports that had been received to date. As a result the Committee had been required to schedule two additional meetings to ensure all outstanding work was signed-off and reported to Board before the end of the</p>

	<p>financial year. One of these meetings would look at the work for the Trust and address any merger issues.</p> <p>RESOLVED – Board to receive final report of the Audit Committee on 26 March 2010.</p> <p>RESOLVED – The only new business going forward to the Trust from the Staffordshire Audit Committee will be the Annual Audit and Accounts.</p> <p>RESOLVED – Alan James to raise concerns reported about the quality and efficiency of the work of the internal audit team this year at the national Audit Committee Chairs meeting on 25 February 2010.</p>
201. Declaration of Interests	<p>a) Graham Morley declared his position as Principal to South Staffordshire College.</p> <p>b) Alan James declared his part-time commitment as Treasurer to Derbyshire Probation Board.</p>
202. Chairman's Update	<p>John Ryan reported briefly from the Probation Association (PA) meeting held on 28 January where mention had been made of the pay deal, which would go forward for consultation with the unions.</p> <p>He outlined the changes due to take place within the PA council following the departure of the Chairman. It was expected that all new incumbents would be in place by July and the PA would ensure updates were circulated in the meantime.</p>
203. Chief Officer's Update	<p>The Chief Officer provided an update on performance which remained in green overall as at Month 8 of 2009/10. Of concern was the national standards target for interventions which despite improvement remained red and was unlikely to reach amber before the year end. The ATR target was also likely to reach amber despite achieving its purpose of reducing reoffending in the Stoke-on-Trent area. The good news continued to be the overall Reducing Reoffending Rate for the Area which remained one of the best in the country and this month was -6.2%.</p> <p>Consultation on target setting for 2010/11 had taken place with the DOM's office to make sure Staffordshire/Stoke-on-Trent LDUs were not disadvantaged. The Chief Officer reported that overall there was likely to be no significant increase in the targets which would now be ratified centrally by NOMS.</p> <p>The staff sickness absence had increased during December and the Area would not now meet the sickness target for this year. The figure had been badly affected by a number of genuine long term absences alongside the rise in short-term sickness prevalent at this time of year.</p> <p>Heather Sutton reported that Staffordshire LDU is commencing a pilot of Integrated Offender Management in collaboration with the</p>

	<p>Police and Youth Offending Services running from April to September. The programme will involve the LDU working intensively with offenders in order that they desist from crime and represents an excellent opportunity to make a positive impact on the Influencing Demand target by reducing the numbers which might otherwise serve short-term custodial sentences.</p> <p>The Single Equality Scheme (SES) Action Plan was now complete and up-to-date with all areas showing green.</p>
204. Board Secretary's Update	<p>The Board Secretary provided an update on the Trust contract, advising members of the ongoing issues that continued to be raised nationally around a lack of promised freedoms. Despite this there would be little value to Trusts in challenging the content of the contract on the basis that this was effectively "the only game in town".</p> <p>A meeting had been held with Board Secretary colleagues and representatives from the Prison and Probation Ombudsman on 19 January. Early indications were that this would be a good relationship; a number of issues had been progressed and the Group had agreed to meet quarterly with representatives from the Ombudsman's office to develop a protocol.</p>
205. Treasurer's Finance Report	<p>The Treasurer advised the Board on the financial position as at the end of December 2009 and the projections for the year ended March 2010. Indicating the Area showed a virtual balanced position with a small under spend. He reassured members there were no surprises anticipated for the Area. It was confirmed the Area will have downsized by 6% (ie 32 posts) by the end of the year and had achieved the finance and saving targets set out in the Area Business Plan for 2009/10.</p> <p>The Treasurer provided the Chairman with assurance that key partners have been advised of the change to a merged Probation Trust from April 2010 and formal changes have been made with financial institutions regarding Staffordshire Probation's bank accounts.</p>
206. Members Update.	<p><u>Ann Holmes</u>. Had attended Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) training at Head Office recently. Whilst there she had met with front-line staff who had spoken with her and commented that the merger should affect them and their day-to-day work very little.</p> <p><u>Alan James</u>. Had attended the first Shadow Board meeting in his capacity as Audit Committee Chair and reported on a very positive meeting. The group had gone through PAM (the web based system) and been given a lot of reassurance that the transition process was on track. A follow-up meeting had been scheduled for 17 March.</p>
207. Any Other Business	None raised.

208. Date and Time of Next Meeting	Confirmed as 10:00 on Friday, 26 February 2010. In Training Room 1 (TR1) at Staffordshire Probation Head Office, Stafford.
209. Exclusion of the Public	RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from the meeting for the items of business which were felt likely to involve the disclosure of confidential information as defined in the Board's approved scheme for meeting in private.

Signed Date:
(John Ryan, Chairman of the Board)