

## **DEPARTMENTAL BOARD MEETING**

**- Minutes -**

**Wednesday 30 November 2016**

**Radar Centre, Sydenham Industrial Estate, Belfast**

**Present:** Nick Perry (Permanent Secretary)  
Clarke Black (Independent Board Member)  
Lianne Patterson (Director, Justice Delivery)  
David Lavery (Director, Access to Justice)  
Anthony Harbinson (Director, Safer Communities)

**Apologies:** Phil Wragg (Acting Director, Reducing Offending)

**In Attendance:** Maria Watson (Secretary)

### **OPERATING ENVIRONMENT**

### **ACTION**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Board members to the November meeting. Apologies were noted from Phil Wragg.
- 1.2 No conflicts of interest were declared.
- 1.3 The Board agreed the October minutes without amendment.

**Board Secretary to place  
October minutes on  
Departmental website.**

### **Critical Issues**

- 2.1 The Chair noted that the Minister would be attending the Justice Committee on 1 December, accompanied by the Directors from Access to Justice and Safer Communities and the Acting Director of Reducing Offending.
- 2.2 The Chair explained that Phil Wragg was absent from the meeting due to the death in custody of a prisoner in Maghaberry earlier that morning and that investigations into the cause were underway.

- 2.3 The Board congratulated Austin Treacy from the Prison Service who received the 'Inspirational Leadership Award' at the UK Civil Service Awards held in London. The award was in recognition of his work to transform Hydebank Wood from a Young Offenders Centre into a secure college – a first anywhere in the UK or Ireland. Congratulations were also extended to Pauline Connor from NIPS who was a finalist in the Customer Service category.

## **DOJ OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

### **Business Plan/Risk Register**

- 3.1 The Board discussed paper BP(16)52 which presented the Departmental Business plan for the period October 16-March 17. The Director of Justice Delivery outlined that the plan had been revised to align with PFG commitments and the Minister's priorities.
- 3.2 The Board endorsed the plan and confirmed that a meeting had been scheduled the following day to agree the plan with the Minister before publication.

### **Resourcing**

- 3.3 The Director of Justice Delivery noted that a Strategic Resources Committee meeting had taken place the previous week (25.11.16) and resourcing had been discussed at that forum.

### **DARC**

- 3.4 The Chair invited Clarke Black to update board members on their recent DARC meeting.
- 3.5 Ronnie Armour had presented a paper to DARC on NICTS Fine Collection Service and the Committee was reassured to hear that NICTS are on track to deliver the new Fines Collection and Enforcement Service in March 2017. Based on an informal indication by the NIAO, the 2015/16 Trust Statement will not be qualified which is welcome news.
- 3.6 Clarke confirmed that there were a number of legacy issues still outstanding in NIPS and the Committee noted they were keen to see these progressed.

- 3.7 The Committee noted the rise in suspected fraud cases within LSA in the last Quarter and the number of “No Further Action” (NFA) cases recorded. Richard Logan had confirmed that NFA can often mean the fraud is alleged, but on investigation there is no substance to the allegation. The Committee accepted that the investigation of this high level of applicant fraud is resource intensive for the Agency.
- 3.8 Derek Anderson had reported that the RUC George Cross Foundation currently has 2 years of accounts waiting to be cleared. Plans are in place to bring both sets of accounts up to date by the end November 2016. Derek also reported that the DOJ IAS plan will remain on track to year end with all audits being completed to at least draft stage.
- 3.9 Gillian Colhoun had presented a paper on the Programme and Project Management and Gateway Review Process. The Committee agreed that a review should be completed on the Programme and Project Management update to the Committee to ensure it is both meaningful and relevant. The aim will be to ensure that the Committee’s focus remains on the audit and risk elements of the process, including mandatory aspects such as completion of Risk Potential Assessments and the External Assurance process.

## **GOVERNANCE**

### **Extension of Shared Services Model to DOJ Records Management**

- 4.1 The Deputy Director of Information Services Division presented paper BP(16)53 which outlined a series of options on the future provision of records management across DOJ.
- 4.2 The paper had been initiated in response to concerns about the fragmented approach to records management within DOJ and the risks this presented to the Department. This was a consequence of the current staffing model, which saw a small central team housed in the Core Department and Agencies independently managing their own parallel teams.

- 4.3 The paper recommended a revised model which would combine an enhanced central role, with a more consistent approach to policies and processes and improved knowledge sharing and professional development, whilst maintaining an assurance for Chief Executives.
- 4.4 The Board agreed the recommended option and endorsed its implementation.

### **Sick Absence**

- 4.5 The Board noted paper BP(16)54 which outlined the headline sick absence position for October. The Chair welcomed the slight improvement in the figures, particularly in relation to Prison Grades, and hoped this would be a continuing trend.
- 4.6 Discussions took place on the position across individual business areas, with particular focus on compliance rates for RTW interviews and long term absence cases. Directors agree to follow up discussions with their own management teams.

### **Mid-Year Stewardship Statements**

- 4.7 The Board agreed paper BP(16)55 on the mid-year Stewardship Statements, which had been approved by DARC at their November meeting.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **Board Brief**

- 5.1 The Board agreed the draft Board Brief.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Date of Next Meeting**

- 6.1 The next meeting will take place on 12 December at 11.00 in Castle Buildings.