

WEST MERCIA PROBATION TRUST

Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Wednesday 30th July 2008 at 10.00am at the Training and Development Suite, Leswell Street, Kidderminster.

MINUTES

Members in Attendance	Keith Austin; Libhin Bromley; David Chantler (Chief Executive); Peter Davidson; Martin Foley; Elaine Hickman; Kenneth Hockenhull; James Kelly (Chair); Derek Muhl; Leon Murray; Valerie Reynolds; Andrew Strong.	
Assistant Chief Officers in Attendance	Graham Mallinson	Head of Business Services & Organisational Development
Officers	Norman Stott Mike Weaver Lynne Coombes	Secretary to the Trust Board Treasurer to the Trust Board Clerk to the Trust Board

201.	Apologies (Agenda Item 1).	Apologies were received from Bridget Nisbet (Member), Mike Weaver (Treasurer to the Board), Helen Allen, Julie Masters and Alec Rudd (Heads of Interventions, Offender Management and HR respectively). HH Judge McCreath (Member) was not in attendance. Peter Davidson joined the meeting at 11:15am.
202.	Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 2).	There were no declarations of interest,
203.	Confirmation of Minutes (Agenda Item 3: Paper A).	Resolved that: The Minutes of the Board meeting held on Wednesday 18th June 2008 were agreed as an accurate record with the Chair being authorised to sign as such.
204.	Matters Arising from the Minutes (Agenda Item 4; Paper B).	Minute 188) – Best Value Review The Chief Executive reported that the Centre is still undertaking the Best Value Review consultation. West Mercia Probation Trust has submitted responses as discussed at Board level previously. Minute 191) – Annual Operational Reports The Chief Executive had nothing further to add.

		<p>Minute 194 – Committees of the Trust Board</p> <p>This item will be discussed in the Closed Session.</p> <p>Minute 196) – Policies</p> <p>The Chief Executive tabled a comprehensive policy chart. He said that whilst there were no standard review dates each policy was reviewed at intervals considered to be appropriate to the subject matter. In the absence of the Head of HR, the Secretary suggested that the Head of HR report to the Board on policies at six monthly intervals thereby ensuring Members had an update on policy progress.</p> <p>After discussion, it was agreed that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a definitive policy list should be produced; b) reassurances be secured that all staff both appreciate and understand the policies (via the shared drive and induction process respectively); c) ACOs’ appraisals incorporate a responsibility to maintain and update policies that they ‘own’ and to ensure that the correct version of any policy is posted on the shared drive. <p>It was also agreed that as a governance issue policies would, in future, be an item for consideration by Audit & Scrutiny Committee which would then report to the Board.</p> <p>Action:</p> <p>(i) The process for the management of Board Policies to be kept under review by the Audit & Scrutiny committee.</p> <p>(ii) ACOs’ appraisals to incorporate a responsibility to maintain and update policies that they ‘own’.</p>
205.	<p>Money Matters: Finance Update (Agenda Item 5; Paper C).</p>	<p>The Treasurer was unable to attend the meeting due to a late clash of commitments. The Chief Executive suggested that the paper was self-explanatory with spending having been consistent throughout the year and proceeding as projected.</p> <p>Ken Hockenhull asked if there had been any changes following the accounts being forwarded to NOMS for consolidation into the Ministry of Justice’s accounts. The Chief Executive confirmed that there had been no changes.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>i) Paper C be noted.</p>
206.	<p>Governance Arrangements</p>	<p>a) The Chief Executive had no definitive new information to report. However, following a 1st Wave Trusts and Chairs</p>

	<p>(Agenda Item 6; Papers D, E and F)</p>	<p>meeting on 8th July, discussions with the ROM and discussions at Regional Project Board indications suggest that the Trust programme will be one of pursuing local structures rather than total centralisation. The 2nd Wave of Trusts would probably now be created in 2010 and not 2009 as originally intended. This would create an extension to West Mercia's period of 'no detriment'.</p> <p>The Secretary said that cancellation of the last 3 meetings of the Parliamentary & Legal Project Board effectively supported the analysis of the Chief Executive. He agreed that establishing any 2nd Wave Trusts by 1st April 2009 would now be extremely difficult.</p> <p>The Chief Executive will circulate any new information received to Members prior to the Board meeting scheduled for September.</p> <p>b) The Chair said that following a meeting with the Board Champions it had been decided that there was a need to rationalise the role of Champion and develop a job description later in the year. The Chair thanked the Champions for their continuing hard work and enthusiasm.</p> <p>c) The Chief Executive reported that he had met with HH Judge McCreath who had agreed to continue as a Board Member. Whilst his role would be carried out at a 'distance' he would continue to provide a link as a Liaison Judge.</p> <p>d) The Chief Executive gave an overview of the current position on publicity for Board meetings, and introduced the paper for discussion. He said that whilst there were several proposals going forward there was a need to clarify the aims. Members agreed that while the public should have knowledge of the probation process and the opportunity to attend meetings, the full Trust Board was probably not the most appropriate forum to promote probation. The meeting considered other means of involving the public via community organisations and events. Keith Austin cited the example of Telford & Wrekin's local Community Matters events which aimed to promote relationships between local services and involve the public. The Chief Executive said there was also the possibility of developing the annual Stakeholder Conference to encompass a wider audience</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>i) The Chief Executive's verbal report be noted. ii) Papers D, E and F be noted.</p>
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207.	Annual Operational Reports (Agenda Item 7; Paper G).	<p>The Chief Executive reported there were no current issues. The Discipline, Grievance, Bullying and Harassment process had been reviewed and is now the responsibility of the HR Committee who will report to the Board. He said that Staff Survey results had shown the second most positive response of staff was that they had not been subject to bullying or harassment.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>i) Paper G be noted.</p>
208.	Risk Register (Agenda Item 8; Paper H).	<p>The Head of Business Services & Organisational Development highlighted the risks which had been reviewed following a recent meeting of the Executive Team. There was an increased Risk (07/10) relating to IT systems as there was still no full reporting system on Delius. One new risk had been added to the risk register (08/04) around the lack of clarity of the VAT position and the possibility of incurring financial penalties. West Mercia's first quarter VAT payment was £580,000 and is currently protected by the Trust 'no detriment' clause. Graham Mallinson asked if Members wanted anything further added to the register and confirmed that it was available for inspection at the meeting.</p> <p>The Members discussed Risk 08/03 related to the Castle House premises. The Chief Executive said there continued to be issues around identifying new premises for delivery of programmes. Members asked if it would be possible to utilise Leswell Street which is not currently used to its full capacity. The Chief Executive said that the issue of unsatisfactory premises had been raised with the ROM. The Secretary reported that this was not a problem that West Mercia could easily address as it was essentially an Estates issue and the responsibility of NOMS. He advised that this was a case where it would be appropriate for NOMS to be put on notice that the current situation was unacceptable, and that the Trust considered responsibility for resolution to be with NOMS. Graham Mallinson said that a business case for an alternative site had been submitted but that the process was slow. Braley House was also being considered but taking on additional premises would incur a cost to the Trust and give the wrong message by allowing NOMS off the hook.</p> <p>The Chief Executive said the Probation Association was continuing its campaign on Estates issues and he would contact Christine Lawrie.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>i) Paper H be noted.</p>

		<p>ii) Chief Executive to contact Christine Lawrie to ask if any progress had been made regarding Estates issues.</p> <p>iii) If not already done, then NOMS to be put on notice that the Trust did not accept responsibility for the condition of Castle House</p>
209.	<p>Probation Association (Agenda Item 9).</p>	<p>The Board considered a report in the Closed Session.</p>
210.	<p>Committees of the Trust Board (Agenda Item 10; Papers I and J).</p>	<p>a) The Performance Dashboard as at 23rd July was noted. Graham Mallinson asked Members to note that data for Offender Management and Interventions was provisional for June and that figures may need to be adjusted. He also advised that as there were more measures this year with some targets being based on previous year's figures, they were therefore a 'best guess'.</p> <p>It was noted that there was a significant increase in the sickness figures. The Chief Executive reported that this mainly related to five members of staff currently going through the latter stages of the capability process who were on sick leave.</p> <p>b) The Minutes of the HR/JNCC Committee meeting held on 10th July 2008 were noted. In the absence of the HR Committee Chair, Committee members highlighted several issues. An HR Vision 5 Year Plan had been approved by the committee and would be brought to September's Board meeting. It was suggested that future Minutes of the Health & Safety Committee and the Diversity Strategy Group should first be noted at the HR meeting. The streamlining of the policy flow chart and changes to JNCC Management and JNCC Board were also outlined. Further confidential issues were outlined in the Closed Session agenda at Item 3.</p> <p>c) The Chair requested that Committee Chairs provide a report of the main issues stemming from Committee minutes at future Board meetings.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>i) Papers I and J be noted.</p> <p><u>Action:</u></p> <p>i) Committee Chairs to provide a report of the main issues stemming from the Committee minutes at future</p>

		Board meetings.
211.	Policies (Agenda Item 11).	There were no policies for consideration at this meeting.
212.	Closed Session (Agenda Item 12).	The Board met in Closed Session to discuss restricted and "in confidence" matters.
213.	Any Other Business (Agenda Item 13).	<p>a) Peter Davidson reported that he had attended a PS Plus Project event which was a joint project between West Mercia and Warwickshire. He said that whilst the project was extremely worthwhile and the staff enthusiastic, the project has to reapply for funding at regular intervals.</p> <p>The Chief Executive said this was a strategic issue around resources. To reduce the vulnerability of the project it had been agreed that mainstream funding would be available for 70% of the project rather than for 7 out of 10 members of staff. The Chair requested a report on project funding at September's meeting.</p> <p><u>Action:</u></p> <p>i) The Chief Executive to report on project funding at September's meeting.</p>
214.	Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 14).	Wednesday 24 th September 2008, 10.00am, Room 1, Leswell Street.
215.	Meeting Ended.	The meeting closed at 1:45pm

Signed:

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Board Chair

Dated:
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