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| **PCNI PLENARY MEETING – 7th APRIL 2016 – PRONI** |
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| **In attendance:** | Ms Christine Glenn | Mrs Elsbeth Rea  |
|  | Mrs Anne Grimes | Justice Tracy Doherty |
|  | Mr Jeremy Mills | Mrs Ruth Laird |
|  | Dr Shelagh Mary Rea | Mr Tom Craig |
|  | Mr Paul Mageean | Dr Adrian Grounds |
|  | Mr Steve Murphy | Mr Nigel Stone |
|  | Mrs Alexandra Delimata | Dr Pat McGrath |
|  | Mr John Gibbons | Mr James Scholes |
|  | Mrs Anne Fenton | Mrs Debbie McQueirns |
|  | Mrs Elaine Peel | Mr Niall Small |
|  | Mrs Marian Killen | Ms Claire Hunt |
|  | Mrs Siobhan Keating | Ms Mary Barnish |
|  | Dr Duncan Morrow | Ms Clodach McGrory |
|  | Mr Noel Phoenix | Mr Emmet Murray |
|  | Mrs Linda McHugh |  |
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| **Guest Speakers:** | Mr Ronnie Armour  | NICTS |
|  | Ms Kerry Malone  | Probation |
|  | Mr Declan Magee | Solicitors |
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| **Secretariat:** | Mrs Joanne Williams | Mrs Kerry McIlwaine |
|  | Mrs Tracy Boyd | Mrs Karen Weir |
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| **Apologies:** | Mrs Micaela Greenwood | Mrs Debbie Hill |
|  | Mrs Maura Hutchinson | Ms Mollie Weatheritt |
|  | Mr Timothy Thorne | Prof John Jackson |
|  | Dr Damien McCullagh | Judge Tom Burgess |
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| The following is a summary record of the Plenary of the Parole Commissioners on 7th April 2016. |
| ***Item 1*** | ***Chief Commissioner’s Introductions*** |
| The Chief Commissioner (Christine) welcomed everyone to the meeting, gave a brief summary of the structure of the day and thanked Commissioners for their attendance. She reported to the Commissioners that three Commissioners had chosen not to renew their contract under the new terms and conditions. Judge Derek Rodgers, Mr Tom Craig and Dr Jackie Withers. She also advised the group that we would likely be saying goodbye to Dr Duncan Morrow as he has, from today, put himself forward as a candidate for the Assembly Elections. She reflected on the fantastic contribution that these Commissioners had contributed over the years and expressed her thanks for all their hard work and support.Christine advised the Commissioners that the Department will be running a recruitment competition in the autumn to recruit up to six additional Commissioners.Christine gave a brief presentation to the Commissioners which focussed on the following:* Outcome of the Terms and Conditions Review and Recruitment process;
* Maintaining and improving quality decision making;
* The new PCNI rules;
* Workload – key points; and
* Support and sponsorship arrangements.
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| **Item 2:** | **Presentation by Ronnie Armour – Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service (NICTS)** |
| Mr Ronnie Armour told the Commissioners that he welcomed the opportunity to talk at plenary. It gave him the opportunity to express his thanks and also the thanks of the Justice Minister for the important work that the Commissioners do. He stated that he appreciated the commitment and co-operation from the Chief Commissioner over the last 18 months.Ronnie then gave a brief presentation to the Commissioners. His presentation centred on the challenges and opportunities facing NICTS in the current fiscal climate. Ronnie explained the challenges ahead and recognised the contribution that the Parole Commissioners (PCNI) had made towards the efficiency savings to date. He went on to brief the Commissioners on the Modernisation Programme which is currently ongoing in NICTS and on his vision for NICTS in moving forward. Ronnie provided a question and answer forum for the Commissioners. |

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| **Item 3:** | **Presentation by Kerry Malone (Probation) – Domestic Violence** |
| Ms Kerry Malone gave a presentation to the Commissioners on the PBNI Domestic Violence Interventions – areas highlighted were:* Context of Domestic Abuse in Northern Ireland;
* A history of the PBNI domestic abuse interventions;
* An overview of the PBNI integrated approach to tackling domestic abuse;
* Details of PBNI interventions; and
* Summary of interventions evaluations.

Kerry also provided a question and answer forum for the Commissioners.  |
| **Item 4:** | **Presentation by Stephen McCourt and Steven Allison (CSU/ORU) - Rules** |
| Mr Stephen McCourt, Head of Community Safety Branch, welcomed the opportunity to come together to discuss, as a group, the approach that the Department will be using for the development of the new Rules. Mr Steven Allison spoke to the Commissioners about the process and timetable for amending the Rules. The approach this time will be to write a new set of rules, rather than amending the current rules. Steven updated the Commissioners on the list of stakeholders involved and on the timeline envisaged to complete the rules. The Department hope to have a new set of rules completed by September 2017.A questionnaire is currently with all stakeholders to allow DOJ the opportunity to consider  |

The presenters provided a question and answer forum for the Commissioners.

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| **Item 5:** | **Presentation by Declan Magee (Carson McDowell Solicitors) – Learning points from Judicial Reviews.** |
| Mr Declan Magee’s presentation addressed the following:* Informed the Commissioners of previous judicial review decisions;
* Updated Commissioners on relevant English case law;
* Spoke to Commissioners on recent/current PCNI legal matters; and
* Explored current issues of concern.

The presenter provided a question and answer forum for the Commissioners. The Chief Commissioner thanked NICTS, Probation, ORU/CSU and Carson McDowell for their presentations today which were very informative for the Commissioners. |
| **Item 6:** |  **Chief Commissioner’s introduction to the working groups** |
| The Chief Commissioner explained the set-up for the afternoon practical sessions. |
| **Item 7:** | **Working Groups**  |
| The Commissioners were assigned to working groups and each group was tasked with a specific area to consider. The groups were provided with statistics, background information and questions to report back on. The areas for consideration were as follows:* Group 1 – Directions;
* Group 2 – Oral Hearings – representation and witness attendance;
* Group 3 – Adjournments; and
* Group 4 – Decisions.

The groups reported back on the following.

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| ***Item 8:*** | ***Next Steps*** |
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Each group reported back on their working groups. It was agreed that the following should be addressed moving forward:

* A standard direction (proforma) should be developed which could be used in advance of listing to request all the required standard information.
* A guide should be developed to clarify the role of Commissioners in Case management.
* Commissioners will report back to the Secretariat on what they would like to incorporate into the new rules. The Secretariat will consolidate the returns to DoJ.

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| **Kerry McIlwaine****Minute-taker** |