

## **SECTION 4: ISSUES FOR THE MINISTER**

### **Minister for the Department of Home Affairs Response: [in Blue](#)**

- The Board would urge the Minister to make sufficient funding available to deal with any repairs, replacement, and structural issues which are bound to arise now that the prison is 10 years old.

**A rolling programme of asset replacement is being updated.**

**In addition, the Prison has submitted revenue bids for improved scanners and mobile phone blocking.**

- The allocation of additional funding for the Mental Health Pathway is a significant move forward. However, the Board would urge the Minister to maintain pressure on Treasury to secure funding for subsequent years to ensure the system functions effectively. This should be an ongoing part of the budget and not simply a one-off amount.

**The Department of Health and Social Care have successfully bid for additional mental health services which will recur year on year.**

**A Senior Practitioner has been seconded to the Police and cases are already being diverted from the Criminal Justice System.**

**The Governor is scheduled to meet with Angela Murray, Director of Mental Health, to discuss Prison & Probation provision.**

**The Governor met with Helen McAskill, Programme Manager, Specialist Service, and two Prison & Probation Managers are now attending the Operational Project Group to ensure all elements of the Forensic Pathway are covered for the purposes of the design and development of the new service.**

- Whilst the Board is pleased to report additional Mental Health funding as above, the absence of a Secure Mental Health facility on the Island remains a concern.

**There is now a budget for secure mental health beds.**

- The Board is disappointed that the Court authorities felt they were unable to review the timing of sentencing to facilitate the transfer of detainees from the Courts to prison earlier in the working day to ensure that they are received in time to be assessed fully to minimise any risk to their health and wellbeing. The Board would ask the Minister to investigate the reasons behind late sentencing as the response received by the Board from the Chief Registrar was most unhelpful.

**A new Chief Registrar has recently been appointed and he will be approached about this issue to ascertain what action can be taken to improve the situation.**

- Due to limited funding for prison education and rising costs, cuts of 5 hours a week have had to be made to stay within budget. Budget restrictions mean that the focus is on the development of basic skills with vocational training opportunities being limited. Whilst acknowledging the financial restrictions facing all Manx society, the Board feels that the limitations on education provided during incarceration represent a lost opportunity to provide detainees with skills which could lead to employment, and hopefully, to a reduction in re-offending. Time served in prison, especially for those on long sentences, should provide opportunities for genuine self-improvement, rather than enforced idleness. This being the case, the Board would urge the Minister to explore whether additional funding can be made available for this vital area.

**A bid to cover the shortfall in Education provision is being prepared.**

**The Governor has met with the Resettlement Team and the UCM Education Manager to introduce qualifications in Catering, Gymnasium, and Horticulture.**

**UCM are visiting in August 2018 to assess the set up facilities necessary for the proposed Trades Course.**

- The Board would urge the Minister to ensure the Sentencing Bill is given priority in the Tynwald 2018/2019 Legislative Programme.

**The various Sentencing Bills have been given high priority and are currently out for public consultation. The intention being that the Bills will be submitted for progression into the House of Keys in 2018.**

- The flow of positive PR re strict conditions for Resettlement Day Release (RDR) and its financial contribution to 'Victim Support' is vital to secure further employment opportunities. The Board would urge the Minister to support these excellent initiatives in every way possible.

**The Minister is fully supportive of the Resettlement Day Release Programme and recognises the importance as part of the resettlement of offenders.**

- The Board would ask the Minister to ensure the Intervention Hub is properly resourced including an allowance for staffing costs for supervision of this initiative.

**The funds for the Intervention Hub are in place and the contract for the successful provider is with the Attorney General's Office.**

**A bid for years 2 – 5 is being prepared.**

- There is scope for the Judiciary to utilise the Video Link more frequently, thus reducing the number of detainees needing to travel from the prison to the Courts. The legislation is in place, the technology appears to have improved, but it seems that pressure at ministerial level may be needed to promote the use of this facility.

**The Court IT is currently being upgraded as part of the Digital Strategy.**

**Once complete we will be able to improve the use of 'Live Link'. This was discussed with Deemster Montgomerie at the recent Probation Liaison Committee meeting.**

- The Board is disappointed that it has proved so difficult and time-consuming to secure vital improvements in the conditions at the Court Custody Suite.

Detainees and staff have been placed at risk throughout the reporting year and any progress that has been made is due solely to efforts of the Prison Governor, the Prison Works Department, and intervention by Senior Officers at the Department of Home Affairs. Whilst it would appear there is now some hope of action by the Department of Infrastructure during the 2018 - 2019 reporting period, the Board would urge the Minister to maintain pressure on his ministerial colleagues to ensure that vital works to guarantee the health and safety of all those working or detained in the Suite are completed at an early date. The risk of a death in custody or serious injury to staff or detainees is all too real.

**It is accepted that progress has been slow however considerable improvements have now been made. The problems with the doors have been resolved, the fixing of furniture to the floor has been partly achieved and windows are safety glass. The equipment to provide improved food to detainees has been purchased and installed and training is awaited for the staff concerned to complete this action. The air cooling system remains an unresolved problem and is being treated as high priority by the head of Public Estates and Housing.**

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