

Metropolitan Police Pension Board

Minutes of the Board's Meeting

Details

Date: 7th December 2022

Place: Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams

Present

Role

From

Pension Board Members

Ian Pollitt (IPo)	Chair	Independent
Mark Pomroy (MP)	Employer Representative	Human Resources
Errol Williamson (EW) _(D)	Employer Representative	MOPAC
Paul Deller (PD)	Member Representative	Police Federation
Duncan Slade (DS)	Member Representative	Superintendents' Association
Eric Smith (ES) _(D)	Member Representative	NARPO

In Attendance

Ken Anthony (KA)	Pensions SME	Metropolitan Police
Ray Henry (RH)	Pensions SME	Metropolitan Police
Paul Mudd (PM)	Secretarial	XPS Administration

Apologies

Helen Harper (HH)	Member Representative	CPOSA
Don Ratcliffe (DR)	Member Representative	NARPO
Catherine Roper (CR)	Employer Representative	Operational Policing/Professionalism
Annabel Cowell (AC)	Employer Representative	MOPAC
Paul Oliffe (PO)	Employer Representative	Finance

Minute	Introduction and apologies for absence	Action
2022-36	IPo welcomed everybody to the meeting, suggesting a round of brief introductions for deputising members. The meeting was declared quorate, as the Terms of Reference for the Board require a minimum of two Member and two Employer representatives.	IPo
2022-37	Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality IPo asked Representatives to declare any conflicts of interest, explaining that a conflict would not necessarily preclude participation on the Board, as detailed within the Terms of Reference and the Conflicts Policy.	All
2022-38	Minutes of Previous Meeting IPo asked Members to confirm that they had received, read and agreed with the contents of the minutes from the previous meeting (7 th September 2022). These were then confirmed as a true and accurate record.	IPo
2022-39	Pension Board Action List (AL3) – Valuation – The Board and MPS continues to monitor the impact of the legal challenge to the Government and the knock-on effect this will have regarding the release of the results from scheme valuations. IPo briefly explained the cost-cap mechanism to the Board and notified them that the latest valuation was paused. (AL18) - Communications to promote scheme membership – to be covered later in the meeting. (AL22) – EQ to attend September meeting – To be closed (AL26) – Stats from Resignations – This action is ongoing, the administrator is hoping for this to be resolved shortly and is aware of the issue. (AL27) – Provide NPCC Flyers to NARPO – This action is complete as acknowledged by ES – action to be closed.	IPo / KA

Minute
2022-40

Knowledge and Understanding

Action
IPo

IPo reminded the Board that there is a legal responsibility for each representative to have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the Scheme and thanked everyone for their continued efforts in this respect.

The Public Service Toolkit was last updated with a module on Pension Scams, and it was recommended that Members of the Board complete this module.

<http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/public-service-schemes.aspx>

2022-41 Administrator Performance Update

KA

There had been a series of meetings between MPS, Staff Associations, SSCL and EQ, with the latest meeting having taken place on the 5th December 2022.

The purpose of these meetings was to monitor the service improvement plan which is in place, focusing on customer engagement and satisfaction, the production of statutory documentation over the previous quarter along with a focus on a pensioner payroll issue, which saw pensioners being paid a day late.

Regular meetings are taking place between the interested parties and these have been mostly positive.

MP stated that this is an ongoing process but that there were early shoots of a recovery in the overall performance.

DS does not share the same confidence and said that one of his main concerns is that the administrator seems to be far behind the curve with their preparation for the annual workplan, and Remedy implementation. Whilst acknowledging that the right people seemed to be attending the meeting, saying the right things, he had very little confidence that the improvements required would be delivered.

DS offered his assistance together with other Staff associations to update their members with communications, which was acknowledged by MP, who agreed that it was certainly going to be a challenge, but that it was up to all parties, and particularly the administrator, to make it work.

Minute	Administrator Performance Update (continued)	Action
2022-41	PD said that he is currently struggling with the administrator and that the only point of escalation for complaints and issues seems to be through colleagues within MPS, such as KA and MP. Member expectations are at a low point and he queries how long members should be expected to wait for responses to questions or complaints. KA said that whilst the administrator should be able to deal with complaints and apprise the MPS of cases, there is value in MPS being party to complaints as there are lessons that can be learned as in the case discussed (late payment of widows pension) which required information from the MPS to resolve. EW asked if there were other cases that may need some form of intervention that MPS was not aware of? MP responded and said this was being looked at and consideration was being given as to how it can be made easier for members to get in touch to escalate an issue, potentially via an internal process. IPo summarised by saying that the statistics appear to be getting worse with dissatisfaction being expressed from members and staff associations alike. With no financial penalties levied for this consistent lack of performance there is concern that this will persist. IPo would like the administrators to attend the next meeting of the Board to give their account of the service and to answer questions from the Board about this and their plan for the future.	KA
2022-42	Report by Senior Pensions Contract Manager <u>Statistics.</u> The performance and statistics had already been spoken about in the previous item. There is still one item to be confirmed and this has been the case for a number of months. Providing details to those Officers about their retirement had dipped significantly. The pensioner payroll issue was also identified in the statistics showing an 85% success rate, representing the circa 5,000 dependent pensions which were paid a day late. It was noted that this was the first time that this had happened and that EQ were very swift to communicate with impacted members and included an offer to cover any expenses incurred as a result of this error.	KA

Minute	Report by Senior Pensions Contract Manager (continued)	Action
2022-43	<u>Internal Dispute Resolution</u> There had been 4 cases received in the last quarter. With no trends identified, the Board noted these cases. There was further discussion here in relation to the recording of complaints and IPo has asked to see the full picture, not just those which require escalation to the MPS. Staff Associations were also asked to provide any tangible evidence they might have in relation to the levels of complaint or dissatisfaction that they receive.	KA
2022-44	<u>Guaranteed Minimum Pension Project</u> This is due to restart in the new year, IPo expressed concern for the length of time this is taking and the impact it could have on the Remedy implementation and also in the confidence scheme members have with respect to the accuracy of their benefits in payment.	KA
2022-45	<u>Pensions Savings Statements</u> The administrator produced a pensions savings statement for 687 officers this year and the general experience appears to have gone a lot better this year than last. There was discussion about next year's exercise and how challenging this could be with the expected increase to those who would be due a statement due to the unusually large CPI value (10.1%), expected to be used in the annual uplift. IPo discussed proposals that the NHS pension scheme were looking at which would shift the effective dates for the pension input period, from the 6th April inclusive to the 1st April to 31st March. A formal consultation is expected on this across the public sector.	KA
2022-46	<u>Scheme Sanction Charge</u> The NPCC has recently issued guidance to all forces in England and Wales, confirming that any officer who has incurred a scheme sanction charge, usually as part of their retirement lump sum option, should not have to pay this on top of the unauthorised payment charge. KA confirmed that the MPS does pass on the scheme sanction charge to the scheme member at 15% of the excess amount and it has been suggested that this would need to stop. Discussions took place with respect to those who have already retired and this is going to be picked up as a project. DS would like to be kept informed as this will impact many of his, along with many other members at all ranks.	KA

Minute	Risk Register	Action
2022-47	IPO and KA had met in advance of the meeting and were comfortable with the Risk Register as it was currently presented. It was asked whether the risk register needed to be amended to take into account the service issues being experienced at the moment. The Board decided to review at the March meeting once EQ have updated the Board on the latest position. The Board therefore agreed that the Risk Register was an up-to-date summary of the risks the pension scheme face at this moment in time.	All
2022-48	Update from the Chair IPO and KA had met with Met-Friendly, particularly in relation to the opt-out rates. Auto Enrolment had slightly brought down the opt out rate but this is starting to creep up again and is currently between 8% and 9%. The cost of living, including rent in and around London is a huge issue. Opt-out forms will be updated to try and capture reasons for opting-out of the Scheme. IPO reminded the Board of his work with the NPCC and the Scheme Manager Group to try and push for the introduction of a tiered contribution system, or perhaps something similar to the Local Government Pension Scheme 50/50 option, which encourages retention of scheme membership by giving varying membership options. IPO mentioned a pension video that had been produced by Peninsula Pensions, the administrator for Avon & Somerset Constabulary which explained the benefits of the police pension scheme. Peninsula has kindly agreed that the video can be shared with all Forces free of charge. IPO has asked Claire Alcock at NPCC to distribute to all forces. It is hoped the will help encourage members to stay in the scheme. There had been some interesting articles in the news, one by the former pensions Minister, Steve Webb, in which he set out the pros and cons of paying into the police pension scheme, and another which was an excerpt from the Telegraph, written by the MPS Commissioner about the position and challenges faced within the MPS, which also included a reference to the Police Pension Scheme. IPO commended the articles to the Board which the Secretary had distributed to Board Members.	IPo

Minute	Other Business	Action
2022-49	With no further business to discuss, IPo thanked everyone for attending the meeting and reminded Board Members of the scheduled dates for forthcoming meetings	All
2022-50	Date of Next Meeting 1 st March 2023 7 th June 2023 6 th September 2023 6 th December 2023	All

