

Metropolitan Police Pension Board

Minutes of the Board's Meeting

Details

Date: 1st March 2023

Place: Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams

Present

Role

From

Pension Board Members

Ian Pollitt (IPo)	Chair	Independent
Mark Pomroy (MP)	Employer Representative	Human Resources
Annabel Cowell (AC)	Employer Representative	MOPAC
Duncan Slade (DS)	Member Representative	Superintendents' Association
Don Ratcliffe (DR)	Member Representative	NARPO
Helen Harper (HH)	Member Representative	CPOSA

In Attendance

Ken Anthony (KA)	Pensions SME	Metropolitan Police
Ray Henry (RH)	Pensions SME	Metropolitan Police
Dennis Ledger (DL)	McCloud Project Manager	Metropolitan Police
Sarah Dove (SD)	Specialist	Pensions Regulator
Layla Nouri (LN)	Specialist	Pensions Regulator
Tony Odams (TO)	Programme Director	SSCL
Andrew Newport (AN)	Relationship Director	Equiniti
Paul Mudd (PM)	Secretarial	XPS Administration

Apologies

Catherine Roper (CR)	Employer Representative	Operational Policing/Professionalism
Paul Oliffe (PO)	Employer Representative	Finance
Paul Deller (PD)	Member Representative	Police Federation

Minute	Introduction and apologies for absence	Action
2022-51	IPo welcomed attendees to the meeting including guests from the Pensions Regulator, who were in attendance to observe the meeting as part of their Supervisory Engagement programme and the MPS McCloud Lead who would provide an update later in the meeting IPo explained that colleagues from the Administrators would join the meeting at an appropriate time to cover their remit. The meeting was declared quorate, as the Terms of Reference for the Board require a minimum of two Member and two Employer representatives. SD explained that the Pensions Regulator was keen to forge relationships with Public Sector Pension Schemes which was why they were attending, stressing that the relationship was borne out due of the size of the MPS rather than any known or suspected concerns or issues about the scheme specifically.	IPo
2022-52	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. No conflicts were raised, nor recorded	All
2022-53	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 (7th December 2022). These were then confirmed as a true and accurate record. IPo explained that there was an action tracker which took actions from the minutes to ensure they were progressed which would be worked through at the next item.	IPo
2022-54	Pension Board Action List (AL3) – Valuation – There has been no further information released about the valuation, however the MPS awaits an outcome which will likely include implications of the McCloud ruling. This has the potential for a positive adjustment to the level of contributions required from members, or for the adjustment to be made to the member benefits which could give rise to increases to benefits. (AL18) - Communications to promote scheme membership – IPo confirmed that a video produced by Peninsula Pensions who administer police pensions for the Avon & Somerset Force which presents an overview of the benefits of the 2015 Police Pension Scheme had been sent to all Forces before Christmas. The MPS will now look to see how this can be added to the communication with their members.	IPo / KA

Minute
2022-54

Pension Board Action List (continued)

Action
IPo / KA

(AL26) – Stats from Resignations – This action is being addressed by AN who will be updating the Board later in the agenda. Clarity is required to understand whether there are failures and if so, can the process be improved.

(AL29) – Analysis of complaints received - KA confirmed that analysis is received on a monthly basis and that these can be included within the Board Pack going forward. KA suggested that complaints appeared to be coming down with 30 received in the last quarter, 16 were not upheld with no case to answer.

DS suggested that although the number of recorded complaints may be coming down that the service doesn't appear to have improved at all.

DR advised that he had attended a meeting with TO to cover the payment issue affecting the dependent pension payment, acknowledging that this was an isolated issue, but that EQ had been requested to write to members to explain the issue and also to offer to make good any financial loss incurred as a consequence of the issue. DR said that he was encouraging members to submit complaints if their queries were not being dealt with in a timely manner, as this is the best way for the issues to be identified and dealt with effectively. Feedback was that it was so complex to record an official complaint that many do not do so.

022-55

Update from Administrator

IPo / TO /
AN

IPo introduced and welcomed TO and AN to the meeting briefly explaining why the Board had asked for an update and thanking both for the advanced copy of the written update.

TO explained against a very busy backdrop of McCloud and business as usual tasks, that the focus has been on stabilising the service and eliminating the backlog which had risen from 2021, TO confirmed that this had been successful, albeit not quite as fast as they have wanted. A number of process improvements have been embedded, however it was acknowledged that these were taking time to filter through to service improvement.

The formal service improvement plan has been refreshed and this is heavily focused on the continuous improvement to processes, with robust governance and scrutiny on the effectiveness in place. Using an implement, monitor, measure approach, there should be tangible metrics to show whether improvements have worked, how much time has been saved, and at this point, a review of what can be done with this saved time, to improve performance.

Action

It is anticipated that training will be improved, error rates will reduce and complex cases will be completed much quicker once the process efficiencies start to be seen.

TO continued to say that last year was all about clearing the backlog and 'settling the ship', and that now, in addition to the process improvements, a big area of focus will be engagement. This not only covers Scheme Members, but also the Service and the Staff Associations. This has already started to happen and individuals agreed that this was very encouraging to see.

TO stated that he is confident that the Service Improvement Plan will get the service back on track, acknowledging that there are challenges, such as the uncertainty around McCloud, and also vetting for new staff which is taking a long time to obtain.

Concluding TO said that everyone is doing everything they can to improve performance, that it isn't a comfortable ride, but that they have confidence in the plan and that there is the ability to get everything back on track and then improve further.

AN reinforced what had been said previously by TO. With emphasis placed on ensuring the backlog is not allowed to build up again and continuous improvement going forwards. EQ would like to focus on quality relating to people, processes and systems as work progress quickly to remedy implementation.

IPo asked MP about the vetting issue raised by TO. MP confirmed that vetting is challenging with no dramatic improvements expected in the speed of these cases being cleared, confirming that EQ and SSCL are on the priority list. MP acknowledged that everyone is in this together.

IPo then invited comment from the Member Representatives.

DR said there were two issues of concern; the first being the fact that calls are not recorded at the moment. It was suggested that when dealing with complaints, it would be useful for all parties; the scheme member, staff associations and EQ to be able to listen to the complaints being made which will help in the resolution of cases and remove any ambiguity around the issue. There doesn't seem to be a uniform way to complain where the member knows their complaint will be investigated, which is a cause of frustration for all.

The second issue is that of recording the death of a scheme member. This is a long-standing issue about which DS has recently had conversations with EQ.

TO agreed and confirmed that a request for calls to be recorded had been made to EQ. He also acknowledged that the website needs to be updated to provide clarity on the complaints process so that anyone submitting a complaint knows where it will go and what will happen to it.

AN confirmed that the facility is there to record calls and that changes to the website are straightforward, saying that guidance can be published for members.

HH said that she had nothing specific to add, but that better responsiveness to requests and call recording would be welcomed.

DS questioned a comment made during TO's item where he had said there were disputes with the MPS commercial team, asking what this had meant. MP said that this was resolved and that it had been regarding the change in law in respect of the McCloud Remedy, and whether this was covered in the existing terms of the contract or not.

DS asked for a list of the contracted EQ time-limits so that these could be taken into account when members were asking staff associations to intervene with queries.

IPo summed up this item by stating that this was an aggressive and ambitious timeline, saying there are still many questions to be answered, adding that; irrespective of McCloud, with the recruitment challenges faced, along with statutory reporting and disclosure requirements and GMP projects it is all quite worrisome.

IPo called for honesty, engagement with stakeholders and common sense, acknowledging the steering group which is already in place.

TO responded in conclusion by saying that SSCL and EQ have listened and will be bringing in a specialist communications person to work on McCloud, who will be able to work smartly on this to create a one stop approach.

IPO thanked TO and AN for their input and asked if one or both would come back to the next meeting in June, both confirmed that they would be happy to do so. ACTION TO/AN

DL introduced himself as the new McCloud Project Manager at the MPS, DL joined in January from the Armed Forces where he was a Senior HR Manager.

DL shared his presentation to the Board and talked through a number of slides covering work completed to date and the plan going forwards.

In scope scheme members are estimated to be 26,266, consisting of just under 60% current active members, 27% retired members. The remaining members are a mixture of deferred members, opt out members and undecided leavers totalling 13% and around 1% of those in scope are beneficiaries of scheme members who have passed away.

There are 2,285 members identified as being potentially in scope, however there is further work required to determine eligibility. This is due to certain data items not being present on member records which, once available, will allow the MPS to determine whether they meet the criteria.

DL explained that legislation was due to 'go to the wire' meaning that there will not be a lengthy lead into the implementation date of 1st October with regulations set.

This will prove to be challenging, given that systems and processes cannot be dialled in 100% without knowing exactly what the legislation requires and also introduces risk to the implementation.

Priority will be given to be the most vulnerable people and the most detrimented.

The MPS is working on a communications plan to take them through to April 2025, by which time, it is expected that any requirements resulting from McCloud for deferred choice members will be BAU.

Missing known data issues should be rectified by around August, , but there could also be some that are currently unknown. Missing data items and the effort to rectify this should be known by the end of March.

There is an 18 month window available to remedy immediate choice members and individual communications will be sent to every affected member.

DL concluded his presentation and invited any questions from the Board.

Minute	McCloud Update (continued)	Action
2022-56	IPo thanked DL for his really useful presentation, saying that it was reassuring that DL has been secured to the project and that the analysis, plan and knowledge of the subject was impressive. Asking about missing date, DL said that transfers were one area of focus and spoke about data sharing agreements that were being adopted by all police forces to facilitate the seamless transfer of data necessary to complete the work. MP said that the latest Pension Savings Statement work had been really useful for data cleansing purposes. Passing this to the floor for comment the following observations were made: KA commented that all schemes were working to the same deadline and that this was a huge project to undertake. DR said that he had already met with DL and acknowledged that many of his members will not be in scope, so it might be difficult to manage expectations within this cohort. IPo asked DL if he is able to attend future meetings which he confirmed he could. DL then left the meeting.	DL /All KA
2022-57	Knowledge and Understanding 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	IPo / All IPo

Minute 2022-58	Report by Senior Pensions Contract Manager <u>Statistics.</u> The performance and statistics had already been spoken about in the previous item. <u>Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP)</u> There had been 2 cases received in the last quarter. Both of these related to historical issues, one dated back to a transfer out in 1991 and the other case dated back to 2004 which had been an admin and communications issue. There was further discussion in relation to the recording of complaints and IPo asked to see more information and not just those cases 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. <u>Administration Questionnaire</u> KA said that a questionnaire had been sent to all Forces by NPCC asking a number of questions about the current administration of the Police Pension Scheme, including questions about McCloud, contracts, systems and data. Discussion took place about what this could be for and why are they issuing this now with very limited time given for the response to be submitted and it was indicated that the responses would form a basis for the future of pensions administration across all 43 Forces. The MPS and their administrator representatives were completing this and will be able to submit within the required timescales.	Action All
2022-59	Risk Register IPo confirmed that the Risk Register was a standing item at every Board meeting. Working through the risks, MP said that the Remedy risk is covered in great detail within the People and Learning Board and that Staff Associations can be invited to this, confirming that extensive risk management is in place elsewhere. IPo said that he will have a look at the Risk Register, particularly around Remedy to ensure it is capturing the necessary risk and control. IPo and KA confirmed to SD that the Risk Register was used to proactively track the risks faced by the Scheme and that it was not simply a tick box exercise.	IPo / All

Minute	Update from the Chair	Action
2022-60	<u>Regulation 36 Guidance</u> IPo raised the issue of the recent legal challenge and subsequent release of guidance for the application of Regulation 36 of the Police Pension Regulations 2015. This guidance stated that a medical would no longer be required for new joiners to the police pension scheme, or for those due to be brought back into the scheme under auto re-enrolment. IPo asked whether people could opt out and then opt back in and navigate around the old requirements. KA said there were 150 who could potentially do this and that guidance has been sought from the Home Office. The HO has confirmed that this will not be retrospective, meaning that anyone who has failed the medical will continue to be ineligible for ill health pension benefits. <u>New Recruits Pension Awareness</u> IPo confirmed that he and KA will attend forthcoming sessions at Police College Hendon together with Met Friendly to gain an insight into the pensions presentation to new recruits given by MetFriendly. IPo confirmed that he had written a paper which had been sent to the NPCC with a request for the scheme to explore how lower contribution rates could be introduced to the Police Pension Scheme to encourage new members in particular to join the scheme. There were a number of potential ways that this could be achieved, potentially with a varied contribution rate and variable benefits, however, it would seek to retain the current death in service benefits. IPo stated that he is very passionate about this topic and will continue to lobby for such a scheme. <u>Pensions Dashboard</u> IPo asked about the readiness of data and awareness of the Pensions Dashboard project. Although DWP has recently issued a statement, advising of delays to the project, he asked whether it would be possible to have someone present to the Board about this project and the work required to ensure compliance when the new connection dates are announced. KA will ask EQ to see if something can be prepared for the Board.	All

Minute	Other Business	Action
2022-61		IPo / All

There were no formal items for consideration, therefore IPo thanked everyone for attending the meeting and reminded Board Members of the scheduled dates for forthcoming meetings. Members were asked whether they would like to have a face to face meeting in the future. PM will ask members separately about their ability to meet at either :

Kilburn Police Station, 38 Salusbury Road, Kilburn, London, NW6 6LT, or,

Metropolitan Police, Central London Building, 109 Lambeth Road London SE1 7LP

IPo Closed the meeting.

Date of Next Meetings

7th June 2023

14th September 2023

6th December 2023

6th March 2024