Minutes of the Board's Meeting

Details

Date: 7th June 2023

Place: Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams

Present	Role	From
Pension Board Members		
Ian Pollitt (IPo)	Chair	Independent
Mark Pomroy (MP)	Employer Representative	Human Resources
Jo Worster (JW) (Dep)	Employer Representative	MOPAC
Paul Oliffe (PO)	Employer Representative	Finance
Duncan Slade (DS)	Member Representative	Superintendents' Association
Don Ratcliffe (DR)	Member Representative	NARPO
Paul Deller (PD)	Member Representative	Police Federation
In Attendance		
Ken Anthony (KA)	Pensions SME	Metropolitan Police
Ray Henry (RH)	Pensions SME	Metropolitan Police
Dennis Ledger (DL)	McCloud Project Manager	Metropolitan Police
Tony Odams (TO)	Programme Director	SSCL
Paul Garner (PG)	Relationship Director	Equiniti
Paul Mudd (PM)	Secretarial	XPS Administration
Apologies		
Helen Harper (HH)	Member Representative	CPOSA
Vacancy	Employer Representative	Operational Policing/Professionalism

Minute	Introduction and apologies for absence	Action
2023-01	IPo welcomed attendees to the meeting, explaining that the Board would be joined by the MPS McCloud Lead and the Administrators at appropriate times to provide updates.	IPo

The meeting was declared quorate, as the Terms of Reference for the Board require a minimum of two Member and two Employer representatives.

2023-02 Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality — All

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.

2023-03 Minutes of Previous Meeting — IPo

IPo asked Members to confirm that they had received, read and agreed with the contents of the minutes from the previous meeting (1st March 2023). 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.

2023-04 Pension Board Action List — IPo / KA

(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.

(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.

(AL26) – Stats from Resignations – Agreed to leave this and raise within the EQ update.

(AL28) - Invite Administrator to June Meeting - Complete

(AL29 + AL30) – Analysis of complaints received - Complaints received and will be discussed later in the meeting.

(AL31) - Administrator update regards Service Improvement - Both SSCL and EQ will present an update at the meeting.

(AL32) - Risk Register - IPO confirmed that the Risk Register will be reviewed and that it will be shared with the Administrator. A combined risk register will be drawn up to capture all necessary risks.

(AL33) - IPO explained what the Pensions Dashboard is and that the Administrator will be asked to present their dashboard readiness and technical solution in a future meeting.

Minute		Action
2023-05	**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. http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/public-service-schemes.aspx KA, IPo and the Scheme Administrators had all been involved in meetings with the Pensions Regulator, within which, Knowledge and Understanding was discussed. Whilst nothing formal to add to this meeting, the purpose of the meetings was for everyone to understand what tPR expects of Pension Boards/Members together with the processes and documentation that were expected. e.	IPo
2023-06	**Report by Senior Pensions Contract Manager** Scheme Sanction Charge (SSC) KA advised the Board that the NPCC had advised all Police Forces in England and Wales that the SSC element which is created when an Officer draws benefits under the Police Pension Scheme and which exceed that permitted by HMRC rules should not be passed to the retiring Officer, but rather the Force should pay this. Legal advice has been taken, as it was considered that due to the member making an election for the taxable benefit, with associated charge, that this constituted an agreement, however, it has been determined that this did not negate the Force from the charge. Going forwards,I.e. wef from 1 October, retiring Officers will not be passed the SSC, however there are a number of retired Officers who will have already paid this charge and this position dates back to 2014. Analysis has already started in respect of the legacy position, and it is estimated that circa 5,200 retired Officers will be due a refund of the SSC that they had deducted from their retirement lump sum. The MPS faced a potential liability of around £6m to repay the Officers and will need to consider any interest payable. Whilst the MPS concludes its analysis and considers communications to impacted Officers, it was asked that Staff Associations can help by not raising this as general news. Any Officer who is owed a refund	KA

Minute 2023-06

of their SSC will be contacted as soon as the MPS is in a position to communicate this issue to individuals.

Action KA

MP reinforced this message and that the MPS is working with the Scheme Administrators to conclude as quickly as possible. If

Report by Senior Pensions Contract Manager (continued)

If Officers ask the question, the message should be that the MPS is aware and that contact will be made with any retiree who is in scope.

DR suggested that the MPS could place an article in the London Police Pension magazine and that issues were due to be sent in September and December should this route be utilised.

DS had three questions, namely, what are the timescales for those in financial hardship, how would people know if they are due a refund and what would the Board or MPS like him to do with the information.

MP reiterated that calculations and communications were being worked on as a matter of priority and that members did not need to contact MPS.

PD said that people were already aware of this and that the Federation is managing expectations.

IPo thanked everyone for their input saying that good news can turn into bad where timely and accurate solutions are not found, he agreed that preventing any more SSC deductions and then addressing the legacy people was the right thing to do.

DS and DR both said that a form of words would be good to have in order that the correct messages were being relayed.

MP said that he would work on this.

KA offered a meeting with member representatives to advise on the above and on progress, mentioning a joint Q&A to go along with the form of words.

<u>Opt Outs</u>

KA confirmed that the current opt out level for the MPS was around 9%.

DS asked whether this number could change given that members have 3 months to make a decision to opt out (again) of the scheme and be treated as never having been a member. It was agreed that the numbers would be reviewed at the September Board Meeting

Minute	Report by Senior Pensions Contract Manager (continued)	Action

2023-06

IDRP

KA

KA explained that there had been two new IDRP cases, the first was where a partner had claimed she should be receiving benefits, however as she was not married to the scheme member, the rules of that scheme did not permit for benefits to be paid. The other case was in respect of a dependent pension which had ceased legitimately due to the age of the dependent, which is in line with the regulations.

KPIs

Reported KPI results appeared better than previous months suggesting some of the improvements to processes were starting to be seen. The KPI for resignations was still in the red, though had moved from 83% to 95% from March to April.

Some processes need to be reviewed to ensure they are processed correctly, in particular regarding dismissals.

KA explained that the MPS and Scheme Administrator are working together on the GMP project and McCloud processes and implementation.

DR said he has reason to follow up with TO and PG to ensure a complaint case that he is aware of is dealt with satisfactorily.

2023-07

Update from Administrator

TO / PG

IPo introduced and welcomed TO and PG 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 opened to say that the headline news was that steady progress was being made. Stating that there had been steps forwards and back, but that overall, the service was in a better position.

From the summer of 2022, the key requirement was stabilising the service and following that period, improvements had started to be seen. TO said that he had asked PG to quantify improvements against effort to show where efficiencies were being seen.

TO said the later part of the quarter had seen improvements, particularly with regards to priority cases such as deaths and retirements, and that he expects to see this embedded across the whole of the service.

There is now significant and improved governance oversight and this is extremely important particularly with McCloud activity being at the forefront of collective efforts.

Minute	Update from Administrator (Continued)	Action
2023-07	Focusing on the contact centre, TO explained that a new manager had been installed in January and has already made improvements.	TO / PG

TO acknowledged that there had been problems, but that the Contact Centre was delivering against the required measures. They were not quite hitting the SLAs that had been expected, but complaints regarding the ability to speak to representatives had stopped and having turned a corner, EQ are aware of what is required, going forward.

In respect of complaints, TO said that a streamlined escalation process had been introduced to ensure that not only does the complainant receive a structured and timely response to their complaint, but also that learning and feedback can be given back to the team.

TO spoke about a specific complaint case which he, PG and KA were aware of regarding an overpayment which occurred for an overseas pensioner, TO and PG expressed their disappointment in the way the complaint had been dealt with and had personally sent flowers to the complainant.

IPo invited comment from the Member Representatives in respect of complaints.

PD said that he doesn't appear to be getting as many Officers approaching him as previously, but the general feedback was that getting information from EQ was still proving difficult. This was echoed by DS.

IPo acknowledged that with over seventy thousand members that the Administrators were always going to receive a number of complaints but that it was encouraging that the number of instances seemed to be reducing.

<u>Statutory Breaches</u>

TO briefed the Board in respect of breaches of disclosure regulations relating to the backlog of casework mainly between August 2021 and February 2022. There were in excess of one thousand breaches recorded and SSCL was meeting with EQ and their Head of Compliance (8th June), to discuss how best to deal with this failure and the compilation of a report to the Regulator.. TO spoke very positively of the analysis and change that PG has effected since he has had oversight of the account, including bringing this issue to the fore and also building statutory disclosure into the SLA workflow. Management Information is now being issued daily, providing better oversight of activities.

Minute **Update from Administrator (Continued)** Action

2023-07 PG explained that a wholesale review had been conducted and that EQ were taking this extremely seriously, explaining that transparency is key to regaining the trust of the service and the membership. TO / PG

<u>McCloud Preparedness</u>

TO explained that EQ and SSCL were very focused on what is happening in advance of October, identifying recruiting resources as the biggest risk.

TO said that the subject matter experts were keeping a very close eye on the national picture and were working flat out on the consultations that had been issued in respect of the scheme and tax regulations, as well as the communications that will be required. KA

A helpdesk was being set up to be a single point of contact for Remedy queries and this was expected to be live by the 5th July.

Lack of regulation and commentary from the Home Office in respect of regulations is another risk.

The Scheme administrators said that they were still having difficult conversations with all parties, including scheme members, staff associations and the MPS. They are committed to ensuring feedback is given to all queries and are setting strict targets with respect to communications and timeliness to responses.

IPo asked the floor for comment on the above.

PD asked questions regarding the call metrics, TO said that these metrics were available and will be provided.

IPo summed up this piece by saying that whilst there are challenges, there are some green shoots, calling for continued engagement at operational and board settings. With the shared risk register, the Board should be able to track risks and issues much better going forward.

2023-08 **McCloud Update** All / DL

DL presented a slide deck to the Board within which he explained that the project approach has altered from what was originally expected. EQ will now work with SSCL, rather than trying to manage this project on their own.

Stages of the Remedy implementation would be shared between EQ, SSCL and the Met and DL showed the Board a Messaging House strategy which was an effective communications tool to ensure people were receiving consistant and accurate information,

Minute	McCloud Update (continued)	Action
2023-08	whether this was by telephone, letter or other forms of communication. DL listed the main risks faced as being the sheer complexity of the Remedy, delay in the release of the Regulations, resourcing and competing priorities. DL showed the Board the beta version of the Remedy website which is hosted by SSCL. This will be a one stop shop for everything Remedy related including the ability for scheme members to see if they are affected by the ruling. DL thanked staff associations for their assistance with the project and also for allowing messaging through their association literature. IPo thanked DL for his input and asked that he attend future meetings to update the Board. DL then left the meeting.	All / DL
2023-10	**Risk Register** IPo confirmed that the Risk Register was a standing item at every Board meeting. As discussed earlier in the meeting, it is proposed that the Board Risk Register is combined with that of SSCL and EQ in so far as the Police Pension Scheme is concerned, ideally a merged register would be available for the September meeting, however with pressures on all parties, this will continue to be reviewed.	IPo / All
2023-10	**Update from the Chair** <u>New Recruits Pension Awareness</u> IPo confirmed that he and KA will attend forthcoming sessions at Police College Hendon to observe the New Recruit Pensions presentation provided by Met Friendly.. On an annual basis IPo compiles an annual report which is sent to the Assistant commissioner in April. This was included within the Board Pack for the meeting. Reduced Contributions / Tiered Contributions IPo provided an update on his paper proposing the introduction of lower or tiered contributions to the police pension scheme with the purpose of retaining new scheme members, albeit on a slightly reduced cost / benefit basis. The paper has been sent to both the Met Police and the NPCC who will consider the proposal before potentially approaching the Home Office.	IPo

Minute	Other Business	Action
2023/11	There were no formal items for consideration, therefore IPo thanked everyone for attending the meeting and reminded Members of the forthcoming meeting dates. It was confirmed that this meeting would be held via Microsoft Teams. IPo Closed the meeting.	All
2023/12	**Date of Next Meetings** 13th September 2023 6th December 2023 6th March 2024	All