Metropolitan Police Pension Board

Minutes of the Board's Meeting

Details

Date: 13th September 2023

Place: Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams

Present	Role	From
Pension Board Members		
Ian Pollitt (IPo)	Chair	Independent
Duncan Slade (DS)	Member Representative	Superintendents' Association
Don Ratcliffe (DR)	Member Representative	NARPO
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		
Mark Pomroy (MP)	Employer Representative	Human Resources
Jo Worster (JW) (Dep)	Employer Representative	MOPAC
Paul Oliffe (PO)	Employer Representative	Finance
Helen Harper (HH)	Member Representative	CPOSA
Paul Deller (PD)	Member Representative	Police Federation
Vacancy	Employer Representative	Operational Policing/Professionalism

Minute	Introduction and apologies for absence	Action
2023-12	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 non-quorate, as the Terms of Reference for the Board require a minimum of two Member and two Employer representatives. IPo explained that this does not prevent the meeting from taking place, however any formal decisions could not be made at the meeting.

IPo expressed his dissatisfaction with the attendance levels of the meeting, and whilst acknowledging that members are busy, that the calendar entries for the meetings have been sent months in advance.

There were a number of members who did not attend and did not submit their apologies, and a number of representatives who did provide apologies but at very short notice.

All representatives will be asked to nominate a deputy who will resolve to attend future meetings should the primary representative be unavailable.

2023-13 **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.

IPo explained, that further to tPRs Supervisory review and their subsequent attendance at the Board meeting on 1st March, they have since met with him and KA and have now produced a report of their findings, within which conflicts were mentioned. The full report will be shared with the Board at the next meeting.

2023-14 **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 (7th June 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.

2023-15 **Pension Board Action List** IPo / KA

(AL3) – Valuation – KA confirmed that there have been meetings in respect of the 2024 valuation where the valuation data requirements were discussed. It was noted that the outcome of the 2020 valuation exercise has still not concluded.

(AL18) - Communications to promote scheme membership – IPo confirmed that he will write a letter to all eligible scheme members who have opted out of the Police Pension Scheme, next year, explaining the benefits of the scheme in advance of the next re-enrolment exercise, which is due to take place in May 2025.

Minute	Pension Board Action List (continued)	Action
2023-15	(AL26) – Stats from Resignations – Agreed to close this action. EQ and SSCL are now providing the updated metrics regarding resignations and these are looking really positive. There is still work to be completed in respect of the process for dismissals as the traditional leaver process is disrupted for these cases. In relation to the previously reported low performance numbers and subsequent referrals that had been made to the Pensions Regulator, DR asked whether EQ are complying with statutory timescales as prescribed by the FCA. DR agreed to raise with EQ once they joined the meeting and provided their updates. (AL29 + AL30 +31) – Analysis of complaints received and attendance at meeting. It was agreed that these actions could be closed now that the Board was receiving additional complaint details and regular face to face briefings and documented updates from both EQ and SSCL. (AL32) - Risk Register - IPo informed the Board that this work was underway and he had recently received an updated draft from EQ/SSCL, which he and KA were due to review and that he would discuss the way forward with the Pensions Regulator, (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.	IPo / KA

Minute	Knowledge and Understanding	Action
2023-16	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 There was no additional information following the update at the last meeting where IPo said that part of the Pension Regulator's supervisory relationship discussions had included that additional training would be made available in due course.	IPo

2023-17	**Report by Senior Pensions Contract Manager** IDRP KA advised the Board that there had been 4 IDRP cases received during the last quarter and explained the process for dealing with IDRPs, in that the 1st stage is completed by SSCL and the second, where required, would be determined by the Scheme Manager, delegated to MP.	KA

Minute | **Report by Senior Pensions Contract Manager (continued)** | **Action**

2023-17

Auto Enrolment

KA

Early indications following the MPS auto re-enrolment had shown that the opt-out rate had reduced to 9% in June. This has now risen to 10% and it is anticipated that this number will continue to rise. Action AL18 refers.

GMP Reconciliation

KA had met with EQ and the next stage for GMP reconciliation has been agreed. Work will recommence on this project in November, and will continue for approx five months.

Annual Benefit Statements and Pensions Savings Statements

KA confirmed that the vast majority of statements had been sent to eligible members by the statutory deadline of 31st August. There were a very small number of members who had not received a statement and statements for these members were due to be sent out very soon.

There were approx 800 to 900 pensions savings statements which were due to be sent out to those officers who had breached the pensions input amount. KA confirmed however, that only those not subject to Remedy would receive a statement this year.

Scheme Sanction Charge

KA confirmed that the commercials were being agreed with EQ and SSCL regarding the legacy work to repay scheme sanction charge deductions to members. KA confirmed that the NPCC guidance, which stated that the charge should not be applied to officers was due to be followed for any new retirements.

2023-18 **Update from Administrator**

TO / PG

DR prefaced the update by saying that he was aware that a number of pensioners had not been paid their pensions increase, in April, citing 70 members, and that he was aware of an issue affecting up to 450 active members who hadn't received their annual benefit statement.

IPo introduced and welcomed TO and PG to the meeting, thanking them both for the advanced submission of their update papers, confirming these had been distributed to the Board prior to the meeting.

IPo passed across to TO to commence the update from SSCL.

TO updated the Board in respects of the highlights and challenges, saying that there has been a stabilisation of business as usual

Minute 2023-18

Update from Administrator (continued)

Action: TO / PG

activities and good improvements over the past 12 to 18 months,

and that SLA and KPI improvements were notable, with a marked reduction in complaints and cases requiring escalation.

Noting that there was still work to do TO advised that although there had been a slowing of process improvement, good progress had been made in this area since March.

Contact centre resourcing continued to be challenging due to vetting, with one further agent now vetted and other awaiting clearance. TO said that under the current model, particularly with Annual Benefit Statement queries now coming 'think and fast', that the current call levels are not sustainable, however there has been improvements over the Summer and call quality and metrics are being monitored with staff made available from other parts of the business should they be needed.

The recent cyber worries caused throughout policing and other third-party companies have impacted resources slightly as processes have been changed to ensure the same issues aren't faced within the MPS.

TO paused to allow questions from Members; DR who asked TO about the unpaid CPI increases for 70 pensioners and the failure to provide 450 annual benefit statements to eligible members.

TO was very aware of these issues which were reported within the SSCL update report. In relation to the pensioners, it was confirmed that these had been paid in September with arrears. TO said that work is underway with regards to the 450 annual benefit statements and that he will provide a detailed update at the December meeting, though operational discussions will take place between the administrator and the MPS in advance of this.

IPo invited PG to provide the update for EQ.

PG explained that following a restructuring within EQ, the backlogs had been eradicated and that the SLA outlook was now looking very good.

The service improvement plan was baring fruit and that this can be built on now. PG said that security clearance has now been received for a number of staff and that training was in place.

Minute	Update from Administrator (Continued)	Action
2023-18	PG advised the Board that there remained areas of concern. He explained that there was a lack of clarity regarding reporting and that further analysis has shown that there were 130 statements not sent by the 31st August deadline. PG said that changes were now in place to ensure this didn't happen again.	TO / PG

Regarding the pensions increase issue, PG confirmed that this was caused by an incorrect marker not being set within the administration system, which affected 70 pensioners. PG confirmed that the issue was now resolved.

Asked by IPo whether this was a one off, PG said that it appears this has happened for a couple of years, due to their records not being set up correctly.

PG explained to the Board that a report in respect of the recent breaches had been made to the Pensions Regulator and that they had received a response, thanking them for reporting the breaches and confirming that no action was to be taken against EQ or SSCL in relation to the breach report.

IPo passed back to TO to update the Board regarding the McCloud Remedy. TO said that calculations were underway for October retirements and that some of these were proving quite difficult and time consuming. There were 82 cases to progress. TO said it was complicated work and as 1st October approaches, more and more members are calling and requesting estimates which are having to be rebuffed for the time-being.

TO said that that a priority list has been established and automation is being developed to speed up calculations for members. There was a full process mapping workshop due to take place in the week following the meeting which will allow for the creation of new end-to-end processes relating to Remedy calculations.

TO acknowledged that the service was short on key people and that recruitment had been underway since February. Agencies have been approached and advertised salaries increased, but it is proving difficult to get the right people through the door.

IPo thanked TO and PG for their hard work not just with Remedy work, but also for the Service Improvements generally. TO and PG thanked the Board members, as well as KA, RH and the staff associations for their help and support, saying there had been 10,000 hits on the intranet for the Remedy pages which gives a flavour as to activity levels and interest in the Remedy from Officers.

Minute	Update from Administrator (Continued)	Action
2023-18	IPo asked staff associations for their views:	TO / PG

DR said he isn't receiving too many calls or enquiries for the time being. He said that his only issue would be that members are finding it difficult to work out what category they fall in to, whether they are impacted by Remedy or not, and if so, when will they hear something.

DL explained the timeline for DR and said that retirees wouldn't need to do anything and would be contacted in due course, adding that the website contains a lot of information to allow members to see if Remedy applies to them.

DS said there is some confusion as to whether the request for 90 days notice of retirement intentions is now mandatory or not, as retiring Police Officers are used to only having to give 28 days notice.

KA explained that the 90 day request was a 'nice to have' and was introduced nationally to try and keep pace with those who wished to retire on or after 1st October, where it is known that calculations will be largely manual and very complex. Although it cannot be mandated, the difficulty in calculating benefit options for post 1st October retirees was acknowledged and having additional time to calculate and check these benefit options will ensure scheme members have a seamless transition into retirement.

IPo said that he understands the complexity of Remedy and that the concept of giving 90 days notice to protect the retirement process seems reasonable.

DS asked whether members would be receiving a Pensions Savings Statement this year. DL said that HMRC had issued guidance stating that the tax return will be carried over until next year, so that anyone who is in scope for Remedy won't have to submit a Pensions Input Amount, tax charge or scheme pays election. DS asked if something could be put onto the MPS Pensions website and DL confirmed that it could.

IPo thanked TO and PG for their document relating to complaints, and said it was encouraging that there are now published service levels.

Minute	**Update from Administrator (Continued)**	Action
2023-18	PG said that EQ are trying to improve their communications and confirmed that complaints are learned from. He was also pleased to confirm that escalation cases have reduced and with an eye on recent data related news, that the number of data protection events was very limited within EQ. PG said that less than 0.1% of transactions end up with a complaint.	TO / PG
2023-19	DR asked whether EQ and SSCL operated subject to the rules of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), and asked that if so, that the EQ report be aligned with these timescales. Action taken for EQ to provide a response.	TO / PG
2023-20	DR also asked whether the letter regarding overpayments, sent typically to a new dependent pensioner could be shared with DR as this was causing some upset. PG said that this can be shared and would arrange this. IP thanked TO and PG for attending the meeting and for their briefs. He invited them to the next meeting in December.	
2023-21	**MPS McCloud Update** IP opened by thanking DL for his article in the NARPO police magazine in respect of the Remedy approach. DL presented a slide deck to the Board. It was confirmed that there were 26,000 scheme members in scope, split 65% active members, 28% pensioners and 8% deferred members. For the active data, DL confirmed that all of the data collection work was complete and ready to upload to Compendia (pensions administration system), and that this will also help with the pensions dashboard in due course. The pensioner data cleanse will start in October and the deferred cleanse will commence in January. Following on from the previous Board meeting, DL said that the priority will be to focus on the vulnerable. Dl reiterated what TO and PG said earlier, that some calculations were taking over half a day each, which from a resourcing point of view, was challenging. There were 85 October retirees being worked on and 67 of these were considered complex cases, with divorce, transfer, added years elements needed to be taken into account within the calculations.	DL

Minute	MPS McCloud Update (continued)	Action
2023-21	DL said that there were a number of communication initiatives, including webinars for retiring scheme members, the launch of a Remedy website and a bespoke helpdesk, as well as a Remedy specific e-mail box being made available. The treatment of 'Contingent Decisions' were to be looked at, however legislation wasn't helpful in this respect. DL said that the people effort was enormous, with sickness and attrition amongst the staff supporting Remedy an issue. DL advised the Board that there was to be a HMRC calculator for pensions tax, however no one had seen this yet. It was expected that members would be able to use this to see what levels of tax they would be subject to under each scenario which applied to them. IPo said that it will be important for the public sector as a whole to ensure accurate messaging is provided to scheme members, as if not, there could be further claims where people do not feel that they have been informed correctly of their options and have not been able to make an informed choice. IPo invited the staff associations for comments. DS said that members were aware of the ongoing work and the availability of a Remedy calculator and that he isn't getting large numbers of queries - for now. IPo thanked DL for his input and asked that he attend future meetings to update the Board. DL then left the meeting.	DL
2023-22	**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. IPO and KA to review.	IPo / All
2023-23	**Update from the Chair** No further updates	IPo

Minute		Action
2023-24	**Other Business** 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 conformed that this meeting would be held via Microsoft Teams. IPo Closed the meeting.	IPo
2023-25	**Date of Next Meetings** 6th December 2023 6th March 2024 5th June 2024 4th September 2024	All