

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF POLICE PENSION BOARD
TUESDAY 1 JUNE 2021
10:00am**

ATTENDANCE BY VIDEO CONFERENCE:

Members: Michael Burton (Chair)
Aislinn McGuckin (T/Director of Police Administration, Northern Ireland Policing Board)
Paul King (PSNI)
Liam Kelly (Police Federation of Northern Ireland)
Brian Quinn (Independent)
Supt Ryan Henderson (Superintendent's Association NI)
ACC Mark McEwan (Chief Police Officers Staff Association)*

**Present from Item 5.1 to end.*

Also present: One Northern Ireland Policing Board (**NIPB**) Official.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received in advance of the meeting from Amanda Stewart.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair asked members to consider the agenda and advise if there were any conflicts of interest. No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Members considered and agreed the minutes from the previous meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

All members confirmed that they had completed the Conflicts of Interest Forms.

It was agreed that IDRPs would be covered separately on the agenda. However Mr King confirmed that he had included additional information in relation to the timeframe for receipt of PSNI's written report under the policy. It was agreed that the IDRPs could be uploaded to the website.

Ms McGuckin informed Members that there had been one recent IDRPs complaint forwarded to the Pensions Ombudsman and this has now been withdrawn.

AGREED: The IDRPs Policy to be uploaded onto the website.

5. PSNI GOVERNANCE REPORT & SCHEME FINANCE

Mr King briefed Members on the PSNI Governance Report paper tabled at the meeting. The paper provided Members with an analysis of scheme movements, current scheme membership, and an overview of the current performance levels for key items such as correspondence/query response times.

Issues discussed by Members included:

- The current position of PSNI's pension budget and spending as at end of May 2021.
- An overview of scheme membership between April and May 2021.
- An overview of and update on general administration and in particular in relation to response and processing times which have largely returned to normal following initial Covid-19 disruption.
- Pensions payments to include confirmation that normal monthly payrolls have been maintained.
- Retire notices, CETVs and estimate requests.
- Mr King also discussed upcoming work streams and issues to include, but not limited to, McCloud, annual benefit statements and annual allowance calculations.

Members discussed the 5 new overpayments made between April and May 2021 insofar as they pertained to notification of death of pensions. Mr Burton suggested that it might be useful for confirmation to be included within the quarterly finance update that payments are made in advance, thus accounting for such overpayments.

AGREED: Mr King confirmed that he would include a note of payments being made in advance in finance reports going forward.

Mr King confirmed that the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the external audit had been shared amongst members. All responses had been received and no issues had been identified.

It was agreed following discussions that a meeting should be convened between the Chair, Ms McGuckin and Mr King to discuss the layout of future Scheme Administrator updates to the PPB.

AGREED: A date should be agreed for a meeting to address issues regarding the Quarterly Scheme Administrator Report.

Mr King provided a status update on Police Pension Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 and Members discussed same at length, noting no fundamental changes, additions or amendments required. Mr Burton noted the hard work carried out by Mr King and his team into producing the annual accounts.

Mr Burton further advised that with benefit statements now in circulation, additional narrative was required around the McCloud judgment. Members agreed that it would be useful for pension scheme members to be provided with as much information as possible as more becomes available. It was agreed that both the Scheme Manager and Administrator would keep members updated via the appropriate channels as/when key updates were received.

AGREED: The Scheme Manager and Administrator to continue to communicate with Members as the McCloud Remedy project develops.

6. PPB RISK REGISTER

It was confirmed that all changes discussed at the last meeting had been updated on the Risk Register had been updated.

With regard to Risk 1 (Knowledge and Understanding) members were asked if to complete the Pensions Regulator toolkit in order that it be included on the training register. Members were advised that on completion of same, their completion certificate should be forwarded by return to PPB Secretariat. Some members had yet to complete the training and it was agreed that Ms McGuckin would circulate the training link to all Members.

AGREED: Ms McGuckin to circulate TPR Training Toolkit link to all members.

In the context of discussing Risk 3 (Record Keeping) Mr Burton advised that a review of needs was required in relation to the Pensions Dashboard. It was agreed that the Scheme Administrator would be best placed to consider same and that a paper in relation to the Pensions Dashboard would be brought by the Scheme Administrator to the next meeting.

AGREED: The Scheme Administrator to share a paper on Pensions Dashboard at the next meeting to include a review of needs.

In relation to Risk 4 (Reporting Breaches) newer Members of the PPB were updated on the 'Reporting Breaches Matrix' which can be utilised by the PPB on making decisions if relevant. It was agreed that this should be shared with all PPB members for reference and retention.

AGREED: Ms McGuckin will circulate Reporting Breaches Matrix to all members.

It was agreed that Risk 5 (Pension Administrator Controls) should remain as green. Members noted that PSNI and NIPB officials regularly engaged in relation to ongoing issues and an Information Sharing Agreement could be drafted between the two organisations to codify current practices.

AGREED: Mr King and Ms McGuckin to commence work on an Information Sharing Agreement and share with PPB members when complete.

Going forward, Members agreed that should be an increased focus on Risk 6 (Member Communications) in light of the McCloud judgement. Members also agreed that the action date of this risk should be updated to 'ongoing' given the nature of this risk.

AGREED: Risk 6 action date to be updated to 'ongoing.'

It was observed that Risk 7 (McCloud), will need to be broken down into more specific actions including a delivery plan and recruitment of staff. Any changes regarding McCloud should be communicated to all members.

In light of progress made, and specifically the work undertaken by the Scheme Administrator, the RAG status of Risk 8 (Covid-19) should be reduced from red to green. All members agreed to this action.

AGREED: Risk 8 should be reduced from red to green.

7. MCCLOUD REMEDY PROJECT

Members noted the paper from Mr King regarding '*Additional Staffing and Administration*'. Mr King advised that a bid had been made to the Department for increased staffing resources in light of the McCloud Judgment. Mr King spoke to the prospective workload of new staff in relation to McCloud.

Mr Burton advised that the Board's Resources Committee had expressed an interest in the issue of staffing, resources and particularly IT infrastructure and that queries had been raised as to the capability of the systems Mr King confirmed that he would provide a bespoke paper in this respect at the next meeting.

AGREED: Mr King to provide a paper on McCloud pressures with a particular focus on staffing/resourcing and IT infrastructure.

Members considered a paper provided on '*Immediate Detriment*'. The paper set out various risks in relation to Immediate Detriment and the current lack of central or local guidance meaning the Manager and Administrator are currently unavailable to adequately plan for same. It was agreed that given the complexity and urgency of this issue the matter should be escalated to the Scheme Advisory Board.

AGREED: Ms McGuckin would correspond with the Scheme Advisory Board outlining concerns raised by both the Scheme Manager and the PPB as to the lack of guidance on Immediate Detriment Cases.

8. PENSIONS REGULATOR UPDATE

Mr Quinn informed members that the Pensions Regulator had issued a consultation on the Codes of Practice which closed at the end of May 2021. Mr Quinn informed members that the new code would replace the 10 existing codes of practice and the consultation also incorporates changes introduced by the *Occupational Pensions Schemes (Governance) (Amendment) Regulations 2018*. Mr Quinn advised that these relate to effective systems of governance and risk assessment. Members discussed the specific risks in relation to public sector schemes and in particular cyber security. Members agreed that mitigation of risks could be explored with the Pensions Regulator during the relationship supervision project

Mr Burton informed members that the Pensions Regulator Supervisory Project was due to recommence imminently and the Pensions Regulator had been in

recent contact with both the PPB Chair and the Scheme Administrator. Mr Burton again confirmed that the Pensions Regulator is using the project to establish best practice and the best way forward for the relevant public sector schemes. PPB Secretariat confirmed that they would re-establish contact with the Pensions Regulator to ascertain what documents were still required and to extend an invite to the next sitting of the PPB:

Agreed: PPB Secretariat to make contact with the Pensions Regulator to exchange outstanding correspondence and extend invitation to the next PPB meeting.

9. PPB ANNUAL REPORT

Mr Burton advised referred Members to a copy of the PPB Annual Report that had been drafted for the previous financial year. He reiterated to members the importance of taking their role on the PPB seriously. He queried if anyone had any issues or questions regarding the report. All members were content with it and subsequently Mr Burton agreed that it should be published on the website.

AGREED: The PPB Annual Report should be published on the website.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

All members agreed that the next meeting should take place within the second two weeks of September. Members also agreed that the next meeting should take place in person at the Policing Board premises.

AGREED: PPB Secretariat to circulate proposed dates in September for the next meeting of the PPB.

MR MICHAEL BURTON
CHAIRMAN