

MINUTES OF MEETING OF POLICE PENSION BOARD

**WATERSIDE TOWER
FRIDAY 11 DECEMBER 2020
11:00am**

PRESENT:

Members: Michael Burton (Chair)
Amanda Stewart (Chief Executive NI Policing Board)
Aislinn McGuckin (T/Director of Police Administration, NI Policing Board)
Brian Quinn (Independent)
Paul King (PSNI)
Robert Drennan (Superintendent's Association NI).
Liam Kelly (Police Federation of Northern Ireland)

Also present: 2 x NIPB Officials

1. APOLOGIES

Mark McEwan (Chief Police Officers Staff Association).

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair asked Members to consider today's agenda and advise if there were any conflicts of interest. No conflicts of interest were declared.

Members considered the draft Conflict of Interest policy and discussed same to include in particular the Register of Interests maintained by PPB Secretariat. PPB Secretariat agreed to circulate the Conflict of Interest forms following the meeting in order that any new members could compete same. PPB Secretariat also agreed to upload a copy of the agreed Conflict of Interest policy to the website.

AGREED to action and circulate Col forms for completion by members and upload agreed Col policy to the website.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair requested that the minutes of the previous PPB meeting on 22 September 2020 be updated to include a short narrative reflecting conversations Members had during the meeting in relation to McCloud, to include in particular the IT implications of the future McCloud remedy project. Some further technical amendments were also agreed. Members agreed that, as they were content with the remainder of the minutes as a whole then these could be populated when the amendments were made by PPB Secretariat. Following consideration Members

AGREED: PPB Secretariat to make amendments as agreed and upload same to the Board's website as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Members considered a paper outlining the matters arising from the PPB meeting of 22 September 2020. Members noted that all agreed actions had been progressed or alternatively, an update would be provided during the course of today's meeting

Members noted that the PPB Terms of Reference at 5.1 had been updated to reflect quarterly meetings. The Chair advised that an annual review of the Terms of Reference (**ToR**) for PPB is now due and proposed this be included on the agenda for the next PPB meeting together with a brief discussion in relation to the PPB Annual Report which will note the progress of the scheme throughout the Covid-19 2020/21 period.

AGREED: Terms of Reference to be included as an agenda item at next meeting for the purpose of an "annual review" to include also consideration of the PPB Annual Report.

Members noted the drafting of both a Conflict of Interest Policy (see Section 2 above) and an IDR Policy.

In relation to the IDR Policy members considered the document and proposed a number of revisions to include in relation to the terminology used and reference to the Pensions Ombudsman only (with removal of references and contact details of the Pensions Advisory Service).

AGREED: PPB Secretariat to make amendments to draft IDR Policy as discussed and bring to next meeting for final sign-off and publication on both PSNI's and the Board's websites.

5. PSNI GOVERNANCE REPORT & SCHEME FINANCE

Paul King briefed Members on the PSNI Governance Report paper tabled at the meeting. This 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 response times to general pension queries.

Issues discussed by Members included:

- The current position of PSNI's pension budget and spending to include increases in Ill Health Retirement numbers which were now being progressed through the system following some delays earlier in the year owing directly to Covid-19.
- An overview of scheme membership between April and November 2020. Members noted that the number of retirements and new pensions are slightly higher as compared with previous years and that ill health retirements, currently the highest they have been in the last 15-20 years, are also expected to rise.
- An overview and update on general administration and in particular in relation to response and processing times which had returned largely to

normal business following some initial disruption owing directly to Covid-19.

- Pension payments to include confirmation that normal monthly payrolls had been maintained and paid on time. Mr King confirmed that pension mortality rates had been reviewed during the initial Covid-19 period to assess if Covid-19 had impacted on mortality rates however it was confirmed that there had not been any significant impacts and/or significant Covid-19 related date deaths to record.
- The continued workload in relation to the processing and finalisation of transfers and refunds for those leaving service. Members noted the large number of requests received from April 2020 combined with a large number received in the final quarter of 2019/20 which PSNI have continued to process as soon as possible.
- Members noted that Internal Audit completed its review of the scheme administration. A satisfactory report was received with just one recommendation. The Chair commended PSNI for the report and thanked them for their continued hard work.
- Members also received updated in relation to contributions, the annual accounts, GAD valuation return and Pensions Savings statements.

6. PPB RISK REGISTER

Members noted that the Covid-19 risk, originally contained within April 2020 update of the Risk Register was not contained within latest version. Members agreed that it was important that this remained on the Risk Register until such times as restrictions begin easing and the risk is lowered. In keeping with decision made at meeting of the PPB in September 2020 it was agreed by Members that the risk for Covid-19 would remain high.

AGREED: PPB Secretariat to repopulate Risk Register with updated Covid-19 Risk.

7. MCCLOUD CONSULTATION

Members noted that the McCloud consultation has now closed and that all key stakeholders had ensured that appropriate responses had been lodged with the Department of Finance. Members noted that responses would be issued by both HM Treasury and the Department of Finance in 2021. Mr King provided an update on plans to create a new team in the new year to commence work on data collection and cleansing to ensure that the Scheme is prepared for April 2022 changes. Mr King also confirmed that as more information is released by HMT and Department of Finance to include the exact details of the remedy, a detailed work plan will be prepared for review by PPB members.

Ms McGuckin confirmed that information sessions would be prepared, with input from the Board's independent pension advisor, to ensure all Board Members are appraised of their responsibilities as Scheme Manager to include the oversight of any financial implications arising out of the administration and payment of remedy monies.

AGREED: Board Officials to arrange a McCloud information session for all members of the Northern Ireland Policing Board, being the Scheme Manager, with an update brought to the PPB thereafter.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members noted that the Administrator and the Manager had been contacted by The Pensions Regulator in relation to the annual scheme return. Members noted that the Scheme and Administrator and Manager would work together to complete the annual return and ensure same it lodged in advance of the deadline. The Scheme Manager agreed to bring an update to the next PPB to confirm return has been lodged and outline any areas of interest being investigated by The Pensions Regulator.

AGREED: The Scheme Manager to bring an update on the annual Pensions Regulator scheme return to include update on any areas of interest for the Pensions Regulator to better inform the PPB.

Members noted, further to discussions at the PPB meeting on 22 September 2020, that a new regulator had been appointed and agreement has also been reached to hold the TPR Supervisory project until late 2020/early 2021. The Chair noted that Officials within PSNI Pensions Branch had re-established preliminary conversations with the TPR and that it may be once sufficient information and ground-work had been completed in the project that the TPR is invited to future PPB meetings to provide an update and/or observations on the scheme.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted that Secretariat would be in contact before the Christmas break in order to agree availability for the next meeting in/around March 2021.

MR MICHAEL BURTON
CHAIRMAN