

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF POLICE PENSION BOARD
THURSDAY 11 MARCH 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)*

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

**Member present for Agenda Items 1 - 6*

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received in advance of the meeting from Amanda Stewart (Chief Executive, NIPB) and ACC Mark McEwan (Chief Police Officers Staff Association).

The Chair asked for a formal note to be raised on the minutes to remind all Members that if they accept a position on the PPB then they should make every effort to attend each meeting. The Chair explained that there was a particular onus on attendance at meetings owing to the Pensions Regulator Supervisory Project, due to recommence imminently.

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.

Aislinn McGuckin confirmed that the Conflict of Interest Statement had been circulated to all Members together with the Pensions Regulator Toolkit for completion by all new Members. Members agreed it would be prudent to update the Conflict of Interest register in advance of the new financial year and Ms McGuckin confirmed that word documents of same could be circulated to all Members for ease of completion.

AGREED: Word document Conflict of Interest forms to be circulated for completion and return by Members

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Members considered the minutes from the previous meeting and noted that reference should be made to the one additional PSNI Official who was in attendance on this date. Members confirmed that once this amendment was included they were content that the minutes represented an accurate record of the previous meeting and that these should be uploaded to NIPB's website in the usual manner.

AGREED: The minutes of meeting on 11 December 2020 would be updated to reflect the presence of the additional PSNI Official and uploaded on the Board's website accordingly.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Members considered the revised Internal Dispute Resolution Policy (**IDRP**) and suggested that an entry could be included which confirmed the timeframe in which PSNI should provide a written report to NIPB on receipt of an IDRP notification. Subject to this inclusion, Members agreed that they were content with the move to a one stage process and the policy as a whole. The Chair asked for a finalised copy to be shared with all Members prior to same being uploaded by PSNI and the Board.

AGREED: IDRP policy to be updated to include timeframe for receipt of PSNI's written report under the policy, with the policy shared thereafter with all Members for sign-off.

Ms McGuckin provided a brief overview of NIPB's Annual Scheme Return to the Pensions Regulator to include an overview of the areas of focus. Ms McGuckin noted that the ongoing McCloud Remedy Project as well as Covid-19 responsiveness had featured strongly in this year's return. The Chair noted once more that the return included an annual request for scheme membership to include a record of meeting attendance throughout the reporting year. The Chair emphasised once more the importance of attendance at meetings. Members also discussed the TPR queries related to data, the gathering and storage of same and the link to the Pensions Dashboard queries.

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 as at the end of February 2021.
- An overview of scheme membership between April 2020 and February 2021.
- An overview and update on general administration and in particular in relation to response and processing times which have largely returned to normal following some initial COVID-19 related disruption
- Pension payments to include confirmation that normal monthly payrolls have been maintained and paid on time.
- The continued workload in relation to the processing and finalisation of transfers and refunds for those leaving service with the large number of requests processed this year to include 181 transfer requests currently at various stage in the system.
- Members also received updates in relation the annual accounts as well as the Government Actuary Department's assumptions for 2020/21 Pension Disclosures.

- Members noted that external audit is due to commence in April/May 2021. Mr King agreed share with Members Terms of Reference for the external audit. The Chair noted that the PPB should consider same.

AGREED: Mr King to share Terms of Reference for External Audit with PPB Members.

On completion of the update, the Chair suggested that it may be a prudent time to consider the layout of finance update report to include the inclusion of qualitative numbers in the Response Times pie-charts and inclusion of '£' sign in columns etc.

AGREED: Mr King confirmed he would consider future layout of report to include suggestions above in advance of finance report to next meeting.

6. PPB RISK REGISTER

Members reviewed and considered the grading of risks on the Risk Register. In relation to Risk (3) Record Keeping members agreed that the date for this should be extend to June 2021 to enable Mr King to provide an update on the new records management scoping exercise.

AGREED: Risk 3 Action Date to be updated to June 2021.

In relation to Risk (5) Pension Administrator controls Members notes that PSNI and NIPB officials engaged regularly 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 once finalised.

In relation to Risk (6) Member communications, Members agreed that due to the nature of this risk the action date should be updated to 'ongoing.'

AGREED: Risk 6 Action Date to be updated to 'ongoing.'

7. MCCLOUD

Members noted the Department of Finance (**DoF**) Consultation Response to the McCloud judgment as well as the Public Service Pensions leaflet and Department of Justice FAQs prepared following publication of the consultation response. Members noted that the DoF decision in relation to DCU mirrored that of the earlier HMT response. Members engaged in a discussion in relation to the contents and subsequent implication of the consultation response to include in relation to administration, resources and timelines. Mr Kelly noted that an entire paragraph contained within the HMT response in relation to accrued rights was not contained within the DoF counterpart document and suggested that this will probably be considered by the Scheme Advisory Board.

Mr King asked Members to note a key concern in relation to immediate detriment and Members leaving the 2015 CARE scheme under Ill Health Retirement with the tools/information currently unavailable to plan for same.

Members acknowledged in lieu of Regulations work was being banked and future work being stored. For example, for members who are leaving and have a right to be treated under a legacy scheme, members noted the next practical steps were currently unclear.

Mr King confirm that an administration plan had been mapped out and Ms McGuckin confirmed that the Resources Committee was receiving a bespoke briefing in relation to McCloud at its next meeting on 24 March 2021.

As this matter is beginning to progress the Chair agreed that it would be wise for PPB Secretariat to share any pertinent information with Members as/when received and, if necessary, an ad-hoc meeting of the PPB could be convened if necessary and as developments arise.

8. PPB TERMS OF REFERENCE – ANNUAL REVIEW

In line with the thresholds defined within the PPB Terms of Reference (**TOR**) the Chair reminded Members of the legal requirement to maintain their training and attend at PPB meetings. Members discussed the term within the TOR for sending a substitute to meetings but generally agreed that substitutes would not have the requisite level of knowledge to sufficiently participate. Members agreed that as a rule, all Members should be in attendance in at least 2 out of 4 of the meetings scheduled annually.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair reminded Members that the annual Public Sector Pension Conference was due to be held by video conference on 24 March 2021 and attendance at same would also qualified for a full day of CPD/training time to be included on the PPB training record.

In response to a question raised by Mr Brian Quinn in relation to the Pensions Regulator Relationship Supervision project the Chair confirmed that in a recent call with the Regulator it was confirmed that owing primarily to COVID-19 related delays, this project would be postponed until June 2021 at the earliest. The Chair reiterated once more the Regulators' confidence in the scheme and explained that the Regulator was content with the administration and management of same.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members agreed to next meeting in week commencing 31 May 2021.

AGREED: PPB Secretariat to contact all Members to confirm availability for the week commencing 31 May 2021.

MR MICHAEL BURTON
CHAIRMAN