

South West Region - Police Pensions Board

Tuesday, 16 January 2018

10.30am arrival for 11.00am

Highworth Room, Divisional HQ Swindon, Oxford Road, Gablecross,
Swindon SN3 4RB

Minutes

Present:

Ian Pollitt CBE (Chair) IP

Member Representatives:

ACC Sharon Taylor, Devon & Cornwall Police (CPOSA) ST
Superintendent Gavin Williams, Wiltshire Police (Superintendents' Association) GW
Sergeant Joe Saunders, Wiltshire Police (Police Federation) JS
Constable Tony Tester, Dorset Police (Police Federation) TT
Paul O'Brien, NARPO PoB
Robin Hobbs, NARPO RHo

Employer Representatives:

John Jones, Assistant Chief Officer, Dorset Police JJ
Richard Hicks, Dorset Police RHi
Sandy Goscomb, Director of Finance & Resources, Devon & Cornwall Police SG
Sarah Holbrook, Wiltshire Police SH
Cassie Skinner, Avon & Somerset CS

In Attendance:

Eyan Naylor, Category Manager, SW Police Procurement Department EN
Julie Taylor, Dorset Police (Secretary)

ITEM 1: APOLOGIES

Clive Barker, Assistant Chief Officer, Wiltshire Police
Julian Kern, Director of Resources, Avon & Somerset Police
Peter Skelton, Chief Finance Officer, Gloucestershire Police
Inspector Sarah Johnson, Gloucestershire Constabulary (Police Federation)
Angela Hughes, Business Support Finance Manager, Devon & Cornwall Police

ITEM 2: INTRODUCTIONS

IP welcomed everyone and introductions were made.

ITEM 3: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

IP reminded those who had yet to complete the Declaration of Interest form to do so and then submit to Julie Taylor (julie.taylor@dorset.pnn.police.uk).

No conflicts of interest were raised.

ITEM 4: MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND ACTIONS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2017 were agreed.

Actions:

- (i) Membership of the Board - JJ confirmed he had now received responses from all the Regional Chief Constables/PCCs who had given their approval. Action complete.
- (ii) Budget – agreement to set up an annual budget of £25,000 to be split equally between the five Regional Forces: JJ confirmed this has now been set up and Forces informed accordingly. Action complete.
- (iii) LGPS sending out deferred notices, contract to be checked: EN advised there was a legislative requirement that forces/public bodies within an area must have their staff side pensions undertaken by the local authority (or chosen third party provider) within which the majority of their populous resides; therefore SW Police Procurement do not have a copy of the contract to review as they would not have been involved. As this related solely to deferred members of the LGPS pension scheme, it was raised for information only.
- (iv) GMP – regular updates to be sought from Kier: EN advised Kier were liaising with HMRC to advise that they would be undertaking the work on behalf of four of the Forces in the South West (Devon & Cornwall, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire) and work had been scheduled in to carry out the reconciliation work required which would commence once the relevant data was transferred from Capita.

IP reminded the Board that HMRC had intended to write out to everyone affected by GMP after December 2018; however they have now advised they will no longer be doing this. There had been discussion at the last Pensions Board meeting about sending out correspondence to explain GMP ahead of anything circulated by HMRC. Now this was no longer the case, the Board may need to have a rethink on what it should do to ensure members were kept informed of the GMP exercise.

IP advised that Kevin Courtney (NPCC Police Pensions Adviser) would be raising the matter with the Scheme Advisory Board to obtain a national approach.

IP stated he had received correspondence advising that Avon & Somerset Police were one of the forces yet to contact HMRC in relation to GMP reconciliation. Cassie Skinner to take this forward with Peninsula. **ACTION: Cassie Skinner**

- (v) Maintenance of pensions records – an agenda item at the meeting.
- (vi) Details of Wiltshire officers yet to receive ABS to be sent to Capita: SH confirmed this had been done.

SG asked if Forces were clear on what information Kier would need in order to meet the deadline for production of ABS this year. SH confirmed all necessary data was being transferred across. The deadline for ABS to members was noted as 31 August.

Discussion was held on whether ABS must be sent in paper form through the postal system or whether it could be done electronically. This had been the subject of discussion outside the Pensions Board and had received support subject to consistent application across the Forces in the Region; there was no suggestion the ABS had to be a hard copy paper item.

The Police Federation could see no reason why the ABS could not be received electronically provided officers were given clear instruction on how and where to go to obtain their ABS online.

RH to contact Kier to explore the feasibility of distributing ABS electronically for the four Forces under the Kier contract. **ACTION: Richard Hicks**

Peninsula will need to declare their position for Avon & Somerset members.
ACTION: Cassie Skinner

The Kier ABS template to be brought to the next meeting for general review and to ensure it contained clear guidance on how members could make enquiries if they thought the information was incorrect. **ACTION: Richard Hicks**

- (vii) Invite Kier to attend future meetings: A rep from Kier will phone in to each meeting. Action complete.
- (viii) Draft annual report: an agenda item at the meeting.
- (ix) Risk Register: an agenda item at the meeting.
- (x) Compliance meetings to continue: SH confirmed this was the case. Previous arrangements had seen quarterly meetings held with the Scheme Administrator (Capita) but a more fluid arrangement was currently in place.

ITEM 5: TRAINING/KNOWLEDGE OF BOARD MEMBERS

IP reminded those who had yet to complete the online training to do so and send a copy of the development record to Julie Taylor and preferably before the next Board meeting. All Board members must undertake relevant training to ensure they have an adequate knowledge of the Police Pension Scheme and general pensions legislation to be able to consider issues that arise and challenge decisions/raise queries in relation to the pension scheme

NPCC tax awareness training for local pension boards and police employees: a series of events had been held. IP recognised that not everyone would have had the opportunity to attend, therefore he was happy to run a training session. JJ seconded this.

A training session to be held on 4 April 2018 after the SW Police Pension Board.

ACTION: Ian Pollitt / Julie Taylor – agenda

ITEM 6: SW REGION POLICE PENSIONS BOARD WEBSITE

All five SW Region Forces now have the website up and running.

JJ stated that rather than each Force host individually, one Force should host and issue to the others the hyperlink required to gain access. SG said she had specifically asked for Devon & Cornwall to host. RH to make enquires with the Communications and Engagement Department. **ACTION: Richard Hicks**

PoB said that whilst this would be of benefit to serving officers it would have no impact upon those officers who have already retired and agreed to approach National NARPO to see whether they would consider hosting an appropriate link on their website.

ACTION: Paul O'Brien

IP thanked all for their efforts in getting the website in place.

ITEM 7: MAINTENANCE OF PENSIONER RECORDS

This had been raised at the previous meeting and had come about following an issue in Wiltshire whereby following the death of a retired police officer, his widow only received a widow's one-third pension and not the half pension expected. The officer concerned had joined the Service pre-1972 and had the option to make additional payments to ensure his widow received a half pension. Unfortunately records could not be found to evidence the officer had completed any paperwork and paid the additional contributions required.

SH advised this matter had now been resolved with a copy of the relevant record being found.

NARPO raised concern over how and where the record had been found and believed the Force had failed in its duty to maintain adequate records. SH responded stating the problem arose due to the officer transferring from another force and his records not transferring with him. Wiltshire had a duty to maintain records once the officer had started with that Force.

The matter has now been raised by National NARPO advising members to check their records to ensure accuracy.

IP stated he was pleased that the matter in Wiltshire had been resolved and that the matter had also been raised nationally by NARPO.

ITEM 8: SHARING PROTOCOLS

IP reminded those present that even though the decision had been taken to form a SW Region Police Pensions Board, individual Scheme Managers remained responsible for the respective pensions information held. However it would make sense not to have five different approaches to carrying out the same task.

Discussion was held on the importance of, wherever possible, acting consistently unless there was a very good reason not to. Matters to be raised at the Board to seek a common approach, share lessons learned, pool learning and experience and avoid duplication, the intention being to try and deliver the same service to the same standard to all members.

RHo asked if there was a better way for the National NARPO Office to liaise with forces if they were intending to write out to members on a matter which could lead to a rise in enquiries. IP felt forces would welcome early contact in order to be better prepared to deal with any anticipated rise in queries, which would include informing the Pensions Administrators.

ITEM 9: DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

A draft of the first annual report of the SW Police Pensions Board was circulated. IP stated there was no legal obligation to have a report however it was encouraged as good practice.

Some of the information within the report was still awaited. Once complete a copy will be placed on the website. Discussion took place around the best time to publish such a report. IP stated it was entirely down to the Board to decide.

All comments to be fed back to Julie Taylor by the end of February. **ACTION: All**

SG said she would like the opportunity to present a copy of the final report to her Force Executive to demonstrate what she was doing on behalf of the Devon & Cornwall Scheme Manager. This was seen by all as another structured mechanism to appraise Scheme Managers.

IP said that provided the outstanding information could be obtained, the Board should be in a position to agree the finalised report at the next meeting.

ITEM 10: THE PENSIONS REGULATOR

Self Declaration to The Pensions Regulator

Dorset Police and Devon & Cornwall Police have self-referred following the potential breaches over the production of the ABS in 2017. RH reported that Dorset had had a positive experience in dealing with TPR and communication was ongoing.

Wiltshire Police and Gloucestershire Police have yet to do so.

JJ asked whether TPR would inform forces if an issue arose elsewhere in the country, eg another force experiencing problems with their Scheme Administrator. IP responded saying reps from TPR would be attending the next meeting and we could raise this with them.

The Pension Regulator Administration and Governance Survey

All Forces in the South West confirmed they had completed this survey.

After discussion it was agreed that the following would become a Standing Agenda Item at future meetings: 'The Pension Regulator – Any Issues to Review'. **ACTION: Julie Taylor**

ITEM 11: REGIONAL PENSIONS ADMINISTRATION – TRANSITION UPDATE

EN provided the following after a request to both Capita and Kier to provide an update on the contract.

Capita

- Advised transition in regard of all data passed to Kier by the deadlines set down.
- Transition support to Kier being provided.
- ABS issues resolved and reissued where required.

Kier

- Transition taking markedly longer than anticipated.
- Devon & Cornwall and Gloucestershire are the priority for transition – moving over the payroll in February.
- Dorset – go 'live' with admin in January and payroll in March.
- Wiltshire – go 'live' with admin in February and payroll in March.
- Data from Capita not as accurate as it could be, as such Kier has requested an allowance for this when Q1 KPIs are monitored.
- Capita stating payments are correct; however the information behind the payments does not reconcile. Kier are querying this.
- Necessary banking arrangements are being set up.
- HMRC authorisation letters awaited.
- Batch testing for all Forces will be carried out.

RHo enquired what handover procedures were set out in the Pensions Administration contract. EN responded stating detail of criteria which must be met in order to receive payment was set out in the extension contract with Capita; lessons had been learned and handover procedures had been included in the new contract with Kier.

ITEM 12: PENSION SCHEME ADMINISTRATION – PERFORMANCE

The KPIs on which the Kier contract will be measured against were circulated for information. Owing to the contract commencing on 1 January 2018 there was no performance data to consider on this occasion.

ITEM 13: VOLUNTARY SCHEME PAYS

Within Police Pensions and HMRC Regulations individuals who face a tax charge as a result of exceeding the pension Annual Allowance have the option within certain parameters to ask the Pension Provider to meet the charge in the first instance and then recover the charge when the pension comes into payment.

For the majority of individuals who exceed the Annual Allowance (ie a breach) they will qualify for Mandatory Scheme Pays, though potential exists for individuals, in certain circumstances, to be excluded from MSP.

Following recent national discussions the provision of Voluntary Scheme Pays (VSP) had been put forward as an option. Relevant briefing papers had been circulated to Board members for information.

The Home Office has signalled their intention to make regulatory changes that provide police pension schemes with the power to allow VSP to be offered to officers. However the Regulations have yet to be amended and after negotiation between the NPCC and the Home Office an interim approach of VSP endorsed by the Scheme Manager (Chief Constable/ PCC) had been recommended.

The decision by Scheme Managers to offer VSP must be made as soon as possible. This was to allow time to notify eligible officers before the deadline for completion of annual tax returns – 31 January 2018 and to enable the necessary election forms to be submitted.

None of the SW Forces have VSP in place at present. It was believed a small number of officers would qualify.

A decision was taken by the Board to recommend to Scheme Managers that they agree to VSP. RH to act as coordinator and circulate relevant guidance and forms for each Force representative to take to their Scheme Manager to complete and sign to signal their approval to make VSP available. **ACTION: Richard Hicks**

All such forms to be submitted to the Pensions Scheme Administrators to keep on record and to then provide the names of eligible officers in order for Forces to write to them as a matter of urgency to offer VSP.

ITEM 14: REPRESENTATIVE FROM KIER

Paul Mudd joined the meeting via telephone.

- Transition continued to go well; he had no doubt that all four Forces would migrate across successfully.
- Buy in from Capita continued. Information was being provided but not as quickly or accurately as would like; this had been raised with Capita and Kier were investing time to ensure all data was correct.
- Once all records have been built and signed off, officers would have the ability to go online to check their own record. Kier will provide guidance on how this can be done

and to advise officers to check their records before the ABS process for this year commences. This will assist in sending out accurate ABS.

- The Board stated the quicker this was done and officers notified on how to access their records online the better as this would help to build officers' confidence in the new Pension Administrator.
- Scheme Pays – IP advised the Board had discussed this earlier in the meeting and would be recommending introduction of VSP to respective Scheme Managers. Who should Forces approach in relation to identifying eligible officers? PM responded saying he would expect Capita to complete up to the end of their contract (31.3.2018), after that Kier would deal.
- IP stated he would appreciate a representative from Kier attending a future Board meeting: [1] to meet in person [2] provide an opportunity to talk through plans for the future. PM stated he would be happy to do this.

There being no further questions, Paul Mudd left the meeting.

ITEM 15: REPRESENTATIVE FROM CAPITA

Paul James joined the meeting via telephone.

1. Work concentrating on the transition – general estimates are 90-95% completed.
 2. Open dialogue with Kier to ensure everything is handed over in an appropriate manner.
 3. Minor issues arising are being dealt with.
 4. ABS – confident the majority of outstanding queries have been dealt with. Currently in liaison with Devon & Cornwall to resolve outstanding matters by the end of the month. As far as the other Forces are concerned, statements have been issued and revised statements issued where required.
 5. Following the problems experienced with last year's ABS production, JJ requested a 'close down report' setting out what had happened, how it happened, numbers involved, action taken to address. This would be useful for The Pension Regulator and for Forces to report back to their Scheme Managers. PJ stated he was happy to support this. RH to liaise with PJ to take forward. **ACTION: Richard Hicks**
- Scheme Pays - IP advised the Board had discussed this earlier in the meeting and would be recommending introduction of VSP to respective Scheme Managers. Who should Forces approach in relation to identifying eligible officers? PJ responded stating all necessary information should be sent to him. RH to coordinate and provide to Capita. **ACTION: Richard Hicks**

There being no further questions, Paul James left the meeting.

ITEM 16: REPRESENTATIVE FROM PENINSULA

On this occasion no representative was able to attend the meeting and apologies were noted; however the latest performance report had been circulated for information.

The majority of the performance measured showed a success rate of 85-90% with the notable exception of:

Injury Pension Calculation	56%
Transfer Values In	63%

CS undertook to obtain an explanation from Peninsula. **ACTION: Cassie Skinner**

ST said it would be useful to see performance reports from both Pension Administrators provided in a similar format to allow comparison. IP said it would also be useful to RAG them (Red, Amber, Green). He would forward some performance measures which he thought would be useful which were not included at present. **ACTION: Ian Pollitt**

There was also a request for explanatory notes to be included behind the success rate percentages for both sets of KPIs from the two Pension Administrators.

ACTION: Cassie Skinner for Peninsula / Eyan Naylor for Kier

EN advised the intention would be to obtain force-by-force positions against the Kier KPIs for future meetings.

ITEM 17: POLICE INJURY BENEFIT REGULATIONS – UNIVERSAL CREDIT

A briefing note was circulated for information and awareness.

ITEM 18: RISK REGISTER

The Risk Register was considered. No new risks were added.

ITEM 19: COMPLAINTS

At present the Board was unsighted on the number/nature of any complaints received. This was seen as unacceptable from a governance aspect and an area which the Board should monitor.

The Board agreed that Complaints should be a Standing Agenda Item for future meetings and requested that relevant information should be included in the performance management reports from both Pension Administrators going forward. **ACTION: Richard Hicks / Cassie Skinner**

ITEM 20: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a. IP requested a review of all communications sent out to members during the last year. He wished to make sure all information was accurate and timely.

ACTION: Richard Hicks

b. Following a request to change the start time of future meetings, the Board agreed all future meetings would commence at 10am. **ACTION: Julie Taylor**

ITEM 21: SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

- i. Avon & Somerset Police to contact HMRC in relation to GMP reconciliation. Cassie Skinner to take this forward. **ACTION: Cassie Skinner**
- ii. RH to contact Kier, CS to make enquiries with Peninsula to explore the feasibility of distributing ABS electronically. **ACTION: Richard Hicks/Cassie Skinner**
- iii. The Kier ABS template to be brought to the next meeting to review and ensure it contained clear guidance on how members could make enquiries if they thought the information was incorrect. **ACTION: Richard Hicks**
- iv. NPCC tax awareness training for local pension boards and police employees: IP to provide a training session to be held on 4 April 2018 after the SW Police Pension Board. **ACTION: Ian Pollitt / Julie Taylor – agenda**
- v. SW Region Police Pension Board website: JJ stated that rather than each Force host individually, one Force should host and issue to the others the hyperlink required to gain access. SG said she had specifically asked for Devon & Cornwall to host. RH to make enquiries. **ACTION: Richard Hicks**
- vi. Approach National NARPO to see whether they would consider hosting an appropriate hyperlink on their website. **ACTION: Paul O'Brien**
- vii. Draft Annual Report: All comments to be fed back to Julie Taylor by the end of February. **ACTION: All**
- viii. The following to become a Standing Agenda Item at future meetings: 'The Pension Regulator – Any Issues to Review'. **ACTION: Julie Taylor**
- ix. Voluntary Scheme Pays: RH to act as coordinator and circulate relevant guidance and forms for each Scheme Manager to complete and sign to signal their approval to make VSP available. **ACTION: Richard Hicks**
- x. Following the problems experienced with last year's ABS production, JJ requested a 'close down report'. RH to liaise with Capita to take forward. **ACTION: Richard Hicks**
- xi. Scheme Pays: RH to liaise with Pension Administrators to ensure the names of eligible officers are supplied to each Force representative. **ACTION: Richard Hicks**
- xii. Cassie Skinner to obtain an explanation from Peninsula in relation to the two performance measures showing a lower success rate ie Injury Pension Calculation and Transfer Values in. **ACTION: Cassie Skinner**
- xiii. Performance measures: IP to forward some performance measures which he thought would be useful and which were not included at present. **ACTION: Ian Pollitt**

xiv. Explanatory notes to be included behind the success rate percentages for both sets of KPIs from the two Pension Administrators.

ACTION: Cassie Skinner for Peninsula / Eyan Naylor for Kier

xv. Complaints: relevant information should be included in the performance management reports from both Pension Administrators. **ACTION: Richard Hicks/Cassie Skinner**

xvi. A review to take place of all communications sent out to members during the last year.

ACTION: Richard Hicks

xvii. Future meetings to commence at 10am. **ACTION: Julie Taylor**

ITEM 22: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

4 April 2018

Ops Conference Room, Avon & Somerset Police HQ, Portishead, Bristol BS20 8QJ



IAN POLLITT

Chair

