

Committee:	Date:
CoL Police Authority Board	22 June 2021
Subject: The City of London Police Pension Board – Review of Activities for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021	Public
Report of: The Chamberlain	For Information
Report author: Graham Newman – Chamberlain’s Department	

Summary

This report summarises the activities of the Police Pensions Board for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. The Police Pension Scheme Regulations 2015 provided for the establishment of a Board with the responsibility of assisting the Scheme Manager (the Commissioner of the City of London Police) in ensuring the efficient and effective governance and administration of the Police Pension Scheme (PPS).

Over the last twelve months the Board:

- continues to review the working practices of the City of London Police Pensions Office including reviews of all letters and documents issued to members, prospective members, leavers and retirees;
- monitored and where appropriate updated the Risk Register for the Board; and
- continues to undertake online training modules with the Pensions Regulator’s Toolkit.

The training needs of all Board Members continues to be monitored and training provided as required.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note this report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Public Services Pensions Act 2013 (the 2013 Act) included several provisions regarding better governance and improved accountability for all public-sector pension schemes. As a result, the Police Pension Scheme Regulations 2015 provided for the establishment of a Board with the responsibility of assisting the Scheme Manager in ensuring the efficient and effective governance and administration of the Police Pension Scheme (PPS).
2. The Scheme Manager for the City of London Police Pension Scheme is the City of London Police Commissioner, with responsibility for the administration of the Scheme delegated to the Chamberlain of the City of London Corporation.

The Role of the Police Pension Board

3. The Pension Board sits in an oversight role, to assist the Scheme Manager with ensuring the administration of the Scheme complies with
 - the Regulations;

- other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the Scheme; and
 - the requirements imposed by The Pensions Regulator in relation to the Scheme.
4. In accordance with the Regulations, the structure of the Board must include an equal number of scheme member and scheme employer representatives. The City of London Police Pension Board consists of 3 scheme member representatives and 3 scheme employer representatives.
 5. The 2013 Act makes it a legal requirement that members of the Board do not have a conflict of interest and therefore all members are expected to identify, monitor and manage any potential, actual or perceived conflicts of interest. The Members of the Board are as follows:

Scheme Employer Representatives:

Mr Alexander Barr	(Deputy Chairman from 29/06/20 to 15/04/21, Chairman since 16/04/21) – Elected Member
Superintendent Helen Isaac	Serving CoL Police Officer
Mr Henry Colthurst –	Elected Member (since October 2020)
Alderman Ian Luder –	Elected Member (until July 2020)

Scheme Member Representatives:

Mr John Todd	(Chairman from 29/06/21 to 15/04/21, Deputy Chairman since 16/04/21) – Retired CoL Police Officer
Sergeant Michael Reed –	Serving CoL Police Officer (Since January 2020)
Mr Timothy Parsons –	Retired CoL Police Officer

Appendix A sets out the attendance record of each Board Member.

Activities of the Board

6. Since 1 April 2020 two meetings have been held – 9 October 2020 and 8 February 2020. A meeting had been planned for June 2020, but due to the COVID 19 pandemic this was cancelled. It is expected that there will continue to be 3 meetings held in every year.

Training

7. Board Members have certain legal responsibilities and must be conversant with the PPS Regulations and the governance and administration of the Scheme to enable them to exercise their role as a Board Member.
8. Members are expected to keep their knowledge and understanding requirements under review. This will allow the training plan to be reviewed and updated as required to meet the training needs.
9. The Pensions Regulator has created an online learning programme, the Trustee Toolkit. The Toolkit is aimed at the board members of occupational pension schemes and Board Members have been provided with the necessary details and are expected to undertake all 7 training modules. The status of each Member's training is reviewed periodically.

10. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic the Pension Office has been implementing new ways of working to ensure the pension administration remained compliant with legislation whilst following Government guidelines working from home. This caused additional requirements on the available resource to deliver the administration during this time and has prevented any formal training being delivered to the Board by the Pensions Office in the past year.
11. Individual training was provided to the two new Board Members in December 2020.

Annual Schedule of Events

12. In order that the Board is able to monitor and oversee the administration of the Police Pension Scheme an Annual Schedule of Events to illustrate the tasks carried out by the Pensions Office, their deadlines and the actual completion dates of each task is maintained. The Schedule is updated as required and is a standing agenda item for each Board meeting.

Risk Register

13. A risk register has been created to cover the risks in respect of the City of London Police Pension Scheme. The Register is a standing agenda item for each Board meeting and means that potential risks are continually assessed, reviewed and amended or added to or removed from the Register as deemed appropriate. Since April 2020 one additional risk has been added to the register. The additional risk is the 'McCloud' legal challenge and expected remedy implementation / amendments to be made to the Scheme legislation.

Documentation and Communication

14. The Board continues to review the working practices of the City of London Police Pensions Office, including all letters and documents issued to members, prospective members, leavers and retirees to ensure optimum clarity as well as accuracy. This work is ongoing and several recommendations have been made in the past twelve months.

Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR)

15. On 25 May 2018 General Data Protection Regulations were introduced. Part of the requirement of pension schemes is to clearly communicate data use and retention. To meet this requirement, the Scheme Manager of City of London Police Pension Scheme must issue a privacy statement to scheme members.
16. A copy of the City of London Police Force's generic privacy statement was included with the 2019 annual benefit statement that was issued to all serving Police Officers by the Pensions Office. A copy of the privacy statement was also sent separately to all retired officers. A copy of the privacy statement is available to officers upon request.

Breaches of Data Security (Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) GDPR)

17. There were no known breaches during the year.

Breaches of Pension Law (The Pensions Regulator (TPR) code of practice)

18. There were no known breaches during the year.

Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice v McCloud and others

19. The Court of Appeal has ruled that reforms made to the judges' and firefighters' pension schemes were discriminatory on the grounds of age. It was determined that the reforms made to all public sector pensions schemes, including the PPS, were also be deemed to be discriminatory on the same grounds and all public sector pension schemes will need to review their regulations and possibly make amendments to them.
20. A consultation period lead to the issue of a Remedy proposal by HM Treasury. However, technical guidance and the necessary legislative changes to implement the proposed Remedy in respect of the Police Pension Scheme is still awaited.
21. The Pensions Office has joined several technical working groups in respect of the proposed Remedy and a dedicated webpage is being set up to communicate all relevant information to officers as it is released.

COVID-19

22. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pensions Office staff have been working from home since 18 March 2020.
23. The TPR have issued guidance that 3 key services should always be retained, they are:
 - Continued payment of pension benefits to existing pension members
 - Commencement of pension benefits to new retirees
 - Ceasing of pension payments due to notification of death.
24. All services provided by the Pensions Office have continued to be provided to scheme members including transfers and estimates.

Conclusions

25. The Police Pension Board was created with reference to the Public Services Pensions Act 2013 and the Police Pension Scheme Regulations 2015. Since April 2018, the Board has met twice in 2020/21 and Members are aware that they should ensure their knowledge of the Scheme is up-to-date in order that they remain compliant with their legal requirements.
26. The Board continues to review the working practices of the City of London Police Pensions Office and regularly monitors all letters and documents issued to members, prospective members, leavers and retirees. The Board maintains a Risk Register and an approved Breaches Policy.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Board Member attendance record

Contact: Graham Newman

Email: graham.newman@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Appendix A

Police Pension Board - Board Member Record of Attendance

	9/10/2020	8/02/2021
Alexander Barr	X	X
Helen Isaac	X	X
Henry Colthurst ⁽ⁱ⁾	X	X
John Todd	X	X
Mike Reed	X	X
Timothy Parsons		

Notes:

(i) Joined the Board in October 2020