



Staffordshire Police Pension Board Meeting Thursday 19th September 2019 at 14.00hrs. Financial & Commercial Services, Block 8, Police HQ Minutes

Present: Board Members

DCC N. Baker, (NB), Mark Judson, (MJ), Det. Supt. C. Mattinson, (CM)

Advisors: Finance, People Services and Procurement.

1. Minutes and Actions from previous meeting

The minutes and actions from the previous meeting were approved.

Action 24: A brief discussion was held with regards to the nomination of an Independent Chair for the Pension Board and NB recognised that best practice is for an Independent Chair, however, when asked, MJ said that he did not have any concerns with NB remaining as Chair. NB said in terms of a governance point of view a chair should be elected once a year. Following further discussion it was agreed to discuss the matter further at the Pension Board Meeting before year end and ask each representative to decide what they would like to do.

Action 30: MJ informed the meeting that a conversation had taken place with regard to this matter and that XPS had requested a generic letter rather than a bespoke letter to be signed by the Chief Constable. NB said that he had sent a letter to XPS giving approval for the letter to be sent out and that the cost would be met by NARPO.

2. Procurement of new contract

Procurement advisor informed the meeting that the procurement of a new contract was ongoing and was within the given timescales. They said it was hoped to finish the moderation this week with a view to taking the report to next week's Enabling Board meeting for approval.

NB asked if the final report should be tabled at the next Pension Board before submission to the Enabling Board and finance said that this was not necessary and would be a conflict of interest.

3. XPS Service Delivery Report

Procurement reported that the Service Delivery Report from XPS was not available as the quarter end was not until the end of September, therefore, it was agreed that the dates for the Pension Board Meetings would be moved so that the XPS Service Delivery Report was available for discussion.

4. Training Update

No update was received at the meeting.

5. Recent Decision of the Court of Appeal in Evans & Ashcroft –v- Chief Constable of South Wales Police

MJ informed the meeting that he had received a circular via the Police Federation and National NARPO with regard to Injury on Duty Officers who, prior to 2017, may have had some of their benefits unlawfully deducted. He went on to say that following this circular a template was produced which was sent to Injury of Duty Pensioners giving them the opportunity to complete it and forward it to their relevant force if they so wished. MJ said that he had been informed that although some of these pensioners have submitted the template they have not received an acknowledgement from the force. Furthermore, he stated that if the pensioners did not get satisfaction they were being advised to contact the Pension's Ombudsman. People Services advisor said that the force have acknowledged at least 20 of the forms received but at the moment they were waiting for guidance from the Home Office and had asked for

guidance from the NPCC, who have a business expert, but were still waiting for a reply. MJ said that NARPO's approach was for individuals to self-identify and HR said that this was considered to be the most sensible approach by the force. People Services representative went on to say that the matter has been referred to the Legal Department and she was awaiting a reply and the force were in correspondence with XPS in terms of how the process should work. They (People Services) also said that if this issue was applied to everyone that would be mean doing 300/400 reviews which the force would be charged for, but the proposal that NARPO have suggested means that the force are looking at the costs of those pensioners who self-identify. People Services representative then said that once the responses had been received from the Home Office and the Legal Department an update would be sent out.

MJ then said that it had been brought to his attention by some of his members that they were unable to access the Staffordshire Police External Website to view the minutes/actions of the Pension Board Meetings. People Services representative said that this was due to the force changing to a Single Sign On system which meant that some of the items on the website had been lost. They went on to say the Comms Department were aware of the issue and were in the process of reloading it, but they said that they would speak to Comms to ascertain how this was progressing.

Action 31: People Services representative to speak to Comms with regard to the progression of reloading the Staffordshire Police External Website and access to the Police Pension Board Minutes and Actions.

6. Injury Benefit Reviews – Half Yearly Progress Report

The latest Half-Yearly progress report was circulated. It was agreed that NARPO could publish it on its own website. It was noted that there had been an increase in one case from Band 1 to Band 4. For a number of cases in which there has been a reduction in injury benefit there have been applications made for a Judicial Review. It was also noted that there had been several new injury awards made in the last twelve months and some new cases were currently being assessed.

Management added that the Force was currently undergoing a tendering process to recruit additional Selected Medical Practitioners (SMP's).

The NARPO representative noted that there had been an increase in the number of injury pensioners reviewed. He had understood that there were no reviews being undertaken at present. Management explained that reviews were ongoing for injury pensioners who were engaging with the review process. Some had indicated that there had been a substantial alteration in their condition and some had requested a review.

The NARPO representative commented that he believed that there had not been an SMP willing to undertake reviews since April/May 2018, and he did not understand the reason for the delay. He noted that the Chief Constable had written to injury pensioners in April 2017 stating that the process would be completed in a timely manner but that this had not been the case. The Chair noted that there had been issues with the behaviour of some individuals towards the SMP which had caused delays in the process, and the Force had had to react to resolve them. Management pointed out that further reviews were now ongoing.

The Chair commented that he wanted to see reviews become a normal part of injury pensions in due course.