

AT A MEETING of the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board of HAMPSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL held at the Castle, Winchester on Monday, 29th January,
2024

Chairman: * Stew Adamson
Vice Chairman: * Richard Scarth

* Councillor Roger Price	* Ross Singleton
* Sean Harrison	Dan Tasker
* Richard North	Mark Hilton

* Present

96. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Mark Hilton and Dan Tasker.

97. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful of their duty to disclose at the meeting any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they had in any matter on the agenda for the meeting, where that interest was not already in the Authority's register of interests, and their ability to disclose any other personal interests in any such matter that they might have wished to disclose.

98. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed.

99. **DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations for this meeting.

100. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed the new Democratic Services Assistant, Nikola Berry, to the meeting.

101. **SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD**

There was no update for the Board on this occasion.

102. **PENSION COMMUNICATIONS**

The Board received a report from the Chair of the Board (item 7 in the minute book), which provided an update on remedy options for members and eligible members of the fire pension board, and to agree the ongoing communications plan and activities of engagement strategy.

Officers presented the report and highlighted key areas regarding the Matthews case. It was discussed that it was difficult to reach retired members so key information has been shared on social media platforms to try and capture more eligible people to sign up.

A second Matthews case letter was due to be sent out to try and encourage more people to apply and it was agreed that it needed to be very simple and explicit in what was required to make it easier to understand.

It was confirmed that the Chief Financial Officer would check with the Local Government Association about how they could follow up with someone if they say they are not interested in being part of the Matthews case. An update would come to a future meeting.

RESOLVED

The ongoing communications plan and activities of engagement were noted by the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board.

103. **LEGISLATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (LGA) UPDATE REPORT**

The Board received a report from the Chief Financial Officer (item 8 in the minute book), which provided an update from the Local Government Association on Firefighters pension matters.

Remedial Service Statement (bulletin 72) was not available for start of remedy period but members were still being offered a choice in its absence. The Chief Financial Officer agreed to create an FAQ document to make the options clear following feedback from members.

When discussing Concurrent Service (bulletin 73), it was agreed that the Chief Financial Officer would investigate how an employee's last day would affect any gap in service. An update would come to a future meeting.

The Chief Financial Officer advised that a new data sharing agreement was in progress regarding the Matthews case (bulletin 74). Members queried what pay data was missing for Hampshire and Isle of Wight so they could advise people what evidence was needed. The Chief Financial Officer would confirm at a future meeting, as well as include it in future communications.

Contingent Decisions (bulletin 74) guidance has been sent to people who requested it. Richard North to review whether cases meet requirements. Members expressed concern that the guidance on Contingency Decisions (bulletin 74) would cause confusion if publicised. Seah Harrison confirmed that it had been shared by representative bodies and already caused confusion. Members discussed ways of distributing this information and it was decided basic communications around 'is there a decision you made that looking back

would have been different because of the discrimination?' to be sent as direct communication rather than general communication or publicising. Ross Singleton offered to discuss the issue with FBU colleagues about a joint message and feedback at a future meeting.

RESOLVED

The content of the report was noted by the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board.

104. **FIRE PENSION BOARD STATUS REPORT AND RISK REGISTER REVIEW**

The Board received a report from the Chief Financial Officer (item 9 in the minute book), providing an update on the development of key items.

A pre-retirement course had been held in December had been well received and another was scheduled for February 2024. A recruits course held in January and had had great engagement with the pensions section and whilst rates were discussed, but the Chief Financial Officer would make sure the jump in rate due to competency was more explicit in future.

Members were pleased to learn that there was an increase in members who were registered on the Members Portal, and it was believed that this would continue with the portal continuing to be flagged in communications.

It was highlighted that the Risk Register (appendix a) had been updated to reflect the implementation of an inhouse HIWFRS HR team.

Due to the delay of the McCloud software, employees were having their pensions manually calculated, which was manageable currently but not as a long-term solution. A further update would come to the Board once more information was known.

Cllr Price requested a breakdown of figures to show the proportion of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue cases dealt with by HPS compared to Police and the Chief Financial Officer agreed to bring this information to a future meeting.

The Board discussed the possibility of an update on general pension cases and requests every meeting and the Chief Financial Officer agreed to look into more regular reporting.

RESOLVED

- a) The content of the report was noted by the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board.
- b) The Risk Register as set out in paragraphs 7 - 9 and Appendix A was approved by the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board with additional information to be added about lack of Pension Fund Grant for years 2 and 3.

Chairman,