

AT A MEETING of the HFRA Hampshire Firefighters' Pension Board held at the
Fire and Police Headquarters, Eastleigh on Tuesday, 9 July, 2019

Chairman:
* Stew Adamson

- * Malcolm Eastwood
- * Richard North
- * Councillor Roger Price
- * Dan Tasker

*Present

Also present with the agreement of the Chairman:

Jo Thistlewood, Technical Finance Manager, Isle of Wight Council

64. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Members were present and no apologies were noted.

65. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Clerk called for nominations for a Chairman, noting the requirements of the Firefighters' Pension Board Terms of Reference. Stew Adamson was nominated, seconded and in the absence of any further nominations duly appointed Chairman of the Pension Board until the first meeting of the Board following the Annual meeting of the Fire Authority in 2020.

66. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Clerk called for nominations for a Vice-Chairman, noting the requirements of the Firefighters' Pension Board Terms of Reference. Richard North was nominated, seconded and in the absence of any further nominations duly appointed Vice-Chairman of the Pension Board until the first meeting of the Board following the Annual meeting of the Fire Authority in 2020.

67. 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 entered 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.

There were no declarations of interest received for the meeting.

68. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed.

69. **DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations on this occasion.

70. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed Dan Tasker to his first meeting of the Board.

71. **SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD VERBAL UPDATE**

The Board received a verbal update from Malcolm Eastwood and Councillor Price on the Firefighters' Pensions Scheme Advisory Board (SAB). The Board heard that in relation to the McCloud judgement, there was no determination yet and further guidance was being awaited. Members heard that there had been discussions about standardising the member self service function across the Service. Topics such as the Government spending review and dashboard initiative were also discussed as well as the work of the three SAB sub-groups and the general political instability nationally.

Members noted that a verbal update on the Scheme Advisory Board would be a standing agenda item for future meetings.

RESOLVED:

That the Firefighters' Pension Board noted the update on the Scheme Advisory Board.

72. **FIRE PENSION BOARD ANNUAL REPORT (2018/19) AND PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PENSION BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members received a report of the Chief Finance Officer setting out the Fire Pension Board Annual Report (2018/19) and Proposed Changes to the Pension Board Terms of Reference (Item 9 in the Minute Book) which would be submitted to the next meeting of the HFRA Standards and Governance Committee.

Officers took Board Members through the report and highlighted the breath of work which had been undertaken during 2018/19. Key issues during the year were highlighted to Members which included injury pensions review, and injury pensions and department of work and pensions. It was hoped that the review processes which would look into injury pensions would be implemented in a few months time. Officers highlighted that in relation to temporary promotions, the Board had endorsed the decision to keep these as pensionable payments.

In relation to communications and meetings during 2018/19, it was noted that there had been considerable work undertaken which included: changes to the

fire intranet homepage portal, regular employer pension group meetings and presentations on fire pensions. Members of the Board highlighted that they had received excellent feedback on the presentations and these had been very well received. Paragraphs 46-52 detailed the situation in relation to the annual scheme returns which had been completed by the pension regulator deadline of 6 November 2018. It was heard that the accuracy of data held had also been measured by Hampshire pension services and this had presented at 95% or above for each data type and scheme. A query was raised as to how many firefighters were not in the pension scheme and it was heard that this was presently at 19%, and a large number of these were retained and have employment.

Other key issues during 2018/19 were highlighted which included benchmarking, annual benefit statements and voluntary scheme pays. It was noted that the deadline for issuing annual benefit statements by the 31 August 2018 had been met. The position in relation to voluntary scheme pays was brought to Member's attention and it was noted that the Board had supported the recommendation to allow voluntary scheme pays to affected members, and the HFRA Standards and Governance Committee would be asked to approve this recommendation. Officers drew attention to other issues which had been brought to Board meetings during 2018/19 and were set out in the report, these included: amendment legislation, employer contributions and consultations. In relation to the scape discount rate, it was heard that there had been a change to this and this would result in a significant increase to employer contributions from 1 April 2019.

Proposed changes to the Pension Board's Terms of Reference were reviewed and these would be put forward for approval at the next HFRA Standards and Governance Committee meeting. Members also discussed the work plan and thanked the Employer Pension Manager for her continued hard work throughout the year.

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Report is agreed for submission to HFRA Standards and Governance Committee.

73. HAMPSHIRE FIRE PENSIONS ADMINISTRATION REPORT 2018/19

Members received a report from Pensions Services, providing the Board with an update on pensions administration (Item 10 in the Minute Book).

Members of the Board were taken through the report and it was heard that active benefit statements would be produced once the annual returns were produced which would be by the 31 August.

In relation to the Walker Case, it was heard that there was confidence that no cases required further examination or recalculation.

Members heard that the Pensions Services team had been awarded the Customer Service Excellence accreditation earlier in the year in seven different

areas, and Members congratulated this achievement. In answer to a Member query, Officers would find out how many areas there were where Customer Service Excellence accreditation could be achieved.

RESOLVED:

That the Firefighters' Pensions Board noted the contents of the report and recognised the achievements of the Pensions Services team.

74. LEGISLATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA) UPDATE REPORT

Members received an update report of the Chief Finance Officer on Legislation and Local Government Association (Item 11 in the Minute Book).

The report was introduced and officers explained that in relation to the exit cap consultation, this wouldn't affect Fire Pension Schemes, but attention was drawn to paragraphs 9-14 of page 40 of the agenda pack which detailed the two specific payments which could be considered under the exit cap. It was noted that there were no cases known, but if any cases should occur then this would result in a reduced pension.

The position in relation to pensionable pay guidance was set out. It was heard that an HFRA project was currently underway to review pay and allowances, and the difficulties in defining pensionable pay was explained.

Members echoed their thanks to officers for their continued work in this area.

RESOLVED:

That the Firefighters' Pension Board noted the contents of the report.

75. FIRE PENSION BOARD STATUS REPORT

Members of the Board received a report of the Chief Finance Officer (Item 12 in the Minute Book) regarding ongoing issues.

The report was introduced and Officers led Board Members through the report highlighting the development of key issues. It was heard that in relation to communications, a presentation to new recruits had been delivered recently by the Employer Pension Manager, who had also attended a recent LGA Police and Fire Governance seminar and Ill Health and Injury Pension Workshop. Members heard that the fire pension schemes member portal had gone live on 1 April with 71 of 1,167 members registered as of 4 June 2019. The Board were asked for thoughts on how to increase registration numbers and further email communication and communication via the Fire Brigade union was discussed. There were concerns about the low registration numbers as members would now only be able to view their benefit statements online, and the Chairman would look into how best to publicise registration.

It was heard that the job vacancy for the vacant scheme member position on the Board had been re-advertised due to an unsuccessful recruitment exercise, and a new member would hopefully be in place soon.

Officers explained the situation in relation to the Combined Fire Authority and temporary promotions and it was heard that once the combination order had been agreed by Government then work would be undertaken to understand the impact of the decision for both authorities. The situation in relation to temporary promotions and different cohorts was explained, and it was noted that four members had so far retired in 2019/20, with the remaining members still in employment and could retire at any point. Members of the Board heard that if the maximum cost envelope was exceeded then approval would need to be sought from the Authority for additional funding.

RESOLVED:

That the Firefighters' Pension Board noted the contents of the report.

Chairman,