

AT A MEETING of the HFRA Hampshire Firefighters' Pension Board held at the  
Fire and Police Headquarters, Eastleigh on Friday, 26 April, 2019

Chairman:  
\* Stew Adamson

\* Malcolm Eastwood  
\* Richard North  
\* Councillor Roger Price  
Dan Tasker  
VACANCY – Scheme Member

\*Present

**Also present with the agreement of the Chairman:**

Jo Thistlewood, Technical Finance Manager, Isle of Wight Council  
Cllr Reg Barry, Member of Isle of Wight Fire Authority Firefighters' Pension  
Board  
Paula White, Northern Island Fire and Rescue Service  
Carolyn Lyness, Northern Island Fire and Rescue Service

**57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Dan Tasker.

**58. 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.

No declarations of interest were received.

**59. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the last meeting on the 8 January 2019 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

**60. DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations on this occasion.

**61. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that Dan Tasker had been formally appointed at the last Authority meeting as an employer representative to the Board, replacing Tom Simms who had recently retired from the Service.

The Chairman clarified some arrangements around the future new combined fire authority, and confirmed that arrangements for the operation of the new authority would be reviewed once the new authority was constituted.

**62. LEGISLATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA) UPDATE REPORT**

The Pension Board received a report of the Chief Finance Officer providing an update on Legislation and the Local Government Association (Item 6 in the Minute Book).

Officers took Members of the Board through the report highlighting and explaining key issues. It was noted that there was a dedicated resource in place to examine key issues arising and Members of the Board extended their thanks to Officers for their hard work in compiling the update report. In relation to the Court of Appeal Transitional Protection Case, it was heard that the government were still waiting for a response from the Supreme Court regarding the right to appeal, and information on this would be communicated in a timely and appropriate manner.

Following a Board Member query in relation to the "Walker judgement" amendment as set out in paragraph 10 of the report, it was confirmed that the number of relevant members of the pension scheme who could be affected would be included in the next pensions administration report.

RESOLVED:

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

**63. FIRE PENSION BOARD STATUS REPORT**

Members of the Board received a report of the Chief Finance Officer (Item 7 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. Officers drew attention to issues such as Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures (IDRP's) and the court ruling against Mid and Wales FRA. Since the last Board meeting there had been a Stage 2 IDRP which was unusual, as given the complexity of the pension scheme, the number of IDRP's was very low. The situation in relation to the court ruling against Mid and Wales FRA as set out in paragraphs 15-24 of the report was explained, and it was heard that the Employer Pension Manager had looked into whether HFRS would be affected, but as the full judgement was not publically available, it was not possible to confirm this at this time.

In relation to communications, it was heard that the Employer Pension Manager had recently attended a regional session of scheme manager training and this had proved particularly useful. It was also noted that the member portal for fire pension schemes went live on the 1 April 2019, and Members of the Board felt it would be useful to receive a demonstration of this at a future Board meeting.

It was heard that the Employer Pension Manager had been invited by individual station managers to attend a number of full-time fire stations such as Rushmoor, Gosport, Fareham and Basingstoke to present on pensions. These had been well received and the Chairman would investigate promoting this service on the portal.

Officers highlighted that in relation to Pension Board training, the LGA would be offering essential training for new Board Members in June, but this was also open to other Board Members to attend if they so wished. Following on from the resignation of Alex Rhodes, it was agreed that Richard North would lead on training needs on behalf of the Board. The Chairman would also liaise with the Employer Pension Manager in relation to a regional training session.

An update on the situation around injury pensions was given, and Board Members heard that there was a responsibility to carry out reviews of injury pensions, but individuals in receipt of DWP benefits also had responsibility to inform of their individual situation. Officers highlighted that the response rate was good with 84 replies received from the 89 pensioners in receipt of an injury pension who were written to. The Board were asked to consider what constituted an appropriate interval for any further reviews, and the period of five years was proposed and agreed.

Issues relating to scheme specific conditional data were highlighted as set out in paragraphs 47-51 of the report. It was explained that the scores reported for the scheme specific conditional data were 97% or higher, which was seen to be good, but it was highlighted that the scoring did not take into account of any scheme specific conditional data that may be held by the employer. Officers drew attention to the differences between common and conditional data and it was noted that confusion nationally over scoring had led to the LGA looking to establish a focus group to provide guidance.

Officers provided an overview of employer contributions and the flow of employer contributions. In relation to employer contributions, the complexities around the increase in these were set out in paragraphs 52 - 58. Officers explained that the initial grant funding from Government to HFRA and other FRA's would need increasing as there will be a shortfall. It was noted that the Government would honour the shortfall, but final confirmation of this was still to be received. The uncertainty of what would result from the Spending Review was also highlighted.

An update on GMP Scheme Reconciliation and the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) was given as set out in page 63 of the agenda report pack. It was noted that in relation to the CFA, and once approved by the Secretary of State, a new Fire Pension Board would need to be set up and the structure of the Board and the Terms of Reference would need to be reviewed.

The Chairman asked Malcolm Eastwood to provide a brief verbal update on the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB), and it was heard that this would be added to future agendas as a standing agenda item. Malcolm reported that various issues were being looked at, including differences between the local Pension Boards, as well as concerns relating to recruitment and retention. Malcolm also reported the concerns relating to the financial burden being experienced by all Fire Authorities. A question was raised about whether the previously circulated SAB questionnaire would be sent out again, and it was heard that it had been discussed at the SAB as to whether this would be a recurring event.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the HFRA Firefighters Pension Board endorsed a time period of five years for any further reviews of injury pensions
- ii. That the HFRA Firefighters' Pension Board noted the contents of the report.

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Chairman,