

AT A MEETING of the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board held at Fire and Police HQ, Eastleigh on Tuesday, 5th July, 2022

Chairman:

* Stew Adamson

Vice-Chairman:

* Richard Scarth

* Sean Harrison

* Councillor Roger Price
Ross Singleton

Mark Hilton

* Richard North
* Dan Tasker

* Present

36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Ross Singleton and Mark Hilton.

37. 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 HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board until the first meeting of the Board following the annual meeting of the Fire Authority in 2023.

38. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Chairman called for nominations for a Vice-Chairman, noting the requirements of the Firefighters' Pension Board Terms of Reference. Richard Scarth was nominated, seconded and in the absence of any further nominations duly appointed Vice-Chairman of the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board until the first meeting of the Board following the annual meeting of the Fire Authority in 2023.

39. 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.

No interests were declared.

40. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting held on the 19 April were reviewed and agreed.

41. **DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations on this occasion.

42. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Stew Adamson thanked Board Members for appointing him as Chairman of the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board for a further year.

43. **SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD**

The Board received a verbal update from the County Councillor Employer Representative. It was noted that there had been recent meetings between the SAB, Home Office and Local Government Association about pension issues. It was heard there were a lot of similar issues, which could be looked at further.

It was heard that other issues relating to the SAB were highlighted in reports later in the agenda.

44. **HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT FIRE PENSIONS ADMINISTRATION REPORT 2021/22**

Members of the Board received a report from Hampshire Pension Services (HPS) providing the Board with an update on pensions administration during 2021/22 (Item 9 in the Minute Book).

Officers presented the report to the Board and highlighted key areas of the report. In terms of administration performance, it was confirmed that all cases had been completed on time. In relation to registration to the online member portal, the table at paragraph 6.2 of the report detailed the number of active, deferred and pensioner members registered, and it was noted that encouragement would be given to those who had still made no contact to either register, or to opt out and receive in paper. Officers were pleased to confirm that following a re-assessment of Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation, HPS received full compliance for all 57 of the criteria, and were awarded 'compliance plus' in six areas which were detailed at paragraph 7.2.

Details relating to complaints and a data breach were explained to the Board, as well as audits in relation to pension administration during 2021/22. Officers were pleased to confirm that a substantial rating had been achieved for the areas audited. In relation to cyber security, it was noted that there were no concerns highlighted following penetration testing.

Questions were raised with officers around the data breach and why this wasn't reported. It was heard that this may not be a material breach, which was why it wasn't reported, but officers would follow this up and inform the Board. In relation to McCloud and the development of software required to administer the

McCloud remedy, officers were asked whether the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) had been involved in any discussions around this, and this would be looked into.

The Chairman thanked officers for presenting the report, which provided reassurance of the outstanding performance of HPS.

RESOLVED:

That the HIWFRA Firefighter's Pension Board noted the report which provided reassurance about the performance of Hampshire Pension Services.

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

The Board received an update on Legislation and the Local Government Association (LGA), Item 10 in the Minute Book.

Officers presented the report to the Board and highlighted key areas. Paragraphs 4-6 of the report detailed Member Benefit Illustrations which could be found on the Firefighters' Pension Scheme website, and was a useful tool for members in the absence of any individual calculator or estimate. Members of the Board who had looked at these, confirmed the tools were useful and made sense.

Officers also drew attention to abatement guidance recently published by the LGA, and it was noted that the approach taken by HPS was consistent with this guidance. Officers also highlighted that Elena Johnson had recently joined the LGA in the role of Pensions Adviser (Governance), and would be able to provide training to Board Members if required.

RESOLVED:

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

46. FIRE PENSION BOARD STATUS REPORT AND RISK REGISTER REVIEW

The Board received a report which provided an update on ongoing issues (Item 11 in the Minute Book), and also the Board's Risk Register for review. The report was introduced and key issues were highlighted.

The Board heard that in relation to member portal registration, figures at the end of May 2022 showed a slight increase. A query was raised about the figures detailing the registration of active members in the table at paragraph 8, and officers confirmed that these would be checked and amended, and an updated report would be published. Officers drew Board Members attention to the tables at paragraphs 14, 17 and 18 which detailed analysis requested at the previous meeting on pension scheme member participation. The figures were discussed and it was heard that some members had opted-out because they were not able to afford to pay pension contributions. Board Members were asked for their views on this analysis and whether any further analysis was required. Board Members queried whether a survey could be circulated to ascertain reasons for opting-out, and it was heard this had been done previously and had a poor

response rate. It was agreed that further analysis around male/female opting-out could be useful and the Chairman of the Board confirmed that he would initially discuss this with the Service's diversity group.

Officers highlighted other issues such as the Risk Register and Matthews/O'Brien case. In relation to the Risk Register, it was confirmed that as requested by the Board at the last meeting, the risk of Isle of Wight (IoW) data in relation to Matthews be added to the Register, and this was shown in the Register at Appendix B. Paragraphs 23-31 detailed the current situation in relation to Matthews/O'Brien case and it was explained that the IoW had sent most of the data requested for the Matthews remedy. The tables at paragraph 29 highlighted the number of cases subject to Matthews remedy, and the number of cases subject to both Matthews and McCloud remedy. Funding has been received from the Home Office to assist with the administration of this project.

Paragraphs 32–39 detailed the current situation around McCoud/Sargeant remedy. It was heard that in response to whether all active members of the fire pension scheme felt that they were 'in scope' or 'out of scope' for remedy, out of the responses received, 12 indicated that they should be 'in scope'. Officers highlighted that this had been a good data checking exercise and these responses would be followed up. Officers also highlighted the current situation with Immediate Detriment (ID), and it was confirmed that this was still currently paused, which was the situation with many other Fire Authorities (FRA's), and a report on ID would be brought to the next meeting of the HIWFRA Standards and Governance Committee on the 29 July for consideration. Board Members queried why some FRA's were offering ID, and it was noted that these FRA's were taking high risks in doing so, to their individual members and to their FRA. It was confirmed that HIWFRA had written to all members who had applied for ID under the framework to inform them of the current position, and there had also been engagement with the local FBU.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the content of the report was noted by the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board.
- ii. That the Risk Register as set out in paragraphs 20-22 and Appendix B was approved by the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board.

Chairman,