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AT A MEETING of the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board held at Fire and Police HQ, Eastleigh on Tuesday, 31st January, 2023 at 11.00

*Present

Chairman:* Stew Adamson
Vice Chairman: * Richard Scarth

* Sean Harrison,
Mark Hilton
* Richard North

* Councillor Roger Price
Ross Singleton
* Dan Tasker

55. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Mark Hilton and Ross Singleton.

56. **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.

57. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed.

58. **DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations.

59. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Mellor, the Chairman of the Standards and Governance Committee, who had come to observe the meeting.

He thanked Clare Neale for completing the The Pension Regulator (TPR) survey and reminded Members that they had until the following week to provide any comments they have.

The Chairman then reminded Members that there would be a training session after the meeting.

60. SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD

Councillor Price explained that this item is covered very well in the reports later the in agenda and that he had nothing further to report.

61. LEGISLATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (LGA) UPDATE REPORT

The Board received an update on legislation and the Local Government Association (LGA). (Item 7 in the minute book).

Officers presented the report and highlighted four bulletins had been issued by the LGA since the last meeting, which were attached as appendices A-D to the report.

Board Members' attention was drawn to:

- Paragraph 7 of the report regarding Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) collaboration sessions on Matthews, the aims of which were to discuss the legislation and policy, the interactions between this and McCloud and the proposed timeline for implementation.
- Paragraph 9, regarding Pension Dashboards. The officer explained that a report from Hampshire Pension Services (HPS) would be presented to the Board providing an update on progress in due course.
- Paragraph 17 and that the judicial review hearing related to the McCloud remedy costs in the costs control mechanism commenced on 30 January and not 23 January as stated in the report.

In response to a Member's question, the Board heard that with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) being suspended, apart from special cases, no more immediate detriment will take place and that if an amended version of the MOU is in place, a decision would need to be made based on the risks.

The Chairman confirmed that in respect of immediate detriment HIWFRA is allowing re-engagement on a case-by-case basis, and that a number of members of staff have been supported. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that the Standards and Governance Committee had approved the continued suspension of the Framework in July 2022.

Resolved

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

62. FIRE PENSION BOARD STATUS REPORT AND RISK REGISTER REVIEW

The Board received a status report and an update on the Risk Register (Item 8 in the minute book).

The Employer Pension Manager (EPM) introduced the report and explained that pre-retirement courses had been booked up until November 2026, with three courses being run in a year.

The Chief Financial Officer explained the issues that had been raised by the on-call firefighters based on the Isle of Wight. She reported that the aim is to run face to face sessions with these members of staff to discuss their specific issues and to be able to signpost them to further information where applicable. She further reported that this engagement was important to ensure that people were 'clear' before any new offer was made to them.

In response to a question from a Board Member, it was confirmed that:

- That level of issue had not been raised by staff on the mainland and the problems stem from a period before combination.
- Officers had been working with the Fire Brigades Union on this issue.

The Board heard that:

- The first 'in person' Fire Pension Scheme AGM had taken place after a couple of years and that the EPM and a Board Member had attended.
- As at the end of December, there had been a small increase in the uptake of the use of the Portal. Members discussed the fact that if the new dashboard encourages deferred members to contact HPS, then this will provide better information relating to these scheme members.
- The annual Pension Regulator (TPR) scheme returns had been submitted and the data scores were improving and reported at paragraph 15 of the report.

In response to a Member's question, it was explained that the jump in the data score for the 2006 Modified Fire Pension Scheme was due to the way the data is reported and the tidying up of records.

The EPM reported that there had been no amendments to the Risk Register since the last report in October 2022.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraphs 18 and 19 of the report regarding the Matthews/O'Brien case and that there is a claim form on the members Fire Pension Scheme website for people who believe they are in scope and that a project team will be set up to deal with the remedy.

It was explained that scheme members will need to be put into separate cohorts to ensure those affected by McCloud are taken into consideration. A pictorial

timeline was provided at Appendix C to provide an overarching view of the work with key dates.

The Board heard that:

- A meeting had been held between Board Member, Sean Harrison, the EPM and the Media and Communications team to discuss a communications plan and timeline.
- The next challenge for McCloud Remedy Working group will be to identify all the members who have some opted out service during the remedy period. Members that have opted out may have the option to raise a contingent decision and may be given the opportunity to have the service reinstated.
- A review was carried out of all firefighters' transition dates and protection status' that had been awarded in 2012, specifically for those that had multiple employments during the remedy period. 46 were found to have an incorrect transition date and protection status, and these amendments could not be changed without altering the remedy options. Due to the complexities of trying to explain the issue to members, some of whom have left employment, the resources required to resolve the individual issues and the timings in trying to correct the position before 1 October 2023, a pragmatic decision was made that these cases will be left and corrected as part of the overall remedy situation.
- There is a period of 18 months for members to be provided with their McCloud remedy options. The workload needs to be managed on top of business as usual, which will also include those retiring on or after 1 October 2023 and the implementation of the Matthews remedy.

The Board discussed the staffing and workload implications of this work and the fact that pensions is a specialised area. Board Members requested that a new risk be considered and developed relating to the failure to attract and recruit and the relevant staff to administer the Pensions' function.

Resolved

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

The risk register as set out in paragraphs 16-17 was approved by the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board.

Chairman, HIWFRA Firefighters'
Pension Board

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