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AT A MEETING of the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Police Headquarters, Eastleigh on Thursday 18 April 2024

Chairman: \* Stew Adamson  
Vice Chairman: \* Richard Scarth

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

## 105. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received from Rob Sarfas, Mark Hilton and Dan Tasker.

## 106. **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.

## 107. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed.

## 108. **DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations.

## 109. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced his resignation effective in June but advised that a replacement would be elected at the next meeting. The Chairman also announced the immediate resignation of Mark Hilton and advised that there will be an advert for an Employee Representative circulated shortly.

## 110. **FIRE PENSION BOARD ANNUAL REPORT**

The Board received a report from the Chief Financial Officer (item 6 in the minute book), from the Fire Pension Board to the Standards and Governance Committee, which summarised the work of the Board for the 2023/24 financial year in the exercise of its functions.

Officers discussed what could be done to increase response numbers from communications about the Matthews Remedy and it was agreed, by the Chief Financial Officer, that a more streamlined and easier to understand letter would

be sent out to members. It was agreed that the sentence 'complied with all legislation and no cases of non-compliance' would be added.

It was agreed that a paragraph will be added under Future Issues, to show the structure and make-up of the board.

#### RECOMMENDATION

The contents of the annual report were approved, with amendments, for submission to the HIWFRA Standards and Governance Committee by the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board.

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

The Board was briefed by the Chief Financial Officer (item 7 in the minute book) regarding updates on Legislation and the Local Government Association.

It was noted that monthly meetings with Hampshire Pension Services, now including HR representatives, have streamlined processes. However, the Chief Financial Officer expressed concern over the timing of information from the Local Government Association, often received last-minute before deadlines. Additionally, upcoming discussions regarding the Matthews Remedy with the Home Officer Update were highlighted.

Requests from the Local Government Association for implementation dates for member Opt-Outs and Matthews Remedy were acknowledged, alongside an ongoing review of employee pension contributions.

An updated GAD calculator for the Matthews Remedy, designed for specific niche cases, was reported. Concerns were raised regarding potential over-caution in complying with Data Sharing Agreements, slowing processes, and seeking clarification on contradictory guidance concerning transfer scenarios on Contingent Decisions, particularly concerning what relates to Fire and/or Police.

The Chief Financial Officer informed the Board of factsheets produced by The Pensions Regulator outlining key processes' performance, primarily relevant to Pension administration rather than Board actions, to be addressed before the next survey.

Upcoming training sessions were highlighted, with the Chief Financial Officer recommending logging training activities at the next meeting and providing key highlights.

Lastly, an extensive survey regarding progress in implementing the Matthews Remedy was received, though resource constraints prevented a full response. The Chief Financial Officer communicated ongoing challenges to the surveyors, acknowledging limitations in providing a comprehensive reply.

#### RECOMMENDATION

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

## 112. PENSION BOARD STATUS REPORT AND RISK REGISTER REVIEW

The Board was briefed by the Chief Financial Officer (item 8 in the minute book) on the progress of Communication, The Pensions Regulator Scheme Returns, Meetings, Member Portal, McCloud Remedy, Matthews Remedy, and Risk Review.

Regarding Communication, it was noted that although monthly updates from Pension Services are being received, the volume of inquiries is lower than expected. This may be due to queries being directed to incorrect channels or uncertainty on how to raise them. To address this, it was proposed that contact details be disseminated through a bulletin. Additionally, it was agreed that a representative from Pension Services should attend a HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board meeting to provide insight into the nature of completed calls/enquiries. Similar consideration was given to inviting a representative from Payroll, given their distinct operational context.

On the topic of The Pensions Regulator Scheme Returns, the Chief Financial Officer reported positive figures with no immediate concerns. It was resolved to adjust the reporting to include data on auto-enrolment and opt-out rates, as well as a table of new recruits' opt-in/out levels.

Regarding the McCloud Remedy, it was explained that due to a lack of clarity between the Home Office, HMRC, and Treasury, work had been paused on guidance from the Local Government Association. The Local Government Association proposed three options, with consensus favouring the third option pending further guidance. Employees will be given the choice to proceed with their payout immediately without interest calculated (with the agreement this is reviewed once the final calculator is confirmed or hold off until the calculator is confirmed, and a final figure agreed. The Risk Register has been updated accordingly.

The Chief Financial Officer provided an update on the Matthews Remedy, noting the complexity of the calculator and prioritisation of existing queries. However, with increased capacity, a simplified communication strategy will be implemented, extending the deadline to accommodate this process.

Lastly, the Risk Register was revisited, with Risk 5 (McCloud) amended to reflect current developments, including an update to the risk level colour to rectify an error.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

The content of the report was noted by the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board. The Risk Register was approved by the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board, subject to amendments.

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Chairman,

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