

AT A MEETING of the HFRA Hampshire Firefighters' Pension Board held at the
Fire and Police Headquarters, Eastleigh on Tuesday, 8th January, 2019

Chairman:

* Stew Adamson

- * Malcolm Eastwood
- Richard North
- Councillor Roger Price
- Alex Rhodes
- * Tom Simms

*Present

Also present with the agreement of the Chairman:

Jo Thistlewood, Technical Finance Manager, Isle of Wight Council

49. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Roger Price, Richard North and Alex Rhodes.

50. 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.

51. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting on the 19 October 2018 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

52. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations on this occasion.

53. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that Alex Rhodes had expressed that he would be resigning from the Board, and Tom Simms would be retiring from the Service in February. The Chairman extended his thanks for their contribution to the Board and it was confirmed that processes would be put in place to fill the vacant positions on the Board in due course.

54. 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 including changes to the SCAPE discount rate and the role of the Independent Qualified Medical Practitioner (IQMP). Paragraphs 13 and 14 of the report set out the position of over and underpayments in respect of Guaranteed Minimum Pensions and it was noted that no significant over or underpayments had been made, but some queries had been raised in relation to this which would be followed up. The Board noted that the administrator and employer survey issued by AON Hewitt had been completed and returned as referenced in paragraph 15 of the report. Board Members also noted that details of the Scheme Advisory Board levy had been received and this had been set at £7.69 per active firefighter.

Officers updated the Pension Board on Pensionable Pay as detailed in paragraphs 17 to 20 of the report, and the position of Welsh Fire Authorities as a result of the Pensions Ombudsman (PO) determination was explained. Whilst this determination didn't affect English Fire and Rescue Authorities, Officers wanted to highlight the complexities of pensionable pay to the Board particularly around USAR payments and training allowances. Members of the Board discussed the complexities of allowances and pensionable pay. The recent review of allowances by HFRS was highlighted, and it was noted that pensionable allowances had also specifically been reviewed. Officers confirmed that advice would be sought before any future decisions regarding pensionable pay were made by the Authority.

Paragraphs 21 to 23 of the report set out the position of Member disclosure and Officers explained key issues relating to this, including cohabiting partners. It was noted that communication informing Members that they would be notified of any material change to basic scheme information had been included on the home page of the fire portal. The Pension Board heard that the number of people who may be affected was small.

RESOLVED:

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

55. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION BOARD

Members of the Board received a report of The Clerk (Item 7 in the Minute Book) inviting them to review the current Terms of Reference for the Firefighters' Pension Board and recommend any amendments to the HFRA Standards and Governance Committee, as the Scheme Manager.

The Board reviewed the Terms of Reference as set out at Appendix 1 to the report and queries were raised. In relation to paragraph 3.8 of Appendix 1, it was heard that it was good practice to continue with the initial fixed four year appointment term for Board Members to ensure consistency to the Board and achieve maximum benefit. It was noted that the position of Director of Professional Services no longer existed, as set out in paragraph 5.1 of Appendix 1 to the report, and the Clerk would seek advice as to which officer position should now be referenced. Clarification as to the purpose of paragraph 5.1 would also be sought from legal officers.

Members of the Board agreed that the Clerk make revisions to the Terms of Reference after clarifying points raised, and informally invite comments from Board Members ahead of the next formal meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED:

That the HFRA Firefighters' Pension Board agreed that the Clerk make revisions to the Terms of Reference and informally invite comments from Board Members, before being presented for agreement at the next meeting of the Firefighters' Pension Board.

56. FIRE PENSION BOARD STATUS REPORT

Members of the Board received a report of the Chief Finance Officer (Item 8 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 highlighted the Fire Pension Board calendar report of items for 2019/20 as set out at Appendix A which drew on discussions at the previous Board meeting about forthcoming agenda items. Members of the Board were content with the work plan of items, and no additional agenda items were proposed at this time.

The issue of Training as set out in paragraphs 7 to 10 was set out and it was noted that as there would soon be two vacancies on the Pension Board, it was felt that it would be appropriate to wait on issuing updated Training Needs Analysis form until these two vacancies were filled. It was agreed that future training session would be beneficial and these would also be organised when the Board had its full quota of Members. The possibility of holding some joint sessions with Isle of Wight Pension Board Members was also discussed.

Members of the Board noted that there had been no statutory reporting events or Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures (IDRP's) raised since the last meeting. It was also confirmed that there had been no breaches which needed reporting to The Pension Regulator. The Board's attention was drawn to Appendix B which set out and clarified the process for receipt of IDRP as well as Appendix C which listed the IDRP Accountable Officers.

Issues relating to Communication were set out in paragraphs 16 to 21 of the report and these were discussed. Members of the Board wished to extend their thanks to the Employer Pension Manager for all her hard work in delivering pre-retirement courses and pension presentations at various fire stations in

Hampshire. It was noted that feedback from these had been very positive. Paragraph 19 of the report detailed a breakdown of the number of page views on the employer pension web pages for October and November 2018. The poor response to the Fire Employer pension web pages survey was discussed and Members of the Board agreed that sending the survey as a global email would generate a higher response rate and Officers would take this forward. This would also be followed up with the communications and media team as well as the Fire Brigades Union. The Pension Board were pleased to hear that the Employer Pension Manager had been appointed permanently to her position and congratulated her on this.

Issues relating to injury pensions and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) were discussed. It was heard that there had been a high response of 62 replies from the 89 member pensioners written to in order to confirm whether they were in receipt of any relevant additional benefits from the DWP. Since the report had been written, it was confirmed that an additional five replies had been received. Those who had not yet responded would receive a firmer follow up letter advising of implications if a response was not received.

The issue of TPR annual scheme returns was also discussed and the difference between common and scheme specific data was explained, and the percentage of data which was present and accurate was set out in the table at paragraph 29 of the report. Hampshire Pension Services would work on a plan to improve data which wasn't 100%.

Members of the Board also heard details relating to the SCAPE discount rate, the annual TPR Administration survey and the forecasting workshop. In relation to the SCAPE discount rate, it was confirmed that HFRA would receive £2.9m from Government to cover additional costs resulting in the increase in employer pension contributions. Members of the Board noted that the £2.9m received was expected to realistically cover these costs.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the HFRA Firefighters' Pension Board endorsed the work plan of items as set out in paragraphs 3-6 and Appendix A of the report.
- ii) That the HFRA Firefighters' Pension Board endorsed the approach of sending out the Employer Web survey via email as set out in paragraph 20 of the report.

Chairman,