

AT A MEETING of the HFRA Hampshire Firefighters' Pension Board held  
remotely using Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 8th October, 2020

Chairman:  
\* Stew Adamson

Vice-Chairman:  
\* Richard North

\*Councillor Roger Price

\*Richard Scarth

\*Mark Hilton

\*Present

Also present with the agreement of the Chairman:

Jo Thistlewood, Technical Finance Manager, Isle of Wight Council

**104. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Dan Tasker.

**105. 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.

There were no declarations of interest received for the meeting.

**106. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

Matters arising - Minute 101, the Chairman confirmed that he had looked to raise awareness in relation to the use of the member portal, and had also explored opportunities with the Unions in relation to joint working.

Matters arising - Minute 103, the Chairman also confirmed that planning for pre-retirement courses was also underway.

**107. DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations on this occasion.

**108. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed Mark Hilton to his first meeting of the Board as the newly elected employee representative. The Chairman also highlighted that he had recently attended the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Annual General Meeting.

**109. SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD**

The Chairman invited Cllr Roger Price to provide a verbal update on the Scheme Advisory Board. Cllr Price highlighted the risk in relation to Pensions, and whether this should be included on the Authority's Organisational Risk Register due to possible financial implications to the Authority. The risk of administrators potentially dropping out of administering fire pensions due to their complexity was also highlighted. It was also noted that only two software providers currently had the ability to calculate pensions.

Cllr Price drew attention to the issues which were discussed at the last SAB pensions meeting on the 17 September which included pensionable pay, abatement guidance, immediate detriment guidance, age discrimination, pensions administration and Covid.

Officers confirmed that the Board could include Pensions on the Pensions Fire Risk Register if they wished, and also further explore the inclusion of Pensions on the Organisational Risk Register, and this could be discussed further at Item 9 on the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the Firefighters' Pension Board noted the verbal update.

**110. FIREFIGHTERS PENSIONS OFFICERS GROUP**

The Chairman invited the Vice-Chairman Richard North to provide a verbal update on a recent Firefighters' Pensions Officers Group meeting, which he had attended on the Chairman's behalf. It was heard that a number of issues had been discussed at the meeting which included the McCloud/Sargeant case, annual allowance calculations, the O'Brien/Matthews case, retrospective tax relief, and the cost cap on the 2015 pensions scheme.

It was heard that the deadline for responses for the Government consultation on the public service pension scheme was soon, and the Chairman highlighted that this was also detailed further at agenda item 9.

RESOLVED:

That the update was noted by the Firefighters' Pension Board

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

The Board received an update report from Officers on Legislation and the Local Government Association (LGA) (Item 8 in the Minute Book).

The Board's attention was drawn to paragraph 7 of the report, and it was heard that the LGA had recommended some suggested wording for Fire and Rescue Authorities to use in job adverts in relation to pensions. It was heard that this was a technically complex area, and there were concerns around making the wording of adverts too complex, and the Board's views were sought. In discussion, Members felt that job adverts should focus on job responsibilities, and signposting to further information on pensions could be included in job adverts. It was felt that discussing this at interview stage would not be appropriate, as interviewers may not have the experience to answer queries on pensions, and there was the risk of wrong information being given.

Officers highlighted paragraph 9 of the report, which provided further details of the Pensions Scheme Bill which would enable people on a defined contribution scheme to have a pensions dashboard with all their pension contributions in one place. It was heard that currently the Bill only applied to private sector schemes, but it was heard the Government would be looking to introduce this for the public sector at some point.

RESOLVED:

That the Board noted the contents of the report.

**112. FIRE PENSION BOARD STATUS REPORT AND RISK REGISTER REVIEW**

The Board received a report which provided an update on ongoing issues (Item 9 in the Minute Book). The report was introduced and the Board's attention was drawn to the Risk Register at Appendix A of the report, and the Board's view was invited as to whether they would wish to include Pensions McCloud Remedy work on the Pensions Risk Register as an additional risk, and also whether this should be included on the Organisational Risk Register of the Authority. Board Members were content with this.

Paragraph 8 of the report detailed the Sargeant case, and Officers highlighted the complexities and the importance of this case. Attention was drawn to Appendices C and D of the report which also detailed further information on this, and Board Members were encouraged to familiarise themselves with this information. It was also noted that future Board training sessions could also include this topic. Officers also drew Board Members attention to paragraph 17

of the report which highlighted that a lot of resources would be needed for the McCloud/Sargeant remedy, and may mean an increased cost for all partners. It was noted that any extra costs would be recorded.

It was noted that there had been a 5% increase in those registering for the member portal, but this was still low. Board Member Mark Hilton had asked the Fire Brigade Union to put this topic on their meeting agendas to raise awareness of this through the Union branches. Mark would also highlight to officers any problems with accessing the portal which had been fed back to him. The Chairman had also asked that this topic be included on the agenda of the monthly Joint Trade Union meeting to help raise awareness.

Paragraph 32 of the report set out details around auto-enrolment process when the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) takes effect from the 1 April 2021, and the communications around this. In relation to the CFA and temporary promotions, Members of the Board were asked to endorse the proposal as set out in paragraphs 21-22, and a report would be taken to the Shadow Authority recommending a formal decision to this effect.

With regards to membership of the pension board under the new CFA, details of this were highlighted to the Board as set out at paragraphs 36 – 39 of the report, and Members of the Board were content to endorse this approach.

**RESOLVED:**

- a) That the content of this report be noted by the HFRA Hampshire Firefighters' Pension Board.
- b) That the Risk Register as set out in paragraphs 4-7 and APPENDIX A be approved by the HFRA Hampshire Firefighters' Pension Board, with the addition of a further risk associated with the McCloud remedy work.
- c) That the HFRA Hampshire Firefighters' Pension Board direct officers to look further into the proposal to include pensions and McCloud remedy work in the organisational risk register, and go through the necessary governance to make this happen.
- d) That the response to the Public Service Pension Schemes consultation as set in APPENDIX E is endorsed by the HFRA Hampshire Firefighters' Pension Board.
- e) That the proposal about the treatment of temporary promotions under the CFA as set out in paragraphs 21-22 of the report is endorsed by the HFRA Hampshire Firefighters' Pension Board and that a report is taken to the Shadow H&IOW Fire and Rescue Authority recommending a formal decision to this effect.
- f) That the proposal about the membership of the Fire Pension Board under the CFA as set out in paragraphs 36-39 of the report is endorsed by the HFRA Hampshire Firefighters' Pension Board and that a report is taken to

the Shadow H&IOW Fire and Rescue Authority to enable the necessary appointments to be made.

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Chairman,