

AT A MEETING of the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board held at Fire and Police HQ, Eastleigh on Tuesday, 20th July, 2021

Chairman:

* Stew Adamson

Vice-Chairman

* Richard North

- * Sean Harrison
- * Councillor Roger Price
- * Ross Singleton

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mark Hilton, Richard Scarth and Dan Tasker.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Clerk called for nominations for a Chairman, noting 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 Firefighters' Pension Board until the first meeting of the Board following the Annual meeting of the Fire Authority in 2022.

3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Chairman called for nominations for a Vice-Chairman, noting requirements of the Firefighters' Pension Board Terms of Reference. Richard North was nominated, seconded and in the absence of any further nominations duly appointed Vice-Chairman of the Firefighters' Pension Board until the first meeting of the Board following the Annual meeting of the Fire Authority in 2022.

4. 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.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting on the 15 April 2021 were reviewed and agreed.

6. **DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations on this occasion.

7. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements on this occasion.

8. **SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD**

The Chairman invited Councillor Roger Price to provide a verbal update on the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB). Councillor Price highlighted that the last meeting of the SAB was on the 24 June 2021, and topics were discussed which included the finance costs relating to McCloud remedy and also only having two companies with the ability to provide software for pension schemes, and the potential risks if one company were to cease in this field.

The current consultations which the SAB would respond to were highlighted, and Councillor Price also emphasised the importance of keeping fire pensions on the Board's risk register as it was such a complex area.

RESOLVED:

The Firefighters' Pension Board noted the verbal update.

9. **HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT FIRE PENSIONS ADMINISTRATION REPORT 2020/21**

Members of the Board received a report from Pension Services providing the Board with an update on pensions administration during 2020/21 (Item 9 in the Minute Book).

Officers presented the report to the Board and highlighted key areas of the report. In relation to administration performance, it was noted that 100% of cases were completed on time for the year, and a breakdown of these cases were detailed in the tables in Section 5 of the report. Officers drew attention to Annual Benefit Statements (ABS) for the year, and it was heard that every member of the firefighters' pension scheme had received their statement by the statutory deadline of 31 August 2020.

The Board noted that work to transfer pension data in relation to the formation of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) had been completed in time by 31 March 2021 which was very positive news, and had been a huge amount of work for Pension Services. In concluding the presentation of the report, officers were pleased to report that there had been no complaints from members of the pension scheme in 2020/21.

Board Members expressed their satisfaction with the report and the good progress made. The Chairman also thanked the Employer Pension Manager for her work, and feedback from fire stations had been very positive. In response to a query relating to paragraph 7.2 of the report, and the exceeding of annual

allowance, officers would find out how many of the 18 Firefighters referenced did end up with a tax charge.

RESOLVED:

That the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board noted the report.

10. 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 drew Board Members attention to paragraphs 18-21 of the report, and also Bulletin 44 which detailed issues around ABS and the inclusion of projections to normal pension age. It was noted that communication on this would be re-issued to pension members as some may have missed the initial communication on this. Officers also confirmed that any protected members affected by this, could ask for an estimate of their projection.

In response to a query on tax relief, it was heard that routine notices would be the best way to communicate this information to pension members, and one of the forthcoming pension briefings could also discuss this issue.

RESOLVED:

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

11. 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). The report was introduced and key issues were highlighted to Members of the Board.

Officers led Board Members through the report. It was heard that in relation to the Pensions Member Portal, there was now the ability to report on the number of deferred and pensioner members that were fully registered with the Portal, and this was shown in the table at paragraph 8 of the report. Board Members heard details relating to the CFA, Historical Contribution Rates and the 2006 Modified Fire Pension Scheme. It was heard that in relation to the CFA, some historical contribution rates had been calculated incorrectly and discussions were currently ongoing to resolve this issue.

Paragraphs 20-21 of the report detailed that legal discussions were still ongoing in the Matthews/O'Brien case, and if there is a second options exercise, then officers will bring further information on this to the Board. Paragraph 19 of the report asked for Board Members views on the Fire Pensions Risk Register and it was heard that the biggest risk was still McCloud. A query was raised as to whether the risk score of McCloud could be reduced, but officers were comfortable that the current score was appropriate.

Paragraphs 25-33 highlighted the issue of Immediate Detriment and officers explained this in more detail. It was heard that there had not been any complex cases, and any Immediate Detriment cases have been processed effectively and in line with Home Office guidance. In relation to the pension administration costs associated with McCloud remedy work for 20/21, it was noted that out of the Home Office grant, £138,787.83 had been allocated to HIWFRA for this. Also in relation to McCloud, it was heard that a master list of all internal communications in respect of this issue had been collated by the Employer Pension Manager.

Members of the Board noted that the number of pensioner members signing up to the Portal was low, and more encouragement could be given through the Past Members Association. A query was raised about Statutory Reporting as set out in paragraph 3 of the report, and it was heard that reporting was dependent on when notification was received.

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 21-22 and APPENDIX A was approved by the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board.

Chairman,