

AT A MEETING of the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board held at Fire and Police HQ, Eastleigh on Thursday, 14th October, 2021

Chairman:

* Stew Adamson

Vice-Chairman

* Richard North

* Sean Harrison

* Councillor Roger Price

* Ross Singleton

* Mark Hilton

* Richard Scarth

12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dan Tasker.

13. 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.

14. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting held on the 20 July 2021 were reviewed and agreed.

15. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations on this occasion.

16. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman drew Members attention to the recent announcement from the FBU and LGA on the Immediate Detriment Framework. Officers confirmed that they would be holding discussions as a result of this announcement, and to identify appropriate governance routes for future related decisions.

17. SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD

The Chairman invited Councillor Roger Price to provide a verbal update on the Scheme Advisory Board (Item 6 in the Minute Book).

Councillor Price confirmed to Board Members that meetings of the Scheme Advisory Board would soon be reverting back to 'in-person' meetings, after being held for some time via Microsoft Teams because of the Covid pandemic.

RESOLVED:

The Firefighters' Pension Board noted the verbal update.

18. **LEGISLATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (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 to the Board and highlighted key areas of the report. Attention was drawn to paragraphs 4 - 7 of the report which detailed the IDRPs Data Request Update. It was heard that out of the 34 Fire and Rescue Authorities who had submitted data, nine reported a nil return, of which Hampshire was one of these. Officers highlighted that the number of IDRPs across the board was quite low. In relation to the annual Governance and Administration survey issued by The Pensions Regulator (TPR), it was noted that due to timings and resource, the survey would not be issued for 2021/22. Results for the 2020/21 survey showed that 83% of active fire pension scheme members had received their 2020 Annual Benefit Statement (ABS) by the deadline of 31 August 2020, which was a high number during a difficult period due to the Covid pandemic.

The issue of Scheme Pays Reporting was explained to Members as set out in paragraphs 13 - 16, and in response to a Board Member query, it was confirmed that this applied to scheme pays and annual allowance. It was heard that the Pensions Dashboard Programme, as set out in paragraphs 17 - 20, was moving forward and was a very large piece of work as every pension scheme would be involved in this. Paragraphs 21 - 28 of the report detailed the SAB responses to recent HMT consultations, and highlighted some SAB concerns relating to these, including the introduction of an economic check.

The Chairman of the Board extended his personal thanks and that of the Board to Clair Alcock for all her support, advice and training. It was noted that Clair had recently left her post at the LGA, and taken up a new post as Head of Police Pensions at the National Police Chiefs Council. It was highlighted that Claire Hey had been promoted as Clair's successor.

RESOLVED:

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

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

The Board received a report which provided an update on ongoing issues (Item 8 in the Minute Book), and also the Risk Register of the Board for review. The report was introduced and key issues were highlighted to Members of the Board.

Members attention was drawn to paragraphs 5 – 7 of the report which provided information on Pensions Savings Statements (PSS). At the last Board meeting, Members requested information on how many fire pension scheme members had exceeded their annual allowance and incurred a tax charge, and it was noted that this totalled 11. In relation to the Member Portal, it was heard that this now reflected a member's membership journey as a result of corrections to the reporting of statistics by Hampshire Pension Services. A discussion ensued around pension scheme communications to new recruits, and it was heard that it would be beneficial for this to be factored into the training course for new recruits.

Paragraphs 15 – 17 of the report highlighted the issue of Historical Contribution Rates, and it was explained that this issue affected all Isle of Wight on-call/retained firefighters that were employed and in a pension scheme between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2021. It was noted that discussions had been held with the Isle of Wight, and further details were awaited from them. Details around the audit of pension records and finance details as part of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) were outlined at paragraphs 18 - 24, and it was noted that the audit had been completed and where there had been issues, everyone had been contacted that needed to be, and this had been dealt with well.

The Board heard details about the McCloud Remedy Working Group, and a discussion ensued around ensuring all staff receive key messages about scheme changes. Board Members agreed that it would be useful for some short videos to be made, with signposting to these, and possibly webinars. It was agreed that the Vice Chairman, Richard North, would liaise with the Employer Pension Manager and the communications team in rolling this out, and Board Members Richard Scarth and Mark Hilton would also assist.

Officers drew attention to paragraph 33 of the report which highlighted Immediate Detriment cases. It was heard that five more pension scheme members had received their options for retirement, and there had been one new request since the report had been written. A discussion ensued around communication messages to try and identify any likely retirements up to the 1 October 2023, and it was agreed that it would be timely to wait until after the Memorandum of Understanding and the new framework before publishing any communications.

Members attention was drawn to the Risk Register, and it was heard that there were no changes to this at the moment, and the Board were content with this.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the content of the report be noted by the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board.
- ii. That the Risk Register as set out in paragraphs 26 - 27 and Appendix A be approved by the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board.

Chairman,