

AT A MEETING of the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board held at Fire and Police Headquarters, Eastleigh on 17th April 2023 at 10.00

*Present

Chairman:* Stew Adamson
Vice Chairman: Richard Scarth

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

63. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dan Tasker and Richard Scarth.

64. 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 declarations were made.

65. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of 31 January 2023 were reviewed and agreed.

66. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

67. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman recorded his thanks to Cllr Mellor, the Chairman of the Standards and Governance Committee, who had attended the training session in January.

68. SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD

Cllr Price confirmed that all items were covered in the legislation and local government update later in the agenda.

69. **FIRE PENSION BOARD ANNUAL REPORT (2022/23)**

The Board received the annual report of the Chief Financial Officer from the Pensions Board to the Standards and Governance Committee, summarising the work of the Board for the 2022/23 financial year in the exercise of its functions. (Item 7 in the minute book).

The Board were content with the report.

Resolved

The annual report was approved for submission to the HIWFRA Standards and Governance Committee by the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board.

70. **LEGISLATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (LGA) UPDATE REPORT**

The Board received an update on legislation and the Local Government Association (LGA). (Item 8 in the minute book).

The officer presented the report to the Board and drew Members' attention to the following:

- Paragraph 9, the LGA have published a new webpage for members relating to the 2015 remedy, and provided a broad timeline to help manage expectations.
- The 'Matthews second option exercise pre-work for FRA's' fact sheet, which has been drafted by the Employer Pension Manager and reported in Appendix C to the report.
- Paragraph 13, - on 6 February 2023, the Rectification of Unlawful Discrimination Regulations were laid. These regulations set out changes to how the pension tax rules will apply to pension scheme administrators and members of pension schemes as a result of the 2015 McCloud remedy.
- Paragraphs 15 -17, HM Treasury have issued a written statement confirming the Public Service Pension Indexation and Revaluation for 2023. This confirmed that for pensions that are in payment, they will be increased from 10 April 2023 by 10.1% except for those which have not been in payment for a full year which will receive a pro-rata increase. The statement also confirmed that for active members in the 2015 FPS, their CARE pensions will be revalued by 7% on 1 April 2023.

In answer to a question from a Board Member, it was confirmed that any recently retired members of the pension scheme who believe they are entitled to back pay after the recent pay rise which wasn't automatically paid, should contact the IBC.

Board members were reminded that:

- The National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) and the Local Government Association will be holding a joint data conference on 17 May in London and were invited to attend.

- The annual Fire Pensions conference will take place on 19 and 20 September 2023 in London.

The Board's attention was drawn to the following:

- Paragraph 25 of the report, on 10 March 2023, the High Court ruled that HM Treasury's (HMT) decision to include the McCloud remedy in the cost cap mechanism was not unlawful. The judge ruled in favour of HMT on all grounds. The judge also refused permission to appeal, but the FBU and other parties are able to apply for permission to appeal directly to the Court of Appeal.
- Paragraph 26, the Government published a consultation on changing the methodology for setting the SCAPE (Superannuation Contributions Adjusted for Past Experience) discount rate in June 2021. The Service is waiting for the related change to the employer contribution rates, which are expected from April 2024. The Board heard that the Government have committed to provide funding for the increase in these rates and officers are waiting to hear what form the grants will take.

Resolved

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

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

The Board received a status report and an update on the Risk Register (Item 9 in the minute book). The Employer Pension Manager (EPM) introduced the report and explained that the Service is intending to run some Annual Allowance and Lifetime Allowance sessions for its staff. These sessions will be run by an external company called Pen-Gage who have a wealth of experience in these particular areas and are scheduled to take place in May 2023.

Sessions are in the process of being arranged for On Call members on the Isle of Wight to help resolve some issues that have stemmed from communication prior to the Combined Fire Authority.

Use of the Member Portal is increasing with active members, although there is more work to do. The Board discussed the fact that deferred members are difficult to reach and ways to raise their awareness.

The officer explained that two new risks had been added to the Risk Register:

- Failure to adequately resource the pension administration team for the upcoming McCloud and Matthews remedy implementation. (Risk number 7).
- Changes to the Shared Services partnership mean that HIWFRA is withdrawing from some strategic services, including HR. There is a risk

that changes could negatively impact on the employer pension management shared function which sits within HR. (Risk number 8).

The Board agreed that:

- the score to risk number 8 should be 12 and not 9 as stated in the register as the mitigations were not yet in place.
- The introduction of the Pensions Dashboard should be added to risk number 7, due to the workload required.

The Employer Pension Manager reported that she had issued a pay data request spreadsheet detailing the pay data that will be required for each member to the Payroll teams at HIWFRS and the Isle of Wight Council. The deadline for this is 30 September 2023.

She has also developed a communications spreadsheet in order to keep up to date with changes of addresses of deferred members to ensure that best endeavours are made to ensure these people receive details of their options. The Board discussed ways in which to spread the word to this cohort of pension members.

The EPM referred to the response that she was developing to a Home Office consultation on the retrospective McCloud remedy which closes on 23 May 2023. (Appendix C). The Board were asked for their views.

A Board member queried paragraph 55 (regarding opted out service) with reference to timescales and the ability to repay , and it was agreed that the EPM will redraft this paragraph and circulate to Board members for approval along with any other amendments.

Resolved

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

The risk register as set out in paragraphs 13-18 and Appendix A was approved by the HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board.

72. PENSIONS COMMUNICATION PLAN

Sean Harrison introduced the report, explaining that the communications plan helped ensure the Service was communicating as best it could and the reporting of this to the Board meant that it could be monitored and reviewed.

Resolved

The HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board received the Communications Plan in Appendix A and approved the addition of a standing agenda item, entitled Communications, to its future meetings.

Chairman, HIWFRA Firefighters'
Pension Board