

AT A MEETING of the HFRA Hampshire Firefighters' Pension Board held at the Fire and Police Headquarters, Eastleigh on Wednesday, 9 October, 2019

Chairman:
* Stew Adamson

- * Malcolm Eastwood
- * Richard North
- * Councillor Roger Price
- * Richard Scarth
- * Dan Tasker

*Present

Also present with the agreement of the Chairman:

Jo Thistlewood, Technical Finance Manager, Isle of Wight Council

76. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Members were present and no apologies were noted.

77. 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.

78. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed.

79. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations on this occasion.

80. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Richard Scarth to his first meeting of the Firefighters' Pension Board.

81. **SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD - VERBAL UPDATE**

Members of the Pension Board received a verbal update from Malcolm Eastwood and Councillor Price on the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) (Item 6 in the Minute Book).

Issues such as the McCloud judgement were highlighted as well as the importance of good governance in ensuring data is complete and the reporting of data breaches. Members also highlighted that it was important for Members of the Board to be kept up to date with the Risk Register and it was agreed to include this as a standard heading within the regular Fire Pension Board Status Report.

Members of the Board were also updated on the SAB Annual General Conference which was held on the 24 and 25 September 2019, and the valuable networking opportunities at this event were noted. The Board heard that the next Pensions Tax Seminar event would be held on the 12 November 2019.

RESOLVEVD:

That the Firefighters' Pension Board noted the update on the Scheme Advisory Board and agreed that the Risk Register be included as a standing item within the Pension Board Status Report.

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

The Board received a report of the Chief Finance Officer providing an update on Legislation and Local Government Association (Item 7 in the Minute Book).

The report was introduced and Officers set out the position in respect of three legal judgements which had been made and could impact Fire Pensions if amendments were made to legislation. The background to the Langford and McCloud judgements was explained and it was heard that there could be changes to legislation as a result of these, and this would be watched with interest. Members attention was drawn to Appendix A of the report which provided greater detail on these two cases. Officers also explained the background to the O'Brien judgement and the situation in relation to the 2006 Modified Fire Pension Scheme as more people challenged their employee rights. The pressures on workloads for Fire Pension Services as a result of these judgements was also highlighted.

Attention was drawn to Appendix I of the report - Firefighters' Pension Scheme – Administration and Benchmarking Review - and Members of the Board were taken through the details of this review which was commissioned by the Scheme Advisory Board. It was noted that the charge for pension administration was less than the charge of administering it. Officers highlighted the figures at page 3 of Appendix I (page 81 of the agenda pack) which detailed the differences in administration costs per member, depending on how many members were in the scheme.

RESOLVED:

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

83. **FIRE PENSION BOARD STATUS REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the Chief Financial Officer (Item 8 in the Minute Book), providing the Board with an update on ongoing issues.

The report was introduced, and the Board were updated on a number of key issues which included statutory reporting and officer attendance at workshops and conferences. In relation to statutory reporting, the Board heard that 100% of annual benefit statements had been produced by the statutory deadline of 31 August 2019. The value of officer's attendance at the Pensionable Pay Workshop and the Annual Fire Pension Conference was highlighted as well as the opportunities for networking and information sharing.

Attention was drawn to the number of people who had registered online for the Members Portal which was detailed in paragraphs 11 – 15 of the report. It was highlighted that there had been a poor uptake in registration, and Board Members discussed how this could be improved. The Chairman highlighted that he would look into the possible circulation of a global email to encourage registration, which Managers could then cascade. A further discussion ensued around raising awareness to online registration and the possibility of doing this through the Fire Brigades Union, notice boards in fire stations and through RDS support officers. Members of the Board were supportive of this approach.

Other issues relating to training and injury pension award reviews were also highlighted. The Board were invited to consider the possibility of utilising the free session of training as highlighted in paragraph 20. After discussion, Members agreed to wait until the learning needs analysis forms were completed which would be forwarded to Board Members shortly. The possibility of a wider training session with other Fire Authorities was also discussed. In relation to injury pension award reviews, it was heard that there were two pensioner members who were due a review, and they had been written to in order to confirm whether there had been any significant changes to warrant a review.

Officers explained the situation in relation to the Combined Fire Authority, employer contributions and Government Actuary Department (GAD) valuation. The Board heard that time pressures had meant that Hampshire Pension Services (HPS) only had a few days to collate and check the data to be submitted to the GAD. Appendix A to the report was highlighted which detailed information specific to the data for Hampshire, and it was explained that there were a number of mitigating circumstances as to why data was not as accurate when submitted.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Firefighters' Pension Board noted the contents of the report.
- b) That the Firefighters' Pension Board approved sending out a cascade message to all managers about the Member Portal as set out in paragraphs 11-15 of the report, and also raise awareness of this through the Fire Brigades Union, notice boards in fire stations and through RDS Support Officers.
- c) That the Firefighters' Pension Board undertake individual training needs analysis before inviting Clair Alcock to a future Board meeting to deliver training.

Chairman,