

AT A MEETING of the HFRA Hampshire Firefighters' Pension Board held
virtually via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 27th January, 2021

Chairman:

* Stew Adamson

Vice-Chairman

* Richard North

* Councillor Roger Price

* Dan Tasker

Richard Scarth

Mark Hilton

*Present

Also present with the agreement of the Chairman:

Councillor Reginal Barry, Isle of Wight Fire Authority Firefighters Pension Board

Sean Harrison, Isle of Wight Fire Authority Firefighters Pension Board

Matthew Collier, Pensions Manager at the Isle of Wight Council

113. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Richard Scarth.

114. 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.

115. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed.

116. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations for the meeting.

117. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Sean Harrison and Councillor Reginald Barry, members of the Isle of Wight Fire Authority Firefighters Pension Board to the meeting as observers. The Chairman also welcomed to the meeting as an observer, Matthew Collier, Pensions Manager at the Isle of Wight Council.

The Chairman invited Pension Board Members to provide feedback on the draft response to the recent TPR questionnaire which had been drafted and circulated to members by the Employer Pension Manager. The Chairman also thanked Pension Board Members for completing the recent training needs assessment.

The Chairman also highlighted the recent NFCC seminar recently attended by himself and the Employer Pension Manager which was based around the McCloud judgement, and in particular the issue of Immediate Detriment.

118. SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD VERBAL UPDATE

There were no formal updates for this meeting.

119. DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR HIWFRA FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION BOARD AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD REPORT

The Board received a report of the Committee Clerk on the draft terms of reference for HIWFRA Firefighters' Pension Board and Membership of the Board (Item 7 in the Minute Book).

The report was introduced and Members of the Board noted the proposed draft report at Annexe A and the proposed draft Terms of Reference for the HIWFRA Firefighters Pension Board at Annexe B which would be considered by the Shadow Authority on the 10 February. The background to the membership report was explained and it was also confirmed that the proposed Terms of Reference aligned closely with the current Terms of Reference for the HFRA Firefighters' Pension Board.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that at paragraph 6 of Annexe A, current Board membership would be included in the Shadow Authority report, to reflect which Members were current Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighters' Pension Board Members, and which were current Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighters' Pension Board Members.

Members of the Board were content with the report.

RESOLVED:

That the HFRA Firefighters' Pension Board note and support the recommendations to the Shadow Authority, as set out in the report at paragraphs 10 – 11.

120. LEGISLATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA) UPDATE REPORT

The Board received an update report of the Chief Finance Officer on Legislation and the Local Government Association (LGA) (Item 8 in the Minute Book).

The Chief Finance Officer highlighted key issues and Members attention was drawn to the section on Immediate Detriment and the background to this was explained. It was heard that the Scheme Advisory Board had requested the number of people who could be affected by Immediate Detriment up until March 2022. The table in paragraph 6 of the report detailed the number of HFRA pension scheme members who could be affected by Immediate Detriment, and it was explained that two of those were claimants.

Paragraph 14 of the report detailed the recent statement from the Home Office in relation to qualifying injury and Covid-19, and it was explained that while the Home Office would be unable to provide global assurance on this, each individual Fire and Rescue Service would have responsibility to make decisions in relation to this. Following discussions, Board Members agreed that it would be useful to put out some communication on this and officers would draft some communication on behalf of the Pension Board.

RESOLVED:

That the Board note the contents of the report.

121. 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 key issues were highlighted to Members of the Board.

Members attention was drawn to the section of the report which explained TPR Scheme returns, and the table in paragraph 6 highlighted the data quality scoring for year ending 31 March 2019 and 31 March 2020 which showed an improvement across all areas from 2019 to 2020. Officers highlighted that if the Board were content, then they would look further into why the common data score and conditional data score for the 2006 fire pension scheme were lower than other schemes. The Board were content with this action.

It was heard that in relation to the Risk Register, a risk had been added to the Register specifically around the McCloud remedy work, and having the resources and capacity to implement the ensuing work. This risk has also been added, in agreement with the Board, to the Organisational Risk Register of the Authority. Also related to McCloud, it was noted that a response to the Government consultation had been submitted, and a response from Government to the Consultation was expected soon.

Paragraphs 12 – 18 of the report explained the current position with Immediate Detriment, and it was heard that so far there were no cases to be dealt with. The Board's views on future communication on the Immediate Detriment position

were sought. A discussion ensued and it was felt that because of the complexities around the issue and the limited amount of people this may affect, that there may not be any gains from issuing wider communications on this. It was noted that members of the pension scheme who were due to retire, were sent individual communication and invited to contact pension services if they had any queries around this issue. Following discussions, Members of the Board were content not to put out wider communications on Immediate Detriment.

In relation to the McCloud remedy project, it was heard that a piece of work was being undertaken to assess which actions can be undertaken prior to April 2022 and which can be done afterwards, and a project plan to examine resources required has also been undertaken. Paragraph 23 of the report also showed the projected costings for this work, and a query was raised about whether Government would be able to assist with the costs. Officers explained that representations could be made to Government to highlight the administrative costs of this work, and Councillor Price highlighted that he would also raise this issue at the Scheme Advisory Board.

Paragraphs 27 – 28 detailed the slight increase in numbers of those registered for the member portal, and officers were hopeful that these numbers will continue to gradually rise, and it was heard that Board Members have also been working to encourage registration. In response to a query, it was confirmed that for future reports, the breakdown of registration by age groups would be detailed.

The situation in relation to fire pension scheme temporary promotions and the formation of the new Combined Fire Authority (CFA) was explained, as set out in paragraphs 11 – 18 of the report. It was heard that most temporary promotions were due to end before the CFA takes effect, but those members affected would be written to in order to inform them of the change. Officers would look into potential issues around the 25 members from IOW that are currently on a temporary promotion and are in either the 1992 or 2006 Fire Pension Schemes.

Members of the Board were thanked for completing the recent training needs analysis, and it was highlighted that the topics of annual allowances and lifetime allowances would be covered in an informal training session after the next meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the contents of the report is noted by the Firefighters' Pension Board.
- ii) That the Risk Register as set out in paragraphs 4 – 6 and Appendix A is approved by the Firefighters' Pension Board.

Chairman,