



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD - FIREFIGHTERS PENSION SCHEME held on Monday, 24 April 2017 at P O Conference Room - Fire Service Headquarters, Winsford, Cheshire at 2.00 pm

PRESENT:

Board Members: Councillors D Marren (Chair), M Cashin(DCFO), N McElroy (FOA) and G Peers (FBU).

Officers: A Harvey, J Nixon and J Swift

1 APOLOGIES

No apologies received.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3 NOTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The notes of the previous meeting held on 9th November 2016 were presented to the Pension Board.

Action Agreed:

[1] That the notes of the meeting held on 9th November 2016 be agreed as a correct record.

Matters arising

Training Update

The Director of Transformation provided a brief update on training. She confirmed that refresher training for Board members had been arranged for 18th July 2017 and would be provided by Clair Alcock, LGA Technical Advisor. The training would be tailored to the Board's training requirements and an offer had been made to GMFRA Board members to attend the training session. The Pension Regulator may also be in attendance.

Joint Publication on Benefits of the Scheme

The HR Business Support Manager distributed a draft copy of the joint promotional leaflet for the Board to agree prior to publication. The Board discussed whether additional information in respect of the changes to the state pension should be included. However the Board agreed that, as this was a separate issue, the information on the reductions to state pensions as a result of the changes introduced to contracting out arrangements should be communicated to staff separately.

Actions Agreed:

[1] any feedback on the leaflet be sent through to the HR Business Support Manager by 5th May 2017; and

[2] an article be submitted to The Green separately in respect of the state pension changes.

4 FIREFIGHTER PENSION SCHEME UPDATE

The HR Business Support Manager presented her report which provided an update on current issues relating to the Firefighters Pensions Schemes including:

- Memberships Statistics
- Pension Administrator Performance
- Firefighter Pensions Scheme Advisory Board – Update
- Pension Scheme Valuation
- Contracted-Out Scheme Reconciliation
- Pension Contribution Holiday
- Survivor Benefits – Nomination Forms
- Employment Tribunal – Transitional Protections
- Exit Payment Cap – Update
- LGA Pension Board Forums

The Board discussed the information provided and a number of comments/queries were raised:

Pension Administrator Performance – Kier's Service Delivery Report was presented to the Board which provided information on performance for quarter three (2016-17). It outlined key pieces of work completed and Kier's performance against service level agreements. The HR Business Support Manager drew the Board's attention to the performance against service levels for provision of pension estimates to staff. She explained that Kier had missed the performance target of 10 days in June and September but following discussions performance had improved and the average no of days to receive estimates had reduced to 5 in December.

The Board noted that, overall, the performance against the contract was good. The Chair queried the summary on regulations and guidance which was provided and it was noted some of the information provided related to Police Pension Regulations. The HR Business Support Manager explained that this was a generic summary in respect of regulations and guidance from Kier. The Board requested that the summary be Fire specific for future reports.

Actions Agreed:

- [1] the pensions update be noted; and**
- [2] the HR Business Support Manager to liaise with Kier regarding the content of the performance report to ensure it is fire specific.**

5 PENSION REGULATIONS TOOLKIT

The Director of Transformation raised this item. She had commenced work, in consultation with the HR Business Support Manager, to review the Pensions Regulation toolkit for the purpose of identifying any gaps in the current pension board governance arrangements.

A conflicts of interest register had been created to ensure that any declarations made at the Board meetings were recorded and also a policy on the reporting of breaches to the pension regulator was being developed in line with the guidance in the toolkit. The Director of Transformation added that this work was on-going and updates would be provided at future pension board meetings.

6 NEXT MEETING

The DCFO queried whether the meeting frequency should be revised so that the Board met on an annual basis. The Chair suggested that the Board discuss this further once the training in July had been completed as this may identify any gaps in the Board's work programme and would assist in deciding the frequency of future meetings.

It should be noted however, that any future decisions in respect of the frequency of meetings does not contravene the guidance in respect of pension boards provided by the Pensions Regulator.

Actions Agreed:

- [1] Board Members to agree the frequency of future meetings once the Pensions training was completed in July 2017.**