



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD - FIREFIGHTERS PENSION SCHEME held on Tuesday, 7 May 2019 at Leadership Team Conference Room - Fire Service, Clemonds Hey at 1.30 pm

PRESENT:

Board Members: ACFO A Waller (Chair), N McElroy (FOA) and G Peers (FBU)

Officers: A Harvey (Director of Transformation), J Nixon (Governance Advisor), J Swift (HR Business Support Manager) and D Linton (Governance and Corporate Planning Manager)

Guests: G Hall (XPS) and M Warburton (FBU - Observer)

2 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G Merry.

3 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Members' interest.

4 NOTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That

[1] the minutes of the meeting of the Local Pension Board held on 22nd November 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

The following action was raised:-

Minute 5 – Firefighter Pension Scheme Update (Resolution 3)

The Chair requested an update from Graeme Hall from XPS on if the service information provided within Annual Benefit Statement could be itemised rather than combined together to allow members to verify that their information was correct more easily. In response, Graeme Hall advised that this request would require a change to the software and this was not possible at the present time. However, an option was for CFRS to use the Member Self-Service Portal, this was currently used by a number of police services including Cheshire Constabulary and Cleveland Fire and Rescue Service.

ACTION: The Governance and Corporate Planning Manager to liaise with XPS to arrange for a demonstration of the Self-Service Portal to take place at Clemonds Hey in July 2019.

5 XPS ADMINISTRATION CHESHIRE FIRE AND SERVICE DELIVERY REPORT APRIL 2018 - MARCH 2019

The Operations Manager, Graeme Hall from XPS was in attendance and presented the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service Delivery Report for 2018-19 which contained the following information:-

- Regulations and Guidance from April 2018 to March 2019
- Three complaints have been received between July 2018 and February 2019
- Common Data
- Performance Charts against individual service level agreements
- KPI Reporting Accuracy and Qualitative Reporting (as requested at the last meeting)
- 2017/18 Annual Benefit Statement (ABS) Issuance

At the last meeting the Pensions Board sought clarity on how XPS would report situations such as ABS's being sent to an incorrect address and XPS confirmed that this would be included within future reports. Graeme Hall confirmed that this information had now been included within the Report Addendum and reported that following the issuance of the 2017/18 ABS's by XPS Administration, Kier Pensions Unit at the time, it transpired that 36 ABS's were not issued and this covered 31 Members. Following an investigation into the member that's did not receive an ABS they were split into four groups that were detailed within the report.

The Director of Transformation made reference to the actual performance figure of 42.86 for processing new entrants in July 2018 and sought clarity on what this included. In response, Graeme Hall advised that he would check this information and respond directly to the HR Business Support Manager outside the meeting.

The Chair welcomed the KPI Reporting Accuracy and Qualitative Reporting information as requested at the last meeting and asked if future reports could include any mistakes identified by the HR Business Support Manager prior to submission.

RESOLVED: That:

- [1] the content of the report and comments raised be noted.**
- [2] Graeme Hall to report to the HR Business Manager directly outside the meeting regarding the query relating to actual performance figure of 42.86 for processing new entrants in July 2018.**
- [3] Graeme Hall to liaise with the HR Business Manager regarding any mistakes identified within the KPI Reporting Accuracy and Qualitative Reporting information.**

6 FIREFIGHTER PENSION SCHEME UPDATE

The HR Business Support Manager presented a report to provide the Pension Board with an update on current issues relating to the Firefighter's Pension Schemes, which included the following:-

- Membership Statistic
- Firefighter Pension Scheme Bulletins
- Firefighter Pension Scheme Valuation and Cost Cap Process
- Contracting-out Reconciliation Exercise
- Surveys and Information Requests
- Regulatory Updates
- Cheshire Fire and Rescue Internal Pensions Administration Performance

Update

A Board Member referred to the Membership Statistics with specific reference to the number of Wholetime Opted Out Members and a discussion was had on the reasons given by staff for opting out of the scheme and if this number could be reduced moving forward by covering the benefits of the pension scheme in the Firefighter Induction process.

The Pensions Board were advised that in FPS Bulletin 16, the LGA had confirmed that there would be no changes to employee contribution or accrual rates. However, the employer contribution rates had increased significantly from 1st April 2019, as detailed at paragraph 5 of the report.

RESOLVED: That:

[1] the content of the report and comments raised be noted.

7 FIREFIGHTER PENSION SCHEME RISK REGISTER

The HR Business Support Manager presented the Firefighter Pension Scheme Risk Register which had been reviewed in March 2019.

A discussion was had on the Data Forecast and Calculations and the HR Business Support Manager was requested to score the risk.

RESOLVED: That:

[1] the Firefighter Pension Scheme Risk Register be noted and the Data Forecast and Calculations Risk be scored accordingly.

8 CHESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE INTERNAL PENSIONS ADMINISTRATION PERFORMANCE UPDATE

This update was included within Minute 6 – Firefight Pension Scheme Update.

9 PENSION TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS COURT OF APPEAL JUDGEMENT

The Governance Officer provided an update on the Court of Appeal judgement in December 2018 in the McCloud/Sergeant transitional protections case. The Court of Appeal had ruled that the transitional protections were discriminatory. The Government had applied to the Supreme Court for leave to appeal the decision. The decision had been expected in April but had not yet been made. It was too early to know what the likely impact would be on members' benefits if the Court of Appeal's decision was upheld.

The Pension Board were advised that updates on the transitional arrangements were available within the FPS Bulletin.

RESOLVED: That:

[1] the verbal update be noted.

10 PENSION BOARD - TRAINING UPDATE

The Director of Transformation advised that all upcoming events and training available was detailed within the FPS Bulletins which all Board Members received directly from the LGA. If any Board Member wished to attend any of these events to contact the Governance and Corporate Planning Manager who would make the necessary arrangements.

Board Members were also informed that the Firefighter's Pensions England Scheme Advisory Board Annual Training event was due to take place on 18th June 2019 at the LGA in London.

It was the intention to invite the Local Government Association (LGA) Firefighter' Pension Advisor to provide 'Local Pension Board Training' in-house later in the year. The Governance and Corporate Planning Manager advised that she would contact the LGA to make the necessary arrangements.

RESOLVED: That:

[1] the Pension Board Training update be noted.

[2] the Governance and Corporate Planning Manager to arrange for the Local Government Association (LGA) Firefighter' Pension Advisor to provide 'Local Pension Board Training' to the Pension Board later in the year.