

MINUTES of the meeting of the **SURREY LOCAL FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION BOARD** held at 3.00 pm on 29 March 2018 at Surrey Fire and Rescue, Wray Park, St David's.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its next meeting on (yet to be determined).

Elected Members:

- * Nick Harrison (Chairman)
- * Richard Jones
- * Glynn Parry-Jones
- * Sally Wilson (Vice-Chairman)

1818 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

There were no apologies of absence.

1918 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 26 OCTOBER 2017 [Item 2]

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

2018 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interest made.

2118 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were no questions and petitions submitted to the Board.

2218 ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER [Item 11]

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Board agreed to review item 11, the actions and recommendations tracker of the supplementary agenda ahead of the main reports to track the progress of the Board's actions to date.
2. Members received a finance briefing outlining the process for making contribution deductions and marked action 10/17 as complete.
3. It was noted that the Board would receive the following project updates relevant to item 5, the administration report and that these items could be removed from the actions tracker;
 - Contributions holiday exercise
 - GMP reconciliation
 - General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
 - Online portal and
 - Service training programme

4. There was a discussion around action 14/17, the stage 2 complaint and officers confirmed that a breach would be reported to the Pensions Regulator (tPR).

Actions/Further information to be provided:

Officers to circulate a copy of the breach report to the Board.

**2318 UPDATES AND FURTHER INFORMATION REQUESTED BY THE BOARD
[Item 12]**

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Board agreed to review item 12 ahead of the main reports to address Members concerns with the Council's failure to notify staff of the Modified Pension Scheme Exercise (2015).
2. The Pensions Lead Manager notified the Board that a project plan was in place to rectify this breach and resources would be allocated to deliver this.
3. In light of the Pensions Lead Manager's impending departure from the Council, assurances were given that the project plan would be met and the breach would be reported to the Pensions Regulator.

Actions/Further information to be provided:

None.

**2418 ADMINISTRATION UPDATE: 1 SEPTEMBER 2017 - 28 FEBRUARY 2018
[Item 5]**

Declarations of interest:

None

Witnesses:

Jason Bailey, Pensions Lead Manager

Eric Jameson, Senior Pension Officer

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. It was noted that in the period between 1 September 2017 and 28 February 2018, there were only four retirements and all cases were completed efficiently.
2. It was further noted that all new employees or employees re-enrolled in this period had opted out of the pension scheme. It was explained that there were varying reasons which indicated that there was no definitive underlying issue.
3. Despite employees opting out, the Board emphasised the importance of encouraging employees to join the Pension Scheme. Officers noted

this concern and assured Members that engagement on promoting the Pension Scheme at recruitment stage was being established however it was difficult to encourage new staff under temporary contracts.

4. The Board were informed that there was one death in service and a lump sum grant of three times annual pay was paid.
5. Officers reported that the tax return in relation to the contributions holiday exercise was successfully completed for HMRC ahead of the deadline for receipt of 31 January 2018.
6. The Board were reminded that ITM Ltd were commissioned to carry out GMP reconciliation work and highlighted that, from a total of 1,737 cases requiring review at the start of the project, the number had reduced to 443 cases upon completion and 301 had been referred back to HMRC.
7. Officers informed Members that a mini tender had been submitted to prospective providers to carry out the review of the remaining cases and an update on this process will be provided at the Board's next meeting.
8. Members referred to annex 3, the GMP reconciliation report and asked Officers to clarify the term 'out of scope'. It was explained that this referred to cases that had no GMP liability.
9. The Board reviewed a letter communicating a 3% increase to pensions in payment to retired FPS Members and their dependants in 2018. Officers noted Members concerns with the GMP section and going forward how it could be more reader friendly.
10. It was highlighted that the online portal was experiencing issues with the 'projection tool' and the site was undergoing further testing to resolve this.
11. It was noted to promote resilience across the Business Operations team, steps were being taken to ensure that Firefighters Pension Scheme knowledge was available across the wider team including East Sussex.
12. The Board suggested that employees on temporary and part time contracts should be encouraged to join the pension scheme when offered permanent or full time positions. Officers noted this and advised this would be taken on board for future recruitment processes.
13. Officers highlighted that a refresh on material for people joining the LGPS was underway and that this could be shared with the Board at a future date.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

Officers to include a recruitment summary in the next administration update report.

Recommendations:

The Board noted the contents of the report.

2518 ANNUAL BENEFIT STATEMENT EXERCISE 2018 UPDATE [Item 6]

Declarations of interest:

None

Witnesses:

Jason Bailey, Pensions Lead Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Board were reminded that there were some delays in issuing the ABS's to scheme members in 2017 and the statutory deadline of 31 August 2017 was missed in some cases. The breach was reported to the Pensions Regulator in November 2017 and it was noted that a response was received and no enforcement action was being taken.
2. Officers assured Members that, to ensure compliance with the statutory deadline for 2018, the production of ABS's for active members was scheduled to take place at an earlier date and completed by the end of June 2018.
3. It was noted statements would be generated online and made available via the online portal, allowing members to access this information themselves. It was further noted that paper statements for deferred members would be brought forward also.
4. Members agreed that the online portal was a good step forward and supported this process.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

None

Recommendations:

The Board noted the content of this report.

2618 PREPARING FOR GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR) [Item 7]

Declarations of interest:

None

Witnesses:

Jason Bailey, Pensions Lead Manager

Eric Jameson, Senior Pensions Officer

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. It was noted that new data protection regulations were due to come into force in May 2018.
2. It was highlighted that an action plan had been prepared and established across the Orbis partnership to ensure the service was responding to the new legislation.
3. Members were informed to maintain records of data processing, experts within the IT&D team were carrying out an analysis of the Information Asset Register.
4. Members were further informed to support data security measures, a risk assessment on the pensions administration system, Altair, was also being carried out by IT&D.
5. The Board were advised that new procurement processes and contract T&Cs had been introduced by the Orbis Public Law & Orbis Procurement service. As a result, service provider contracts were being updated and dealt with at corporate level.
6. Officers highlighted that privacy notices were also being updated and would be issued with any future correspondence to Firefighters as well as publishing it on the internal website.
7. It was clarified that nothing beyond how many days of sickness and reason for absence was held on file for Firefighter medical records.
8. Officers advised that an update on the action plan work streams would be provided at the Board's next meeting.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

None

Recommendations:

The Board noted the update provided.

2718 SURREY FIREFIGHTER'S PENSION RISK REGISTER [Item 8]

Declarations of Interest:

None

Witnesses:

Neil Mason, Head of Pensions

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. It was noted that risk F6 (failure to recognise and manage conflicts of Board Members) was reassessed and reduced as per the Board's request from its meeting on 26 October 2017.
2. It was highlighted that officers also reassessed risk score F9 (failure to administer the scheme in line with regulations and policies) following the Board's concerns on 26 October 2017 that the risk could potentially be greater than anticipated and as a result increased the inherent risk from 21 (amber) to 32 (red) and the total residual risk was increased from 14 (green) to 16 (amber).
3. Further to the Board's recommendations on 26 October 2017 it was further highlighted that the risk register was amended to include risks for GMP reconciliation (F15) and Work reform (F16).
4. The Board agreed an additional risk should be included on the Risk Register to reflect the impact of the Pension Services Manager leaving the Council on 20 April 2018.

Actions/Further information to be provided:

None

Recommendations:

The Board noted the content of this report, including the changes to the scoring of current risks and the inclusion of additional risks and made the following recommendation;

The Surrey FFPS Risk Register to be amended to include an additional risk for the Pension Services Manager's departure and the impact it would have on the Service.

2818 OMBUDSMAN'S DETERMINATION THE NEW FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEME (ENGLAND) (2006 SCHEME) [Item 9]**Key points raised during the discussion:**

1. It was explained based on the ruling of this recent Ombudsman's determination the decision reached at the stage 2 complaint in November 2017 was unsound.
2. Officers said that they would review the decision made at stage 2.
3. It was noted that the service would need to decide whether to overrule the decision as it cannot be referred back to the adjudicator. The Pensions Lead Manager noted this and assured the Board an opinion would be formed how best to resolve this.

Actions/Further Information to be provided:

None

Recommendations:

The Board noted the content of this report.

2918 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 10]

The next meeting date is yet to be confirmed.

The Board thanked the Pensions Lead Manager for his contribution and wished him well in his future endeavours.

Meeting ended at: 4.42 pm

Chairman