

MINUTES of the meeting of the **SURREY LOCAL FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION BOARD** held at 10.00 am on 28 July 2022 at Committee Room.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Thursday, 10 November 2022.

(* present)

Elected Members:

- * Paul Bowyer
- * Nick Harrison (Chairman)
- * Glyn Parry-Jones
- * Dan Quin (Vice-Chairman)

21/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

None received.

The Chairman welcomed Paul Bowyer to the board. The Chairman also informed the board that he had written to Richard Jones to thank him for his years of service on the Surrey Local Firefighters' Pension Board.

22/22 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 28 APRIL 2022 [Item 2]

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

23/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

None received.

24/22 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were none.

25/22 SURREY LOCAL FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION BOARD ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER [Item 5]

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman introduced the report.
2. Members agreed to close Action A2/22.
3. The Scheme Manager agreed to review the actions included on the tracker, including those related to the 10% allowance and age discrimination, to condense and reorganise where appropriate.

Recommendations:

To note the actions tracker.

26/22 SCHEME MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT [Item 6]

Officers:

Sally Wilson, Scheme Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Scheme Manager introduced the report and made the following comments:
 - a. That the focus over the last few months was around age discrimination and looking to get additional information with regard to immediate detriment. The service was currently in a holding position as the Local Government Authority (LGA) had put forward the Memorandum of Understanding but then later had it withdrawn. Other Fire & Rescue Authorities were noted to be in the same position. Further details are included within the report.
 - b. In regard to the 10% pensionable allowances, the service was engaging with conversations with the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) to look into how to resolve and move the allowances forward. Officers were currently awaiting comments from the FBU. Further details are included within the report.
 - c. The report included an update on the Pension Regulator – “six processes” factsheet. The Chairman asked that the board be provided with an update on this annually.
 - d. Noted that the internal auditing team at Surrey County Council had commenced an audit on the contract between XPS Administration and Surrey Fire and Rescue.
 - e. Noted detail related to pension scheme resources as noted in the report.
2. In regard to age discrimination, a member of the board asked whether the service was in contact with other Fire & Rescue Authorities that were continuing to go down the route of applying the immediate detriment and learning how they were controlling risks. The Scheme Manager explained that it was mostly the smaller schemes that were moving forward and so had less risk due to their size. The member of the Board requested a list be circulated of the authorities continuing to apply immediate detriment and of those that were not.
3. In regard to 10% Pensionable Allowance, the Chairman asked for confirmation on the number of priority groups and members within each group. The Scheme Manager agreed to circulate a response outside the meeting.

Resolved:

The board noted the report.

27/22 XPS - SURREY FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY PENSION BOARD REPORT [Item 7]

Witness:

Paul Mudd, XPS

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The representative from XPS introduced the report and provided an overview of each section within the report which covered detail on an Overview, Member Self Service, Common Data, Membership, Completed Cases Overview, Completed Cases by Month and Complaints.
2. The Chairman highlighted the common data table on page 31 of the agenda which included data on the number of members with address issues.
3. The representative from XPS highlighted that the benefit statements would be produced the following month and that members could access them by going online to register. A schedule would also be available to provide information on when statements would be available. The Scheme Manager explained that a communications plan allowed pension items to be circulated internally through a newsletter as well potential circulation through the FBU. The Scheme Manager confirmed that she was happy for the detail on benefit statements to be added to the communication plan. The representative from XPS also confirmed that deferred members would receive a paper statement sent to their home address.
4. The representative from XPS explained that pensioners would receive a payslip if their net pay had changed by five pounds or more from one month to the next. The board also noted details of the process to confirm members addresses.
5. The board asked whether it was possible to contact all board members via email when required. XPS explained that an email could be used to establish communication with a member however personal information would not initially be used until their identity was verified. The board suggested that work be carried out to try to obtain email addresses for all members, allowing for information to be circulated when needed and potentially reducing the risk of losing contact when the member moved home address. The Scheme Manager agreed to consider and report back to the board.
6. The Chairman said that it was encouraging to see the completed cases higher in June than in previous months and thanked and congratulated the representative from XPS and his team for their work.
7. In regard to complaints, a member of the board said that a pension scheme member highlighted that they had received a letter labelled as Police Pension but was instead the Annual Benefit Statement for their Firefighters' Pension, The representative from XPS thanked the board member for highlighting the issue and explained that the majority of taxation correspondence was generated manually, rather than automatically, which could be the reason for the error. XPS explained that the Technical Manager would be made aware of the issue and that considerations would be made to prevent it happening going forward. Furthermore the Scheme Manager asked that pension scheme members make the Surrey pension team aware of any further issues.

Resolved:

The board noted the report.

28/22 FIRE BULLETINS [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Sally Wilson, Scheme Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman introduced the report.

Resolved:

The board noted the report.

29/22 RISK REGISTER [Item 9]

Witnesses:

Sally Wilson, Scheme Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman introduced the report.
2. The Scheme Manager proposed that risk F5 and F31 were closed which was agreed by the board.
3. The Scheme Manager highlighted a new risk, F39, which identified that there may be some incorrect salary information and noted that there could be more work to be done to resolve this. Actions would also be carried to understand the exact level of the risk to ensure an appropriate response. The risk register would be updated when appropriate.

Resolved:

The board noted the report.

30/22 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 10]

The board noted the date of the next meeting as 10 November 2022.

Meeting ended at: 10.53 am

Chairman