

MINUTES of the meeting of the **SURREY LOCAL FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION BOARD** held at 10.30 am on 8 February 2024 at Committee Room, Woodhatch Place, 11 Cockshot Hill, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 8EF.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Friday, 26 April 2024.

(* present)

Elected Members:

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

In attendance

Benedict Mulliss (substitute) attended the meeting virtually

1/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Nick Harrison. Dan Quin, Vice-Chairman, acted as Chairman on behalf of Nick Harrison.

Nick Harrison attended the meeting virtually.

2/24 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 23 NOVEMBER 2023 [Item 2]

The minutes from the meeting on 23 November 2023 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

None.

4/24 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were none.

5/24 SURREY FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION BOARD ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKER [Item 5]

Witnesses:

Sally Wilson, Scheme Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman introduced the Action and Recommendation Tracker. The following comments were raised:

A1/22 – 10% Pensionable Pay – The Board agreed to close the action.

A20/20 - GMP Exercise – The Board noted that officers were awaiting a final update from XPS. The representative from XPS confirmed the a report had been received from Mercer and XPS were due to meet with Mercer for a discussion.

A7/21 - Address Tracing Update – XPS confirmed that a basic unit price had been received and that they were awaiting information on the scheme members that needed to be covered.

A3/23 – Member Tracing – the representative from XPS confirmed that information would be provided outside the meeting. Cllr Harrison noted that this action had been ongoing for some time and stated that it was important that progress was made.

A5/23 - Longest Failure – The Board agreed to close this action.

A7/23 – Annual Benefit Statements – The representative from XPS confirmed that they expected the Annual Benefit Statements to be online by close of business on 9 February 2024.

Closed actions – the Board agreed to close the items noted within the 'completed actions' section of the tracker.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

None.

Resolved:

The Board noted the Actions and Recommendations Tracker.

6/24 SCHEME MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT [Item 6]

Witnesses:

Sally Wilson, Scheme Manager
Janine May, Pensions Support Assistant

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Senior Pensions Advisor introduced the report and highlighted the following points:
 - a. In regard to the McCloud - Age Discrimination Remedy, officers stated that communications were ongoing and highlighted that 29 scheme members were due to retire this year. It was further highlighted that the Pension Team continue to work on the GAD data collection exercise to collate and report the GAD calculator data to XPS, for each cohort of membership, in accordance with the RSS timetable. Members further noted that, since 1 October 2023, any retirement had been paid remedy benefits. It was noted that those who retired before 1 October 2023 would be dealt with under the immediate choice cohort however there

was a brief pause while the Home Officer considers tax implications. Officers agreed to provide a report on progress against the plans for those who retired before October 2023 outside of the meeting.

- b. Noted details around the 10% Pensionable Allowance as outlined in the report.
- c. Noted details around the Matthews - Retained Scheme – On-Call Access as outlined in the report. Members noted that the Pension Team had submitted a business case regarding their intention to appoint a specialist ‘member tracing’ service ‘ITM’, to ensure communications were being sent to the correct addresses.
- d. In regard to the Annual Benefit Statements, officers stated that they had not yet confirmed a revised timeline with the Pension Regulator. A Member of the Board noted that there was a delay to the publication this year, partly due to issues with Unit 4, and asked whether the following Annual Benefit Statements would be available on time. Officers confirmed that the Payroll team were aware and that officers were awaiting detail on the benefit specification from XPS. It was also noted that Payroll were due to test the migration of data from SAP to Unit 4. The Chairman stated that it would be helpful to include an update on this within future Scheme Manager Update Reports. A Member asked whether a record of exceptions was available and officers confirmed that a log of exceptions was recorded and it was agreed to share it within a future meeting.
- e. Provided detail on the Pre-Retirement Courses as outlined in the report.
- f. Members noted detail in regard to the Pension Dashboard.
- g. It was noted that the Pensions Team were pleased to report the role of Senior Pension Adviser was now confirmed and the new member would be joining the team on 5 February 2024.
- h. Noted details on communications as outlined in the report.

2. The Chairman thanked officers for their report.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

A1/24 - In regard to the McCloud - Age Discrimination Remedy, officers agreed to provide a report on progress against the plans for those who retired before October 2023 outside of the meeting.

A2/24 - It was agreed to include an update on the progress of the Annual Benefit Statements for 24/25 within a future Scheme Manager Update Report. It was further agreed to circulate the log of exceptions with members of the Board for consideration at a future meeting.

Resolved:

The Board noted the report.

7/24 XPS - SURREY FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY PENSION BOARD REPORT [Item 7]

Witnesses:

Paul Mudd, XPS

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The representative from XPS introduced the item and provided a summary of its content. The following details were noted:
 - a. Details related to regulations and guidance as outlined in the report.
 - b. Noted details regarding security to protect against data breaches as outlined in the report. The representative highlighted that there had been some high-profile data breaches in the news recently however noted that this was not an XPS issue.
 - c. In regard to Conditional Data Testing, Members noted that work was ongoing to map the entire Firefighter Pension Schemes to a Conditional Data testing facility within XPS which would give a conditional data score.
 - d. Noted data related to Member Self-Service as noted within the report.
 - e. Presented the updated common data as noted within the report.
 - f. Noted the data included within the Membership tables.
 - g. Noted the completed cases overview. The Board stated that it would be helpful to receive updates on the backlog within future meetings.
 - h. Members noted that reporting on complaints would be improved going forward.
 - i. The representative from XPS highlighted that XPS had produced an internal position statement within regard to McCloud and that a public statement would be available soon.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

None.

Resolved:

The Board noted the report.

8/24 FIRE BULLETINS [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Sally Wilson, Scheme Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Board noted the fire bulletins.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

None.

Resolved:

The Board noted the fire bulletins.

9/24 RISK REGISTERS [Item 9]

Witnesses:

Sally Wilson, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Janine May, Pensions Support Assistant

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Senior Pensions Advisor introduced the report and provided a brief overview.
2. In regard to the McCloud Risk Summary, Risk ID 3, the Board discussed the benefits of good communication. A Member suggested including updates within a newsletter to answer common questions and share information. It was agreed to schedule a meeting with members of the Board to discuss the communications strategy to ensure scheme members were aware of detail related to the implementation of McCloud and when pension payments would be made.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

None.

Resolved:

The Board noted the risk register.

10/24 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 10]

The Board noted that the date of the next meeting was 26 April 2024.

11/24 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC [Item]**RESOLVED:**

That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

12/24 XPS - SURREY FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY PENSION BOARD REPORT [Item]

The Board considered the XPS internal position statement within regard to McCloud in Part 2.

Meeting ended at: 11.45 am

Chairman