

MINUTES of the meeting of the **SURREY LOCAL FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION BOARD** held at 10.00 am on 15 January 2021 Remote via Teams.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Thursday, 22 April 2021.

(* present)

Elected Members:

- * Mr Nick Harrison (Chairman)
- * Richard Jones
- * Glyn Parry-Jones
- * Dan Quin (Vice-Chairman)

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

There were none.

22/21 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 18 NOVEMBER 2020 [Item 2]

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

23/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were none.

24/21 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were none.

25/21 ACTION TRACKER [Item 5]

Witnesses:

Sally Wilson, Scheme Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

The following changes were requested be made to the action tracker:

- A11/20 – remove Vice Chairman from owner column
- A14/20 & A15/20 – Scheme Manager and Workforce Information Officer to co-ordinate training
- A16/20 & A19/20 – Change owner to Scheme Manager
- A20/20 – remove Vice Chairman from owner column
- A26/20 – text in brackets to be transferred to update column
- A26/20, A27/20 & A28/20 – to be rated yellow as not complete

Actions/ further information to be provided:

The Scheme Manager and Workforce Information Officer to co-ordinate training for the Board in relation to A14/20 & A15/20.

Resolved:

The Board noted the action tracker.

26/21 ADMINISTRATION UPDATE: [Item 6]

Witnesses:

Tom Lewis, Pensions Support & Development Manager
Clare Chambers, Pensions Service Delivery Manager
Sally Wilson, Scheme Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Scheme Manager introduced an administration update. This report set out two months of KPI figures, as opposed to the usual three months, due to how the dates of meetings had fallen. She highlighted the following from the report and its annexes
 - 2.17 to 2.19 of the KPI annex referring to backlog in transfers which were slowly being dealt with.
 - Paragraphs 9 and 10 of the main report regarding opt-outs
 - Paragraph 19 of the main report concerning the High Court ruling on GMP equalisation and stated that there may be a need to look at historic transfers out of the scheme.
 - She also highlighted paragraphs 24 and 25 and referred to the improving scores regarding common and specific data scores
 - Paragraphs 26 and 27 of the main report referring to the work being undertaken with the helpdesk and stated that five new agents had been appointed to work through the 500 to 600 emails. She also explained that remote working was making learning difficult for the new appointees.
2. The Pensions Support & Development Manager explained that the possibility of using East Sussex for support going forward was not an option due to the dissolution of the Orbis arrangement. She highlighted that the risk log for Covid-19 had been reopened.
3. A Member asked for the helpdesk contact telephone details to be made more accessible, especially for those that may not have access to the Council's S-net.
4. The Scheme Manager explained that the new supplier, XPS, would soon be setting an implementation work programme and that they had experience of working with the fire service so understood the scheme complexities.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

1. The Scheme Manager is requested to:
 - send a note to all firefighters with helpdesk telephone numbers
 - to provide briefing to members on resourcing.
2. That the Board receive details of the transition plan when it is completed and before the next Board meeting in April.

Recommendations:

The Board noted the report.

27/21 TPR SURVEY RESULTS [Item 7]

Witnesses:

Sally Wilson, Scheme Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman stated that he had received notification that the 2020 survey was due to start soon. He requested that the Scheme Manager provide comparison data for SFRS the next time this report was presented to the Board.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

1. That the Scheme Manager provide comparison data with future TPR (The Pensions Regulator) survey results.

Recommendations:

The Board noted the report.

28/21 SCHEME MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Sally Wilson, Scheme Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Richard Jones had provided a written note of concerns regarding pensionable allowances which are attached as an annex to these minutes. In response to this the Scheme Manager explained that it was not right to share legal advice received but that the advice was being responded to and the Board would be kept updated. Richard Jones was not happy that employers were unwilling to share the legal advice.
2. The Scheme Manager also explained that further resources were being sought due to the Project Manager being currently unavailable.

3. Richard Jones raised a discrepancy of who had been contacted in relation to pension contributions as he had received notice from some that had not been contacted. He was asked to provide specific details to the Scheme Manager.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

1. Richard Jones to provide details of members that had not received communication to the Scheme Manager to look into.

Recommendations:

The Board noted the report.

29/21 RISK REGISTER [Item 9]

Witnesses:

Sally Wilson, Scheme Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Scheme Manager updated the Board on changes made to the register and agreed that risk F8 needed to be expanded to incorporate the shortage of trained resources and not just the issue of training and knowledge.
2. The Chairman requested that risks be reviewed and updated due for the transfer to a new supplier, and the loss of East Sussex as backup.
3. Risk F16 was discussed in respect of its scoring and mitigations. The Scheme Manager reported that the risk had been reviewed and that engagement was in place for workforce related changes through internal governance and outcomes were a service-related matter rather than a pension related matter.
4. Richard Jones requested that a new risk be added in relation to decisions taken by service management that could lead to legal challenge. The Scheme Manager requested further information so she could look into this. Richard Jones stated that he was not happy with the response and that he did not agree that the risks were scored adequately. The Chairman pointed out that F16 was not marked green so was still marked as an ongoing risk.
5. There was discussion around the risk F24 and whether it explained the problem correctly and whether the mitigations listed would actually mitigate. The Scheme Manager was happy to review the risk and add further explanation and would discuss with Richard Jones. The Chairman requested that the score also be reviewed due to possible financial and reputational risk.
6. The Board requested a new risk be added to the register to identify cyber risks.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

That the Scheme Manager review:

- Risk F8
- Risks F16 and F24 be reviewed after discussion with Richard Jones
- Risk F24 scoring be reviewed
- Addition of new risks concerning the transfer to a new administrator, the loss of East Sussex as a back-up, and around cyber security.

Recommendations:

The Board noted the report.

30/21 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC [Item 10]

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.

31/21 TPR CORRESPONDENCE [Item 10a]

Witnesses:

Sally Wilson, Scheme Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Board discussed Part 2 correspondence with The Pensions Regulator.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

1. That the Board be briefing on outsourcing and other programmes as required between Board meetings.

Recommendations:

The Board noted the TPR correspondence.

32/21 PUBLICITY OF PART 2 ITEMS [Item 11]

Resolved:

That the Part 2 correspondence not be made public.

33/21 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 12]

The Board noted that the next meeting would be held on 22 April 2021.

Meeting ended at: 11.22 am

Chairman