

MINUTES of the meeting of the **SURREY LOCAL FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION BOARD** held at 10.00 am on 10 November 2022 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, 24 February 2023.

(* present)

Members:

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

Benedict Mulliss (substitute member) was also in attendance

31/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Paul Bowyer.

Paul Bowyer attended the meeting virtually.

32/22 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 28 JULY 2022 [Item 2]

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

33/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

None received.

34/22 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were none.

35/22 SURREY FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION BOARD ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKER [Item 5]

Witnesses:

Sally Wilson, Scheme Manger

Key points raised during the meeting:

1. The Chairman introduced the item and thanked officers for their work to update the action tracker and stated that it was now a more succinct document.
2. In regard to Action A1/20, the Scheme Manager noted that the GAD exercise was now underway. The scheme Manager also stated that the majority of the action updates were also noted within the Scheme Manager Update Report
3. In Regard to A20/20, the Scheme Manager highlighted that XPS were due to provide data extracts and had stated that the exercise was due to be completed in mid-November. The Chairman acknowledged that the exercise had taken some time to progress.

4. The Vice-Chairman provided feedback on the action tracker document. It was suggested that the job title 'Head of Data, Digital & Special Projects' should be updated to 'Scheme Manager'. Further to this the Vice-Chairman proposed that action A9/21 be closed which was agreed by the Board.
5. The Vice-Chairman proposed that action A1/22 was amalgamated with action A16/20 as there was significant overlap. The Board agreed to combine the two actions.
6. The Board agreed to close the completed actions.

Actions / further information to be received:

Job title 'Head of Data, Digital & Special Projects' to be updated to 'Scheme Manager'.

A9/21 – CLOSE

A1/22 & A16/20 – COMBINE

Completed Actions – CLOSE

Resolved:

The Board noted the report.

36/22 SCHEME MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT [Item 6]

Witnesses:

Sally Wilson, Scheme Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Scheme Manager introduced the report and provided a brief summary. Members noted:
 - a. In regard to Age Discrimination, good progress had been made on the data collection exercise and that it was due for completion.
 - b. the Service were notified at the end of October 2022 and via the FBU website of the compensation some of the Service's members were set to receive following complaints logged regarding the closure of the 1992 and 2006 pensions schemes. Officers were still awaiting details on how this would progress. The Chairman asked for detail on which organisation would provide the compensation noted within paragraph 2.4 of the report. The Scheme Manager said that officers were waiting for more information however it was believed that the funds would be provided by the Government. A Board Member provided further detail on the matter and explained that the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) were reviewing responses to the survey and that claims made in 2015 would be processed first then claims made in 2020 would be processed next.
 - c. In regard to 10% Pensionable Allowances, the Scheme Manager explained that the service had met with the FBU during the summer period and that the Service had not received any further feedback or details of the legal advice the FBU had

- gained. Further to this, Members noted that calculations had been finalised for all Priority Groups apart from Priority Group Seven. The calculations for this cohort were in progress.
- d. Details related to the Modified Scheme as noted within the action tracker.
 - e. In regard to pension policy, the Pension Project Team had created an overarching policy for the Service's pensions. Amendments had been made to the policy which was at the final stage of approval before it is placed onto SharePoint for the members of the Service to access. The Chairman suggested that, following approval, the final version of the document was brought to the Board for noting, which was agreed.
 - f. That the internal Audit Team at Surrey County Council had completed their audit on the contract between XPS Administration and Surrey Fire and Rescue Service. The overall assurance rating was deemed as 'reasonable' with five medium rated findings. The Scheme Manager noted that the outcomes to the audit would be brought to the next Board meeting for consideration.
 - g. That a business case had been approved for a Pensions Support Assistant to join the Pension team and that the service was working through the recruitment process.
 - h. That the creation of an ill health retirement policy is underway and was due to be available for review in early 2023. In the interim, quarterly meetings continued to take place with the Employee Relations Partner, Senior Pensions Advisor, Scheme Manager and an external Operational Health colleague.
 - i. In regard to incorrect pensionable pay, Members noted that an extensive review regarding the reasons for the incorrect pensionable pay and salary information passed to XPS from the Service had been completed and that it appeared that there were no errors with the pensionable pay data for members contributing to the FPS 2015 scheme. However some salary information was inconsistent for members who had contributed to the FPS 1992 scheme before its tapered closure in April 2022. In some instances, the pay data sent to XPS included Continuing Personal Development (CPD) payments and in other instances it did not. A detailed spreadsheet was submitted by the Senior Business Finance Partner at Surrey County Council to XPS so it could be understood where CPD payments were or were not included in pensionable pay.
 - j. That the service had circulated information to members on the potential impacts of any industrial action.
2. The Vice-Chairman proposed that a risk related to incorrect pensionable pay was closed which was agreed by the Board.
 3. The Chairman stated that the list of tasks and topics found on page 20 of the agenda was helpful. The Chairman further stated that he appreciated the information provided within the report and its new layout and found it to be very helpful.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

A8/22 – The Board to receive the new Pension Policy following approval at a future meeting for noting.

Resolved:

The Board noted the report.

**37/22 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. That following discussions with XPS's existing supplier, they had decided to retain their services and would be able to commence the mortality and address cleanse towards the end of October following the payroll cycle.
 - b. Provided an update on conditional data testing, scheme returns and the annual benefit statements and pension savings statements as outlined in the report. In regard to Scheme Returns, the Scheme Manager confirmed that they had received a draft version and had provided feedback. The Chairman requested that the document be circulated to the Board for information.
 - c. Noted the information which needed to be sent to the National Fraud Initiative by mid-November 2022.
 - d. Provided detail on Member Self-Service and explained that XPS sought to record a demonstration of the Member Self-Service to help members of the scheme navigate the system and find the information they need.
 - e. Noted that the Contact Centre had been live for five weeks.
 - f. That the common data was mostly unchanged however it was expected to see a change in the address data as mortality screening progressed.
 - g. In regard to membership, Members noted an increase in active members.
 - h. Stated that XPS expected the number to completed cases to increase as work progressed.
 - i. In regard to completed cases, the Chairman highlighted that the overall number of cases was relatively low and therefore each case update had an obvious impact on the percentage of completed cases.
 - j. Provided an overview of the task analysis as noted in the report. The Chairman requested that the previous quarter's task analysis was included in future reports.
2. In regard to the Annual Benefit Statement, a substitute member present at the meeting stated that they were able to find the percentage of annual allowance used in the scheme year but was unable to find the percentage of lifetime allowance. The representative from XPS said that he would speak to his team about whether it could be included going forward and that the Annual Benefit Statement template was due for review. The Chairman said that he agreed it would be helpful to have the percentage included.

3. A substitute member present at the meeting highlighted an issue related to a payment made to employees in lieu of overtime and that it was later determined that holiday pay was due so the payment was treated as pensionable when it should not have been. The Scheme Manager stated that communication had been circulated on the matter and that the issue should be rectified by the end of the month. It was further noted that the error was because the administration was treated the same as the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) however business services were informed of the error and it should not happen again.
4. A Member of the Board said that he was aware of issues raised by members of the scheme that had not received a responses by XPS, and asked whether those issues could be raised a the board meeting. The Scheme Manager said that the first point of contact for issues should be the Surrey Pension Team.
5. A Member asked for detail on the parameters for a complaint to be considered a 'formal complaint' as he was aware of three complaints made that had not been reported within the report being considered. The Member further stated that they were unable to locate a complaints procedure on the website. The representative from XPS said that the complaints procedure was available on the 'contact' area of the website and that XPS sought to resolve complaints within 10 working days. The representative agreed to send a link to the procedure outside the meeting The Chairman requested that the member of the Board and the representative from XPS provide an update at the next meeting on whether the complaints had been resolved, and for the representative from XPS to provide more information on the complaint process and the reasons why the three complaints were not recorded as formal complaints. Following further discussion, the representative stated that they would ensure that a 'complaint' section on the drop-down list within the 'Contact' webpage was available to select if needed.
6. The Scheme Manager asked that the pension reform email address was copied into any complaints sent to XPS.

Actions / Further information to be provided:

A9/22 - That the draft Scheme Return document be circulated to the Board for information

A10/22 - Glyn Parry-Jones and the representative from XPS to provide an update at the February 2023 meeting on whether the complaints had been resolved, and for the representative from XPS to provide more information on the complaint process and the reasons why the three complaints noted were not recorded as formal complaints.

Resolved:

The board noted the report.

38/22 FIRE BULLETINS [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Sally Wilson, Scheme Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Scheme Manager introduced the report.
2. The Chairman noted that he attended the first day of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Conference.
3. The Chairman noted detail of the strategy to combat pension scams and asked the representative from XPS to provide detail on what XPS was doing to combat scams. The representative explained that there were a number of challenge-points in place when a member sought to transfer funds to check whether they were being coerced to do so and were aware of any fees. The representative agreed to provide a report on the subject at the next meeting.
4. The Chairman said that he appreciated the summary on action points included.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

A11/22 – The representative from XPS agreed to provide a report on the strategy in place to combat pensions scams at the February 2023 Board meeting.

Resolved:

The committee noted the report.

39/22 RISK REGISTER [Item 9]**Witnesses:**

Sally Wilson, Scheme Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Scheme Manager introduced the report.
2. The Vice-Chairman highlighted that Risk F28 was a green risk and with mitigation remained green so questioned whether the risk was required to be on the tracker. The Scheme Manager said that the risk register was due to be rereviewed to align with the county council's risk procedure and that with this was an opportunity to close green risks where appropriate.
3. The Scheme Manager proposed to close risk F29 as it was covered between F8 and F34. The Board agreed to close the risk.
4. The Scheme Manager noted that Risk F37 would be closed as it was no longer required.
5. In regard to Risk F1, the Chairman suggested that the comments made by XPS regarding data improvements be included as an action being undertaken.
6. In regard to F11, the Chairman suggested that the board consider the risk in detail at a future meeting. The Scheme Manager suggested that, following a review of the risk register, the Board consider one or two risks at each meeting to allow a better understanding by the board. The Board agreed to the proposal.
7. In regard to Risk F25, the Chairman highlighted that point 4 was missing some wording and asked that it be corrected.
8. In regard to Risk F9i, the Chairman suggested that it be consolidated with Risk F34 which was agreed.

9. The Vice-Chairman suggested that there was an opportunity to adjust scoring for each risk when considering issues raised by members of the scheme.
10. The Chairman suggested that the Firefighters' Pension Team meet with the Surrey LGPS Team to discuss their administration of their risk register and share best practice.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

Risk F29 – CLOSE

Risk F37 - CLOSE

Risk F1 - That comments made by XPS regarding data improvements be included as an action being undertaken.

Risk F25 – to correct missing wording

Risk F9i & Risk F34 – COMBINE

A12/22 – The board to consider one or two risks, and mitigating actions in place, in detail at each meeting

Resolved:

The Board noted the document.

40/22 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 10]

The Board noted the date of the next meeting.

Meeting ended at: 11.10 am

Chairman