



## **Surrey Local Firefighters' Pension Board 13 January 2022**

### **Scheme Management Update Report**

#### **Recommendations:**

The Board is asked to note the report and actions taken.

#### **1.1 Introduction:**

1.1 The Board has requested an update on Scheme management activities.

#### **2.0 Scheme Management Activities**

##### **2.1 Age Discrimination – Immediate Detriment Remedy**

2.2 On 8 November 2021, SFRS contacted 178 members who would be affected by the Immediate Detriment Framework (IDF), based on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which was released on 8 October 2021. The communication to the members notified them that the Service was reviewing the processes involved in the IDF and would contact them again once a decision had been reached as to whether SFRS would be adopting the framework.

2.3 On 29 November 2021 Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) received an update from the Local Government Association (LGA) to confirm that the Home Office had withdrawn its guidance on the IDF in relation to the McCloud/Sergeant case. This has meant any work to remedy those due to retire before 2023, will cease until further updates are provided. This is due to the Home Office noting that considerable risk, uncertainty and administrative burdens for individuals, schemes and employers would occur during the IDF process. Furthermore as the legislation is being worked through in preparation for its introduction in 2023, it has become apparent that some of the implications would only be tested in the court of law. Currently members affected by the McCloud/Sergeant case will only be remedied from October 2023 when the legislation comes into play.

2.4 The Service has noted the response from the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) to the retraction of the Immediate Detriment Framework, but is waiting for further guidance from the LGA and Nation Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), before the 178 members are contacted again.

## **2.5 10% Pensionable Allowance**

2.6 During the week commencing 13 December 2021, communications were sent to priority one members (Firefighters about to retire in the next 12 months). This cohort consisted of 13 people rather than the original 17 as the Service were notified of four firefighters who are not due to retire until 2024.

2.7 In terms of the 29 members in priority group 2, (Firefighters who have retired after 2014), the calculations have also been completed and the letters are due to be sent out at the start of 2022.

2.8 The Pensions Project Team have liaised with Surrey County Council's Finance and Payroll teams to ensure repayments of pension contributions owed can be processed accordingly. Meetings have also taken place with XPS Administration and further meetings have been scheduled to ensure member records will be updated.

2.9 At present the Pensions Project Team expect to complete the calculations and communicate to priority group 3 members (Deferred Members) in the first quarter of 2022.

## **2.10 10% Pensionable Allowances – IDRPs update**

2.11 Three complaints were raised by members which have now reached stage 2 of the IDRPs process. Each of the three complainants have been sent a letter in December has been confirmed that of these complainants, 1 will be contacted as part of the priority group two communications. For the remaining complainants, their cases will be reviewed prior to issuing priority group three letters. It may be possible the affected complainants can be reviewed after the first priority group, but this cannot be guaranteed.

## **2.12 Modified Scheme – On-Call Access**

2.13 The deadline for the Expression of Interest forms to be submitted to the Service by, has now passed. Presently, no further guidance has been provided by the Government as to when the firefighters pension scheme will reopen for the firefighters to join. From the 220 affected members, 102 forms have been received of which 99 are interested in joining the scheme. The Service will be communicating to members with an update, however we are unable to proceed further with this project until additional guidance has been received.

## **2.14 Training**

2.15 Based on the action in the November 2021 Local Pensions Board Meeting, contact has been made with the LGA to arrange for training to take place again in Spring 2022. The training session will be for Board Members, Scheme Manager, the Senior Pensions Advisor and the Pensions Project Support Officer.

## **2.16 The Pension Regulator – “six processes” factsheet**

2.17 The first FPS bulletin of 2021 included the release of the latest version of the Pension Regulator six processes factsheet. Based on the action from the November Local Pensions Board Meeting, the SFRS The Pensions Project Team will be working with the Board on this in early 2022.

## **2.18 Audit**

2.19 The internal audit review took place on Monday 13 December 2021. The auditor was very pleased with the progress made to date and there are no further meetings scheduled. An update of the current active actions, need to be sent at six monthly intervals.

## **2.20 Risk Management**

The Local Firefighters Pension Scheme (LFPS) Risk Register has been reviewed and is a standing agenda item on the LFPB

## **2.8 Summary**

The Board is asked to note the update provided.

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**Sources/background papers:** N/A

**Annexes:** N/A

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