

MINUTES of the meeting of the **SURREY LOCAL FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION BOARD** held at 10.30 am on 20 July 2023 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 Thursday, 23 November 2023.

(* present)

Elected Members:

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

Benedict Mulliss, substitute member, was also in attendance (virtually)

21/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

No apologies for absence were received.

Benedict Mulliss joined the meeting virtually.

22/23 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 10 NOVEMBER 2022 & 24 FEBRUARY 2023 & 27 APRIL 2023 [Item 2]

The minutes from the meetings on 10 November 2022 and 24 February 2023 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

The Chairman raised two formatting amendments to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2023. The Board agreed that the minutes from the meeting held on 27 April 2023 were an accurate record of the meeting subject to the amendments raised by the Chairman.

23/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

None.

24/23 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were none.

25/23 SURREY FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION BOARD ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKER [Item 5]

Witnesses:

Paul Mudd, XPS
Phillip Johnson, Senior Pensions Advisor

Key points raised during the discussion:

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

A20/20 GMP Exercise - Members noted that Weightmans were in the process of reviewing the draft template to complete the calculations.

A7/21 Address Update – XPS explained that discussions with the provider were continuing to take place. Members noted the update and asked that XPS progress the project so that it could be completed as soon as possible.

A10/22 Feedback on XPS – The Board agreed to close the action as no further complaints had been received.

A1/23 – Pensions Dashboard - The Board agreed to close the action as the detail was being reported within other standing items.

A11/22 Pensions Scams – The representative from XPS provided Members with an overview of scams related to members of a pension scheme transferring their benefits to another scheme and being subject to high unauthorised payment charges. Members noted some examples of scams, and that XPS staff attended annual refresher training on pension scams and the processes in place to address suspicious activity.

A12/22 Risk Register – The Chairman noted that the action was marked to be closed.

A3/23 Member Tracing – In regard to the action, the representative from XPS explained that they had not received a response from the scheme member who was believed to be overseas. The Chairman asked that XPS continue with their efforts to contact the scheme member.

A5/23 Longest Delay – The representative from XPS confirmed that the longest delay was 55 days however the case had been incorrectly logged due to an administrative oversight and was not a normal occurrence. The Chairman asked that data on the longest delay be included in future reports from XPS.

A6/23 Age Discrimination– In regard to McCloud Age discrimination legislation, the Chairman noted that orders had recently been laid before parliament and asked that Members were briefed on any issues within the next few weeks following the meeting.

A7/23 – Annual Benefits Statements - Officers explained that they were hopeful that the information would be available by the end of July 2023.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

None.

Resolved:

The Board noted the Actions and Recommendations Tracker.

26/23 SCHEME MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT [Item 6]

Witnesses:

Phillip Johnson, Senior Pensions Advisor
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. The data return for members of the 2006 scheme was due to be completed by the end of June 2023. Although the team have been working tirelessly on this project, the deadline will need to be extended to 31 July 2023.
 - b. Thanked those that contributed towards the McCloud consultation.
 - c. Noted that the Pensions Team's immediate priority focused on completing the McCloud data collection exercise before re-commencing with the 10% project.
 - d. Noted details on risks related to the Matthews Retained scheme.
 - e. In regard to pay award details for active members, Members noted that a communication to confirm when the pay award data will be included in projections would be sent to members once the Pensions Team had received the pay award data. The Chairman asked that officers contact Board Members if they were unlikely to meet the deadline of 31 August 2023. Officers also confirm that this would be logged as a potential risk within the Risk Register.
 - f. Noted that the abatement policy had been completed and approved by the Workforce Working Group (WWG) and was available to view on the Pensions SharePoint site.
 - g. Noted that a meeting was hosted by XPS Administration to discuss the preparations and challenges faced by fire authorities with regards to implementation of the McCloud Age Discrimination legislation.
 - h. Noted details related to communications since the last meeting.
2. The Vice-Chairman thanked officers and stated that he had received good feedback from scheme members on Communications.
3. A member asked for detail on the number of expressions of interest on the Matthews Scheme. Officers confirmed that 200 members were in scope for the modified scheme and 100 members had submitted an expression of interest. The member of the board raised concerns that scheme members were unaware of the opportunity to register an interest and asked that officers consider also confirming whether a member was not interested.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

None.

Resolved:

The Board noted the report.

**27/23 XPS - SURREY FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY PENSION BOARD REPORT
[Item 7]**

Witnesses:

Paul Mudd, XPS
Sally Wilson, Scheme Manger
Carrie Pearce, Pensions Project Officer

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
 - b. Details related to Conditional Data Testing as noted in the report.
 - c. Information related to the National Fraud Initiative.
 - d. An overview of the analysis of late tasks.
 - e. Noted data related to Member Self-Service as noted within the report.
 - f. Presented the common data as noted within the report.
 - g. Noted the data included within the Membership tables. Members noted that XPS were looking to include data in the future related to people who had opted-out of the scheme and that the next auto-enrolment date was in 2025.
 - h. Noted the completed cases overview.
2. The committee discussed opportunities to publicise the date in which auto-enrolment took place. This included using email, the council website and letters.
3. In regard to completed cases, a member suggested that data was included from the previous year to allow Board members to make a comparison.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

None.

Resolved:

The Board noted the report.

28/23 FIRE BULLETINS [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Phillip Johnson, Senior Pensions Advisor

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.

29/23 RISK REGISTERS [Item 9]

Witnesses:

Phillip Johnson, Senior Pensions Advisor

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Senior Pensions Advisor introduced the report and noted that the highest rated risks had remained the same compared to the previous publication.
2. The Senior Pensions Advisor provided Members with an overview of the Retained Firefighters (Matthews) Risks. A summary could be found on page 133 of the meeting's agenda.
3. The Chairman asked that the briefing on the risk titled 'Pensions Team Skills and Team Resourcing' was provided in Part 2 (restricted) at the next meeting of the Board.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

Resolved:

The Board noted the risk register.

30/23 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 10]

The Board noted that the date of the next meeting was 23 November 2023.

The Chairman asked the Senior Pensions Officer to confirm whether there was a need to reschedule the next meeting of the Board to take place in October or early November 2023.

Meeting ended at: 11.50 am

Chairman