

At a meeting of the HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY PENSION BOARD held at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Eastleigh on 18 August 2016.

PRESENT:

p	Stewart Adamson	p	Cllr Roger Price
p	Malcolm Eastwood	a	Alex Rhodes
p	Steve Foye		

35 INTRODUCTION TO PENSION BOARD AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Alex Rhodes.

It was noted that following the Full Authority meeting In June, Councillor Price, Stewart Adamson and Steve Foye were appointed Employer representatives to the Firefighters' Pension Board. It was also heard that following a successful recruitment process, Richard North had been selected to replace Charlie House as a Scheme Member following his resignation. This appointment would be formally made at the next Full Authority meeting in September.

Members of the Board introduced themselves, outlining their background and experience.

36 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE PENSION BOARD

The Clerk called for nominations for a Chairman, noting the requirements of the Terms of Reference. Members of the Board were keen for greater flexibility in the Board's Terms of Reference in appointing future Chairman/Vice-Chairman, in particular with regards to the need to alternate between Scheme and Member representatives each year. Steve Foye was nominated, seconded and in the absence of any further nominations duly appointed Chairman of the Pension Board initially for the current meeting only, subject to legal advice relating to the Board's Term's of Reference.

37 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Clerk called for nominations for a Vice-Chairman. Alex Rhodes was nominated, seconded and in the absence of any further nominations duly appointed Vice-Chairman of the Pension Board subject to legal advice relating to the Board's Term's of Reference as detailed in Minute 36.

38 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

Members were mindful of their duty to disclose at the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest they had in any matter on the agenda for the meeting,

where that interest was not already entered in the Authority's register of interests, and their ability to disclose any other pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests in any such matter that they might have wished to disclose.

Malcolm Eastwood declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as Chairman of the National Firefighters' Pension Scheme National Advisory Board.

39 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting on 14 April 2016 were received and noted. As Members who had been in attendance at the 14 April meeting were not in attendance on this occasion, it was agreed to defer acceptance of the minutes to a future meeting of the Board.

40 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no announcements.

41 DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

42 DISCRETIONARY POLICIES

[Councillor Price declared a conflict of interest in the item, by virtue of his membership of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and that Committee's decision earlier in the year relating to discretionary policies. He therefore withdrew from that part of the item.]

The Board received a report from the Chief Officer regarding several discretionary policy related areas in relation to the Firefighter's Pension Scheme (FPS) (Item 8 in the Minute Book).

The report was introduced by the Chief Financial Officer and the background to the report was set out, highlighting a range of areas where discretionary policies were being sought to be implemented, which included ill health retirement and re-engagement. It was explained that the report had been received by the HFRA Finance and General Purposes Committee on 10 May 2016, and the recommendations were approved by the Committee.

The background to Continual Professional Development (CPD) payments as pensionable payments was explained to the Board. Following questions relating to the accuracy of the data in paragraph 4.4 of the report, it was agreed that officers would investigate the accuracy of the figures further.

It was noted that draft policy proposals would be considered at a future Standards and Governance Committee.

RESOLVED:

- That a draft Firefighters Pension Scheme Discretionary Policy be produced with reference to the Scheme Managers Discretions document as published by the Local Government Association (LGA) and be submitted to the F&GP Committee for approval.
- That CPD payments to continue as pensionable payments.
- That a HFRA FPS ill health retirement policy be developed and brought back to a future meeting of the Committee for approval.
- That a new re-engagement policy be developed, which maintains the current position that staff, will not be re-engaged following retirement, except in exceptional circumstances driven by business need and should include any tax implications as a result of Protected Pension Age (PPA).
- That pension payments are abated in the exceptional situation that an individual is re-employed where they are a member of the 1992/2006 FPS.
- Not to have a discretionary injury benefit scheme under the Local Government (Discretionary Payment) (Injury Allowances) Regulations 2011 at this time and to publish a written statement to this effect. This policy is to be reviewed periodically.
- To conduct injury award reviews for the Firefighters Pension Scheme Compensation (England) Order 20016, in conjunction with ill health retirement reviews, at the appropriate interval determined by the policy once established.

43 ANNUAL REPORT OF PENSIONS BOARD

The Board received a report from the Chief Financial officer and the Director of Human Resources regarding ongoing issues (Item 7 in the Minute Book).

The report was introduced and it was explained that in line with the Board's Terms of Reference, an annual report on the exercise of the Board's functions is required to be presented to the Standards and Governance Committee as the Scheme Manager. The background to the formation of the Pension Board was set out and the range of pension related issues looked at by the Board in its first year were highlighted as detailed in the report.

Following discussion, the Board acknowledged the training sessions for newly appointed Members of the Board, as these were found to be beneficial for Members after the Board was originally formed. Malcolm Eastwood agreed to contact newly appointed Members to discuss training opportunities in the form of workshops and LGA organised courses. The introduction during the past year of a training needs analysis for Members of the Board was highlighted and it was felt that this would be a positive tool to take forward.

The need for clear and concise information in relation to the Moodle website was discussed, and the importance of clear signposting to enable Firefighters to access information relating to pension queries was emphasised.

Members were keen to ensure that Firefighters had sight of the Annual report of the Pension Board once received by the Standards and Governance Committee for information, and Members agreed to recommend this to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- That the contents of the report were noted.
- That the Pension Board approved the report and agreed to recommend to Standards and Governance Committee that it be drawn to the attention of Firefighters.

44 PENSION ISSUES LOG

The Board received a report from the Chief Financial officer regarding ongoing issues (Item 10 in the Minute Book).

The report was introduced and the position regarding the impact on pension tax liability of temporary promotions was clarified. The Board heard that following a change in regulations in July 2013, work had been taking place to identify those officers affected and amend their pension records to ensure that their pension benefits and tax positions were correct. It was noted that it would take longer than was previously thought to extract all of the required data. In response to questions, it was confirmed that this would be finalised for submission for the 2015/16 tax year, and officers would clarify any tax charges as soon as possible. It was also confirmed that officers would ensure that The Pension Regulator would be kept informed of the process, and as discussed with The Pension Regulator, a Record Keeping Plan would be implemented.

The position regarding the issue of RDS Less Favourable Treatment was outlined and it was heard that with regards to the purchase of retrospective membership, final calculations and administrative details had been completed. The Board heard that there was the potential for complaint cases, and these were being dealt with. Potential national issues in relation to the way the process was handled were also highlighted.

Other pension issues were highlighted including re-employment policy and employment tribunal claims regarding transitional protections, and the Board noted the actions relating to these.

The possibility of aligning future meetings of the Board with meetings of Standards and Governance Committee in order to streamline business was discussed and officers would look further into this matter.

RESOLVED:

- That the contents of the report summarising progress toward resolution of the pensions issues for Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service be noted.