

At a meeting of the HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY PENSION BOARD held at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Eastleigh on 30 September 2015.

PRESENT:

p	Cllr Mark Cooper	p	Charlie House
p	Malcolm Eastwood	p	Alex Rhodes
a	Cllr Hannah Hockaday	p	Cllr John Wall

**11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Hockaday.

**12 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

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 personal interests in any such matter that they might have wished to disclose.

There were no declarations of interest received for the meeting.

**13 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting on 27 July were agreed to be a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**14 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman had no announcements.

**15 DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations.

**16 PENSION BOARD – FORMAL DOCUMENTATION**

The Board received a report from the Chief Financial Officer regarding the breaches policy and conflicts of interest. (Item 6 in the Minute Book).

The need to update the Board's Terms of Reference to include the actions to be taken with regards breaches of pension regulations or undisclosed conflicts of interest was set out. It was explained that few examples of how to include this were available and a light touch approach was proposed.

Members were keen to remain consistent with other Boards wherever possible and noting that Hampshire was ahead of many in terms of formalising documentation, it was agreed that the Hampshire Terms of Reference should be shared with colleagues at the LGA to contribute to the nationally available knowledge base.

RESOLVED:

- That the Board formally adopt the revised Terms of Reference and associated documents.
- That the Board recommend the changes to Finance and General Purposes Committee for approval in their capacity as Scheme Manager.
- That the Board's updated Terms of Reference be shared with the LGA.

## **17 FIREFIGHTERS PENSION SCHEME - STATISTICS**

The Board received a report from the Chief Financial Officer regarding pension scheme data (Item 7 in the Minute Book).

The key points of the report were outlined with attention drawn to the figures at 3.2 of the report and clarification of a "deferred" status was given. It was noted that a high proportion (c. 80 percent) of those eligible grey book staff were active members of the Pension Scheme. The Board was supportive of action to encourage staff to join the Scheme and to seek to understand reasons for leaving. Communication with staff was discussed and Members felt that many of the messages were national rather than specific to Hampshire and therefore were keen to explore the potential of national communications through the LGA.

With regards to the transition to the new 2015 Pension Scheme, the breakdown of the position of HFRS staff moving into the new Scheme was highlighted and it was confirmed that this was based on individuals' ages at a certain point. No issues from this transition were known to have arisen.

RESOLVED:

- That the Board agrees to target communications to non-members of the pension scheme as part of a wider communication strategy to be considered at a later meeting.
- That the Board agrees (subject to legal advice) to write to Scheme Members who have opted out of the Pension Scheme in order to determine their reasons for doing so.

- That the Board requests a regular pension scheme performance report be prepared for consideration.
- That the potential for a national communications strategy be pursued through officers and their counterparts at the LGA.

## **18 PENSION ISSUES LOG**

The Board received a report from the Director of Human Resources regarding ongoing issues, including an update on backdated RDS pensions (Item 8 in the Minute Book).

Members heard that the issues detailed in the report were those currently being dealt with and were common to most Authorities. The RDS modified Scheme membership position was discussed and although it was believed that issues had now been overcome, there was concern that the documentation had been complex. It was acknowledged that because of the complexity and because a Scheme administrator is not able to provide pension advice, some people may have experienced difficulties. This may also explain why some forms had not been returned at all. Given that pension and general financial advice cannot be provided by the Scheme administrator, Members were keen to find a means of guiding people towards reliable independent advice, noting that Trade Union support was only available to members. It was agreed that further consideration of this point should be given at a future meeting.

The background to the tax liabilities incurred through temporary promotion was explained and it was noted that the situation was an inevitable consequence of the regulations. It was confirmed that additional pension benefits would be further reviewed and recommendations made to the Full Authority if required.

### **RESOLVED:**

- That the contents of the report summarising progress toward resolution of the pensions issues for Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service be noted.
- That consideration be given at a future meeting to means of guiding people towards independent and suitable pension advice.

## **19 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board received a report from the Clerk regarding future business of the Board (Item 9 in the Minute Book). The report was noted and it was agreed that in the future this could be combined with the issues log (Minute 18 refers)

## **20 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, being information relating to any consultations or negotiations or contemplated negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority, and further that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons set out in the report.

## **21 EXEMPT MINUTE**

The exempt Minute of the meeting on 27 July was agreed to be a correct record and signed by the Chairman.