

**Minutes of the meeting of the Local Pension Board
held on 15 March 2022 via Zoom**

PRESENT

Employer Representatives:

Cllr John B Hughes
Gareth Owens, Clerk

Employee Representatives:

Richard Fairhead, Fire Leaders Association - Prospect, Employee Representative (Chair)
Bob Mason, Fire Officers' Association.
Duncan Stewart-Ball, Fire Brigades Union

Advisors

Helen MacArthur, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Martin Morgan, Dyfed Pension Fund

Minute Taker

Alwen Davies, Members' Liaison Officer

Prior to starting the meeting, ACFO MacArthur informed members that Julie Brown, Pensions Manager, had resigned and a new pensions officer is due to join the Service in May 2022.

1 APOLOGIES

Cllr Bryan Apsley
Jane Honey, Fire Officers' Association
Tim Lloyd, Fire Brigades Union

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 None.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2021 were approved as a correct record.

4 FIREFIGHTERS PENSION SCHEMES – UPDATE REPORT

4.1 ACFO MacArthur led Members through the report which informed members about the scheme membership, together with updates on:

- Membership update
- Horizon scanning
- Overview of FPS Bulletins and Circulars

- 4.2 The report gave details of current member levels in the firefighters' pension schemes.
- 4.3 Members were reminded that the Service had received two complaints during 2021-22 financial year. These were dealt with via the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure; one complaint progressed to Stage 2 and was considered by a member led panel and the complaint was not upheld. A further complaint is currently outstanding with the Pension's Ombudsman (PO) and the outcome is still awaited.
- 4.4 In terms of Horizon scanning, there were several issues and developments that members of the LPB needed to be aware of including
- addressing the age discrimination contained within the UK Government's 2012 pension reforms
 - detailed 2020 valuation being undertaken by the Government Actuary's Department including the cost control mechanism
 - pensions dashboard.
- 4.5 It was noted that the pensions dashboard will allow individuals to see information about all of their pensions including occupational and state pensions in a single place. The dashboard is being introduced in different stages and the regulations will create a legal duty on pension providers to provide the information. However, the dashboard will not be introduced until 2024 and members will be kept informed of developments.
- 4.6 **RESOLVED to note the report.**
- 5 AGE DISCRIMINATION - UPDATE
- 5.1 ACFO MacArthur presented the report which gave members an update on progress with legislative changes required to address the age discrimination arising from the 2013 pension reforms.
- 5.2 Members were reminded that the legislative changes necessary to address the age discrimination are contained within Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill (the Bill). The Bill also empowers responsible authorities to make changes to scheme rules to effect these changes (i.e. the Welsh Ministers for firefighters' pensions in Wales).
- 5.3 It was noted that the legacy schemes will close to future accruals with effect from 1 April 2022 and all members will be transferred into the 2015 reformed scheme.
- 5.4 Members had previously been informed that the full implementation of the remedy proposals is not expected to be concluded until 1 October 2023 and that an interim option was available through a framework agreed by lawyers acting on behalf of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and fire and rescue authorities. However, this had not yet been implemented following concerns raised by HMRC/HMT and ACFO

MacArthur confirmed that the issues are being worked through with tax advisers.

5.5 It was confirmed that individuals affected by the delay of the interim option being implemented have been invited to information workshops and offered one to one support where appropriate.

5.6 **RESOLVED to note the update.**

6 DYFED PENSION FUND UPDATE (SCHEME ADMINISTRATOR)

6.1 Martin Morgan presented his report which provided information on the following areas:

- Regulatory Update
- E-communication
- GMP reconciliation
- Appeals
- Breaches
- Data quality reports
- My Pensions Online
- Workflow.

6.2 The importance of the pension scheme members checking their My Pensions Online account was again highlighted as this is the quickest and easiest way of identifying any issues. It was noted that representative bodies need to keep communicating and promoting this to their members. ACFO MacArthur also confirmed that this will be an important area of work for the new pensions officer who is due to start with the Service in May 2022.

6.3 **RESOLVED to note the information provided.**

7 SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD

7.1 ACFO MacArthur gave members an update on matters discussed at the SAB meeting held on 23 February 2022.

7.2 It was noted that a range of matters had been discussed which included the cost cap mechanism relating to the 2016 GAD valuation, the Public Sector Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill, the Firefighters Pension Scheme (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2022, member communication in respect of age discrimination remedy and the consultation on the Pensions Dashboard 2022 Regulations.

7.3 **RESOLVED to note the matters discussed.**

8 RISK REGISTER – RISK AREA 4 REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

8.1 Members were reminded that the Pensions Regulator recommends that Local Pension Board members consider and review their Risk

Register during each Board meeting. The risk register for regulatory compliance was presented for review at the meeting.

8.2 **RESOLVED to note the Regulatory Compliance Risk Area of the Register for 2021/22, and that any changes or updates be incorporated into the register and the revised document published at the end of the year on the Authority's website.**

9 FIREFIGHTERS PENSION SCHEMES LOCAL PENSION BOARD – ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

9.1 The annual report of the Local Pension Board which details the work of the board during the 2021/22 financial year was presented to members for approval.

9.2 The report also provided a work programme for 2022/23 and it was agreed to add the O'Brien and Matthews cases to the programme in order to monitor any developments that may occur. Section 8 of the annual report will be amended prior to submission to the FRA meeting.

9.3 **RESOLVED to**
(i) recommend the annual report to the Fire and Rescue Authority subject to amending the forward work programme under section 8;
(ii) note the terms of reference noting the requirement to reappoint Local Pension Board members following the local government elections in May 2022.

10 MATTERS TO BE REFERRED TO THE FRA

10.1 The next meeting of the FRA will be on 20 June, it was agreed that the following pension related items will be on the agenda:

- LPB annual report for 2021/22 and terms of reference
- report requesting co-option of FRA members onto the LPB.

10.2 It was agreed that no other issues needed to be referred to the FRA.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 None.