

HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY

PENSION BOARD

12 JULY 2021

PRESENT:

Employer representatives: Councillor Shepherd and Mr P McCourt (Director of Service Delivery)

Scheme Member representatives: Mr B Johnson (Chairperson) and Mr G Marshall

Councillor Briggs attended an observer.

Martyn Ransom - Head of Finance, David Lofthouse - Procurement Manager, Sarah Keyes - Finance Officer, Mathew Buckley - Monitoring Officer/Secretary and Samm Campbell - Committee Manager.

The meeting was held at the Humberside Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Kingston upon Hull. Meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m.

The Monitoring Officer/Secretary took the chair for Minute 13/21.

13/21 ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMITTEE - *Resolved* - That Mr B Johnson be appointed Chairperson of the Pension Board until its Annual General Meeting in 2022.

Mr B Johnson took the chair.

14/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - There were no apologies for absence.

15/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - There were no declarations of interest.

16/21 MINUTES - *Resolved* - That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 1 February 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

17/21 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES - There were no matters arising from the minutes.

18/21 CALENDAR OF BOARD MEETINGS - The Monitoring Officer/Secretary submitted a report summarising the calendar of Fire Authority meetings.

Resolved - That the report be received.

19/21 PENSION FUND ACCOUNT - The Head of Finance submitted the Pension Fund Account for 2020/21.

The Pension Fund Account continued to be stable, with deficits met annually by the Home Office.

Resolved - That the Pension Fund Account be received.

20/21 REPORTING BREACHES - The Procurement Manager informed the Board that there had been no breaches since the meeting held on 1 February 2021.

Resolved - That the update be received.

21/21 PENSION BOARD WORKSTREAMS UPDATE - The Head of Finance submitted a report setting out an update on the Board's workstreams for 2021/22.

The number of complaints received by the Service each year in relation to pensions tended to be low (often zero), with none received during 2021/22 to date. The Risk Register had been enclosed with the agenda (Appendix 2). The security of scheme members' data remained a key risk, as well as the reliance on a small number of key officers. However, the continued support of West Yorkshire Pension Fund addressed the risks concerning data and reliance on officers. The Service was also due to recruit two new members of staff to assist in addressing the outcomes of the Sargeant/McCloud case (Minute 8/21 refers).

The Service was reviewing one of the key performance indicators (KPIs) used to hold West Yorkshire Pension Fund to account for its performance in relation to the speed with which death-in-retirement processes were undertaken.

Resolved - That the report be received.

22/21 FPS MEMBER WEBSITE - The Finance Officer provided the Board with details of the new website designed for members of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

Resolved - That the details be received.

23/21 SARGEANT/MCCLOUD UPDATE - The Head of Finance gave a verbal update to the Board on the Sargeant/McCloud case.

At its meeting of 25 June 2021, the Fire Authority had received a report (Minute 95/21 refers) on the informal Home Office guidance on the Treatment of 'Immediate Detriment' cases issued on 21 August 2020 and updated on 10 June 2021 ("the Immediate Detriment Guidance") in relation to members of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992 and the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2006 ("the Legacy Schemes"). The Authority had agreed the report with the following conditions:

- (1) A Framework for the application of the Immediate Detriment Guidance is nationally agreed between the Government, Fire and Rescue Authorities and the Representative Bodies.
- (2) Where calculation of benefits under Immediate Detriment Guidance in accordance with the nationally agreed Framework is possible.

A Member queried why the Authority had not opted to proceed with the application of the remedy using the informal Home Office guidance. While six Scheme members had been identified as prospective 'Immediate Detriment' cases up to 31 March 2022, the informal guidance had no basis in law, and the Authority expected the national framework on the application of Immediate Detriment Guidance to be agreed by all parties by September 2021. Processing cases before this would pose a risk to both the Authority and FFPS Members.

However, the Board resolved to recommend that the Fire Authority reconsider its decision with regard to the application of the updated Immediate Detriment Guidance and was keen to ensure that the Service was doing all it could to support the welfare of affected Scheme members before the national framework was agreed.

Resolved - (a) That the update be received;

Recommended -

(b) that the Authority offer welfare support to Scheme members affected ahead of the agreement of a national framework for the application of the Sargeant/McCloud remedy, and

(c) that the Authority reconsider its decision with regard to the implementation of the Home Office's updated Immediate Detriment Guidance.

24/21 ANY OTHER BUSINESS – There were no items.