

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Pension Board of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme
held on 12 January 2017**

Present:

Members

Keith Bray (Chair), Katie Brown, Liz Firmstone, Tony Morgan, Paul Morley, Rob Moyney

Officers

John Betts, Head of Finance

Vicki Newbold, Senior Solicitor and Team Leader

Ben Patel-Sadler, Democratic Services Officer

1. Introductions and General business

(1) Apologies

Marcus Giles

(2) Board Members' Disclosures of Interests

None

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2016

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 11 January 2016 were agreed as an accurate record for signing by the Chair. There were no matters arising.

2. Pensions Update Report

Liz Firmstone provided the Board with an update where members noted the following:

- In relation to ill health retirements, members noted that retained firefighters who were not members of the pension scheme were still entitled to ill health benefits. This had resulted in a financial shortfall of around £1 million which had since been provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DfCLG). This had been backdated to April 2016. Members noted that the County Council had paid the interest on the balance of the £1 million which amounted to £250,000. The Council had set aside another £750,000 in the event that the DfCLG ruled that the Council was required to pay the remaining balance. If this payment was not required, the £750,000 would be transferred to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme.
- The Board noted that some of the overtime paid to retained firefighters should have been pensionable. Members noted that legal advice was currently being sought by the Council – it was

anticipated that the reimbursement of this pensionable overtime would amount to between £100,000 and £110,000 which would be drawn from the fire and rescue budget.

- The Board noted that some firefighters who joined the service in 1992 had paid two years' too much of pension contributions because they had been admitted into a different pension scheme which was in operation at that time. 16 people were affected by this in Warwickshire and the Home Office would be reimbursing these individuals by the end of March 2017.
- Members noted that firefighters' pension schemes were sometimes very complicated (there were a large number of different schemes in operation around the country).

3. Scheme Advisory Board update

John Betts, Head of Finance informed the Board that the setting up of the national Scheme Advisory Board and of regional meetings meant we could now raise Warwickshire issues at a regional level, where they may receive more attention than they would at a national level. The Board would keep this in mind and would raise issues as and when they arose.

4. Communications Update

The Board were asked for their opinions in relation to the latest 'On Call' pensions newsletter and their thoughts on the move towards a paperless system for the distribution of pensions information.

In relation to the paperless approach to providing pensions information, the Board observed that because of the complications around each individuals' pension, it was sometimes easier to have a face to face meeting so that certain scenarios and situations could be explained to the individual. One drawback of moving towards a paperless system could be that contributors to the pension scheme would be unable to decipher the sometimes complicated information. John Betts, Head of Finance informed the Board that officers would look at options as to how firefighters could access their own individual pensions information electronically whilst still being able to access pension professionals by the way of one to one meetings when required.

5. Local Fire Pension Board Training

The Board agreed that training should take place on an annual basis. Katie Brown informed the Board that she would be meeting with the regional HR leads where discussions would be taking place on how training might be delivered on a regional basis to several boards simultaneously. Members of the Board agreed to forward any ideas they had around specific training topics to Katie Brown. John Betts, Head of Finance suggested that the Board might be interested in undertaking some training around the role of the pension scheme administrator.

6. Next Steps

The Chair informed the Board that the next steps would be to attend any arranged training and to consult on the future dates for Board meetings.

7. Any other business

None

The board rose at 14.15 p.m

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Chair