

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Pension Board of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme
held on 27 November 2018**

Present:

Members

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

Officers

Helen Barnsley, Democratic Services Officer
John Betts, Head of Finance

1. Introductions and General business

(1) Apologies

Keith Bray was delayed so appointed Katie Brown as the Chair for the meeting until he arrived.

(2) Board Members' Disclosures of Interests

None

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2018

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 26 February 2018 were agreed as an accurate record for signing by the Chair. There were no matters arising.

2. Impact of Reducing the SCAPE Discount Rate

John Betts, Head of Finance, gave an update regarding concerns across services such as fire and teaching following the announcement that there would be a reduction to the SCAPE discount rate. Pension schemes now look more expensive with higher/more frequent contributions needed to maintain the pension scheme.

Warwickshire is building contributions into the base budget so there is no difference to the access or availability to members of pension schemes in Warwickshire.

It was noted that there are no plans for an increase in employee contributions at this point in time but it is something that the pension board should keep an eye on moving forward.

Resolved

That the Board noted the impact of the adjustment to the SCAPE discount rate on the public service pension schemes.

3. Potential Outsourcing of Fire Pensions Administration

John Betts, Head of Finance, provided a verbal update to the Board on the potential outsourcing of administration for the fire pensions. It was noted that informal contact has been made with other counties and fire authorities in relation to their approach. It was considered that the scheme would receive better coverage and more stability with another fire authority providing administration on behalf of WFRS.

Paul Morley confirmed that a key factor would be specialism in fire pension schemes as they get more complicated and that consistency would be key moving forward.

The Board noted that there was no solid timeframe in place but once the process has started formally it should be quite swift. In the meantime, Neil Buxton, Pension Service Manager, was responsible for answering any queries.

It was agreed that there will be a further update for the Board at the next meeting.

Resolved

That the Board noted the updated provided.

- **Keith Bray arrived at the meeting and took the Chair for the remaining agenda items**

4. HMRC Compliance Matters

Liz Firmstone, Strategic Finance Manager, provided an update for the Board following two issues regarding HMRC compliance.

In relation to tax rules for retained fire fighters, WFRS has provided all the information requested by HMRC and no further communication has been received. The result is that there are no compliance issues for WFRS regarding retained fire fighters.

Regarding the compliance with tax rules for retained fire fighters who have been awarded an ill health pension; there is a piece of work in progress to discover if anyone in WFRS falls into this category.

There will be an update at the next meeting. A request was made for clarification on who would be responsible for rectifying any issues; the fire service of the individual – this will be provided at the next meeting,

Resolved

That the Board noted the content of the report

EXEMPT ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PRIVATE (PURPLE PAPERS).

5. Current Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures

The Board noted the update provided.

6. Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 February 2018

The exempt minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 26 February 2018 were agreed as an accurate record for signing by the Chair. There were no matters arising.

7. Next Steps

Tony Morgan raised the issue following a recent case at the European Court. The judgement on November 7, 2018 in the O'Brien Decision was in relation to part time workers and the question raised was if this would have an impact on part time retained firefighters. It was noted that this case may be raised at the Fire Finance Network meeting in December 2018 and that officers will be able to provide an update at the next meeting.

Marcus Giles requested assurance that the pension scheme was following the eligibility to join rules. It was agreed that there would be an update at the next meeting.

It was agreed that the next meeting will be scheduled for approximately six months' time (May or June 2019)

8. Any other business

None

The board rose at 10:06am

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Chair