

# Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Local Pension Board of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme

Thursday 4 March 2021

## Minutes

### Attendance

#### Committee Members

Martin Reohorn (Chair)  
Barnaby Briggs  
Caroline Jones  
Councillor David Reilly  
Paul Morley  
Tony Morgan

#### Officers

Helen Barnsley, Democratic Services Officer  
Neil Buxton, Technical Specialist - Pension Fund Policy and Governance  
Liz Firmstone, Service Manager (Transformation)  
Jane Pollard, Legal Service Manager (Corporate)

### 1. General

### 2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Vicky Jenks, Sian Marsh and Deborah Moseley.

### 3. Board Members' Disclosures of Interest

(As stipulated by the Public Sector Pensions Act 2013 and set out in Annex A of the Agreed Board Terms of Reference).

There were no declarations of interest noted.

#### (1) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

There were no matters arising.

#### **4. Terms of Reference**

Neil Buxton, Technical Specialist - Pension Fund Policy and Governance introduced the report to the Board and confirmed that the terms of reference had been updated.

It was noted that section 7.4 had been missed from the updated version sent to the Board. It was confirmed that this will be corrected and the correct document will be recirculated to the Board members.

The Board accepted the updated Terms of Reference.

#### **5. Pensions Administration Update**

Liz Firmstone, Service Manager (Transformation) presented the report to the Board. It was noted that the report brings a broad picture of the activity completed by the pension administrators.

The Board noted that there had been one recorded breach since the last meeting. The breach was a minor breach and had been resolved. There was no requirement for it to be reported.

In relation to internal disputes, it was noted that there have been three cases since October 2020. They have all been investigated with two not upheld and one being dealt with internally by HR.

In relation to McCloud/Sergeant, the Board noted that following consultation, the Government had announced that members will not have to choose options until they leave. These means that members will have the information to make the right decision. This is a good outcome.

It was noted that with reference to Immediate detriment, the Home Office has recently provided guidance, some of which was challenged in the courts but this has not been successful. It was confirmed that officers are waiting to hear if there will be appeals, although this is unlikely. Officers will revisit calculations to ensure that everything is correct.

The Chair raised a question in relation to the guidance and if it will include specific information about immediate ill health retirement and if it will this be across legacy schemes? It was confirmed that Liz Firmstone will investigate and report back at a future meeting.

Section 8 of the report related to data performance scores and it was noted that the scores compare well with others. There have been some issues with data in relation to legacy schemes but work is in progress to improve the performance score in this area. It was noted that advice is expected from the LGA in relation to legacy cases and how to proceed where data is missing or incorrect. The Board noted that access to older pay systems is still available and that this should help.

Following a question from the Chair, it was confirmed that Liz Firmstone will investigate if the missing data is all from one area and feedback to the Board at a future meeting.

Following a question from Councillor Dave Reilly it was confirmed that administrators can hold data from a range of sources and that this has been validated and verified by legal officers.

In relation to the outsourcing of administration, it was confirmed that work is in progress to ensure that the quality of the data is high before anything is outsourced.

The Board noted that Shropshire have expressed an interest in sharing the tendering process for the outsourcing. Reassurance was given that the sharing process will not delay Warwickshire's plan. The Board noted that 1 April 2022 is the planned go-live date for the outsourcing project.

Barnaby Briggs stated that the national fire procurement framework would allow Shropshire to benefit from the process undertaken by Warwickshire. The Board noted that it was unclear at the moment if Shropshire were interested in sharing the procurement process or in having a shared contract. The Chair advised caution in starting a new contract at the start of a financial year.

It was confirmed that in relation to O'Brien/Matthews case, an update would be prepared for the next meeting. O'Brien/Matthews related to a 2006 modified scheme for part time working settlements.

## **6. Risk Monitoring**

Neil Buxton, Technical Specialist - Pension Fund Policy and Governance, presented the report to the Board and confirmed that it would be presented each quarter and any amendments would be highlighted to the Board.

The board noted that risks associated with Covid-19 have been added to the register. It was also noted that the implementation of i-connect will improve the quality of the data that is input.

The Board noted the content of the report.

## **7. Forward Plan**

Neil Buxton, Technical Specialist - Pension Fund Policy and Governance presented the report to the Board confirming that it was a plan for items due to be presented to the Board at future meetings.

It was noted that there is flexibility if there are items that the Board would like to bring forward or push back. Standard items for each meeting are included on the plan as well as bespoke items such as policy reviews.

In relation to training, it was confirmed that a more detailed training plan for the Board will be provided at a future meeting. The Board noted that an LGA training session to be held at Hereford and Worcester has been opened to members in Warwickshire.

Paul Morley requested that the tender process be added to the forward plan as well as to the training plan to allow board members to fully understand the process

The Board noted the content of the report.

## **8. Any Other Business**

Councillor Dave Reilly advised the Board that he would not be standing for re-election in May 2021, so this would be his last meeting of the pension board. The Board thanks Councillor Reilly for his work on the Board and wished him well for the future.

It was confirmed that a replacement member would be decided by full council at the meeting in May after the election.

Barnaby Briggs informed the Board of the latest FPS Bulletin (42) which raised a series of questions that Fire Authorities needs to address. It was agreed that the questions would be shared with the Board and that Liz Firmstone would circulate answers before the next meeting to that they could be discussed. The item will be added to the agenda.

## **9. Future Meeting Dates**

The schedule of future meeting dates was agreed as follows:

Tuesday, 14 September 2021  
Tuesday, 9 November 2021  
Monday, 14 February 2022  
Tuesday, 10 May 2022

All meetings will be held at 2.00pm in Shire Hall or virtually (subject to government guidance)

The meeting rose at 14:49

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Chair