

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

7 November 2022

## Governance and Policy Update

### Recommendation

That the Board note and comment on the items in this report

#### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the Board on regulatory and policy updates in the Firefighter Pensions Schemes arena.

#### 2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 None.

#### 3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 None

#### 4. Regulatory Update

- 4.1 The Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) has been invited by the Home Office to take part in a series of joint engagement sessions with the Police SAB to consider scheme specific versions of the Provision Definition Documents (PDDs) which define the provisions of the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act (PSPJOA) 2022 for each area of the 2015 Remedy. These discussions will help to inform the drafting of secondary legislation, ahead of formal consultation early in 2023.
- 4.2 Nearly 9,000 firefighters are set to receive a pay out of £3,750 as compensation for anxiety and distress for “significant uncertainty” over their financial futures following the government’s attempts to bring in public sector pension reforms which were later found to be discriminatory.
- 4.3 The Pensions Dashboards Programme (PDP) had launched a consultation on dashboard standards and guidance and a call for input on the design

standards in July. The standards detail how pension schemes and dashboard providers operationally, technically or in practice must meet their dashboard duties. Responses to the consultation needed to be submitted by 30 August 2022. LGA have responded to the consultation, and we support this response. Particularly, the need for the dashboard system to show appropriate caveats in relation to pension scheme members relying on this information where they are planning actual retirement income amounts and pointed out the impact and complications of calculating benefits in relation to Matthews by the staging date.

- 4.4 To support scheme managers in the delivery of Matthews, the SAB, the LGA, and the Home Office are working together in the form of collaboration sessions on Matthews. The aim is to discuss Matthews legislation and policy, the interaction between Matthews and McCloud and the proposed timeline for implementation. A Matthews Technical Working Group has been set up to assist with the technical aspects of the project. The LGA has published a Matthews Project Implementation Document (PID) which sets out the scope, deliverables, and high-level timeline for the project. The PID also includes a communications plan and draft terms of reference for the SAB working group.
- 4.5 The Pensions Regulator (TPR) is sending out scheme return notices to managers of public service pension schemes in October, before submitting the scheme return. Completing the scheme return is a legal requirement and if scheme managers fail to complete and submit it by the deadline, they could be fined. WYPF will be completing the returns on behalf of WFRS.
- 4.6 On 8 August 2022, HM Treasury (HMT) issued a consultation on proposals to limit exit payments. The Government is proposing to introduce:
  - An expanded approval process for employee exits and special severance payments; and
  - Additional reporting requirements.
- 4.7 If implemented, the proposals would apply to all bodies that are classified as 'Central Government'. This does not include local authorities or bodies under devolved administration. Following discussion with the Home Office, the definition of 'local authorities' expands to cover the following:
  - Fire and Rescue Authorities
  - Fire and Rescue Services
  - London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
  - Police and Crime Commissioner

## 5. Policy Updates

- 5.1 Work has been delayed on the Discretions Policy and this is now planned to be finalised ready for Staff and Pensions Committee in March 2023.
- 5.2 The revised Abatement Policy will be delivered to Staff and Pensions Committee in December.

## 6. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 6.1 None.

## Appendices

None

## Background Papers

None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s):

Other members: