

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

Monday 25 September 2023

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Martin Reohorn (Chair)
Councillor Brian Hammersley
Caroline Jones
Paul Morley

Officers

Victoria Jenks, Pensions Admin Delivery Lead
Andy Carswell, Democratic Services Officer
Nicole Conway, Trainee Democratic Services Officer
Martin Griffiths, Technical Specialist Pensions Fund Policy and Governance

Others Present

Helen Scargill, West Yorkshire Pension Fund
David Vazquez, Observer

1. General

The Chair introduced members to David Vazquez, who, subject to approval at Full Council the following day, would be filling the vacancy on the Board.

(1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Liz Firmstone.

(2) Board Members' Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

(3) Public Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

2. Administration Update

The item was introduced by Vicky Jenks (Pensions Administration Delivery Lead). She advised the administration update was based on the monthly reports received from the West Yorkshire Pension Fund. The most recent information contained in the update was from the July report, although the August update had now been received and would be circulated separately to stakeholders. Vicky Jenks said there were no significant updates to advise the Board on. Data was continuing to be monitored, with the Fund working with payroll to ensure there were no discrepancies. Work on the reconciliation of pensioner payments was nearly finished. Vicky Jenks reminded members that the legislation arising from the second retained modified exercise was due to come into place from 1 October. Once it had taken effect, the Warwickshire Fund would need to liaise with the West Yorkshire Fund to set up records relating to which members had made a decision on purchasing service.

Responding to a question from the Chair regarding preparedness for remedy, Vicky Jenks said the data had been submitted to the West Yorkshire Fund but it had been returned because there were some queries. The updated data had now been resubmitted but had not yet been analysed.

Helen Scargill (West Yorkshire Pension Fund) said a webinar relating to the GAD contribution calculator had been arranged. Vicky Jenks said an officer from Warwickshire would be attending. Helen Scargill said the West Yorkshire Fund was preparing for the first batch of post-1 October retirements; however there had been a delay in the relevant remedial service statement being made available. Officers had therefore had to make changes to the West Yorkshire Pension Fund's retirement pack to ensure compliance with the new code. Helen Scargill said she hoped payments would still be made either on time or with minimal delay, as the contributions could not be calculated yet. She added she did not believe any Warwickshire pension scheme holders would be affected. Paul Morley said the first retirees were due in January, which would mean there could be some notifications in November. Helen Scargill confirmed the West Yorkshire Pension Fund would use the LGA version of the retirement pack once it was available.

Responding to a question from the Chair, Helen Scargill said there were 373 members who had registered online and were active users. She said she would look at what this amounted to in percentage terms, and how this compared to other clients administered by the West Yorkshire Pension Fund.

Members noted the contents of the report.

3. Governance and Policy Update

The item was introduced by Vicky Jenks, who advised the main points of interest continued to be the MacLeod age discrimination work and the Matthews second retained exercise. The Home Office had submitted its comments on the two consultations.

A training log had been created for Board members, to keep track of any upcoming training sessions and if there were any gaps in member knowledge. Training for new Board members was scheduled for November, and there would also be training on the second modified exercise.

Vicky Jenks confirmed there had been no breaches since the last update. This would be included in the administration update. The Chair said the topic of breaches had been discussed at the Pension Regulator Conference the previous week, and concerns had been raised that they were not being reported properly.

Members noted the contents of the update.

4. Risk Register

Vicky Jenks said the risk register had been revised but there were no significant updates since the last meeting. Risks relating to the second modified exercise had been added to the register.

Helen Scargill said the West Yorkshire Pension Fund would be moving to a cloud-hosted system for its pensions dashboard and a service provider had been identified.

Responding to a question from the Chair, Helen Scargill said there was a minimal number of people that the Fund did not have address details included on the system. The vast majority had been confirmed during the first exercise. Vicky Jenks said there were around 120 individuals who were members of the Warwickshire Pension Scheme that had been identified as being within scope, and letters had been sent to all of them. Of these, around 30 had responded. Messages had been sent through the retained fire stations to see if more members could be contacted. Consideration would be given to using a tracing scheme for members who had not responded.

Members noted the contents of the risk register and the update.

5. Forward Plan

Vicky Jenks reminded members of the training log, and of the upcoming exercises for completion. A review of the discretions policy was scheduled for the February meeting. There were 53 discretions that needed to be looked at. Legal colleagues were conducting a review of the Board's terms of reference.

6. Any Other Business

The Chair said he had attended the LGA's Firefighter Pension Scheme AGM the previous week. Updates on the Matthews calculator and communications were given. Vicky Jenks said Lisa Eglesfield was attending the GAD calculator session.

7. Future Meeting Dates

Members noted the dates of future meetings. It was agreed one of the forthcoming meetings should take place in person.

The meeting rose at 2.32pm

.....
Chair