

**Minutes of the meeting of the  
Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Pension Board of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme  
held on 26 February 2020**

**Present:**

**Chair**

Keith Bray

**Employers' Representatives**

Barnaby Briggs- Assistant Chief Fire Officers  
Katie Brown – HR Management (Fire)  
Dawn Suckling – Finance Manager Communities

**Employees' Representatives**

Marcus Giles – Fire Brigades Union (Fire and Rescue)  
Paul Morley – Fire Officers Association (Fire and Rescue)  
Tony Morgan – Retained Firefighters Union

**Officers**

Helen Barnsley, Democratic Services Officer  
Liz Firmstone, Service Manager (Transformation)  
Andrew Marson, Pension Fund Administration Lead

**1. Introductions and General business**

**(1) Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Marcus Giles and Tony Morgan

**(2) Board Members' Disclosures of Interests**

None

**(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2018**

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 27 November 2018 were agreed as an accurate record for signing by the Chair. There were no matters arising.

It was agreed that meetings will be held every six months as per the regulatory guidelines.

**2. Fire Pension – current pension issues**

Dawn Suckling Finance Manager Communities, presented the report, three updates

- i) With reference to the McCloud/Sargeant case it was noted that the case is still ongoing. The board is fully aware of the situation and members are awaiting final outcomes. The latest Home Office briefing was circulated to the board

- ii) In relation to pensionable pay for on call fire fighters, it was confirmed that officers are still awaiting a final decision on back pay and how far back it will need to be paid. It was confirmed that funds have been set aside for this but it is hard to estimate what the full impact will be at this point
- iii) In relation to the outsourcing of pension advice; it was confirmed that officers are working with other fire services to look at how to move forward but currently a lack of resources available is slowing progress down.

It was confirmed that Dawn Suckling is going to the Fire Finance Network meeting on 2 March 2020 so will be able to feed back to the board at the next meeting.

### **3. RDS Part Time Worker regulations – oral update**

Katie Brown, HR Management (Fire) stated that there was a fire specific update about the issue in relation to RDS part time worker regulations.

Previous regulation had stated that RDS workers could join the pension scheme from 2000. There is a case currently at tribunal regarding RDS workers being bale to join the pension scheme from the start of their employment, even if this was before 2000. It was confirmed that officers are waiting for an outcome but this could potentially cost the fund a lot of money,

It was noted by the board that there was a gradual change from using the phrase “RDS workers” to “On call Fire Fighters”. The Board was asked to bear this in mind as there may be documents soon that refer to both.

### **4. Pension Age Discrimination case – oral update**

Katie Brown, HR Management (Fire) confirmed to the Board that officers are waiting for final Home Office guidance on the age discrimination case as discussed under Item Two.

### **5. Next Steps**

Barnaby Briggs confirmed that at a previous meeting of the Board there had been an acknowledge that the board needs fire specific, external pension advice.

For example, who would members of the pension fund go to in order to find their Scheme Reference Number? Or information in relation to retirement?

Andrew Marson, Pension Fund Administration Lead stated that he would expect the administration team to be able to provide help and guidance on the processes needed to find information, and to help members understand options, eligibility etc.

It was agreed that the Board would look to create more formal relations with other fire services in order to proceed. There are several authorities who are keen to grow their fire pension administration and who already have some structures in place.

The Chair stated that communication would need to be improved from both sides; employers and employees. The board requested information on how this would be done, and who would take ownership because the next meeting is scheduled for six months' time.

**Action point – Pension administration to work closely with fire pension representatives ahead of the next meeting on how to move forward. A report will be presented at the next meeting.**

**6. Any other business**

Barnaby Briggs asked if the Board should we have an elected member? It was confirmed that an elected member would be an employer representative but at the moment, there were no vacancies on the board.

**ACTION POINTS** It was agreed that a report would be presented at the next meeting in relation to Board membership; including timescales involved in being a member of the Board.

Helen Barnsley will contact Marcus Giles regarding his position on the fire pension board since his retirement and confirm if he wishes to continue.

**7. EXEMPT ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PRIVATE (PURPLE PAPERS).**

**8. Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 November 2018**

The exempt minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 27 November 2018 were agreed as an accurate record for signing by the Chair. There were no matters arising.

**9. Pension Ombudsman Case – oral update**

Katie Brown, HR Management (Fire) provided an update on a case that had been to the Ombudsman.

An individual retired 2014, but then returned in green book part time role (civilian member of staff). The individual then went full time but did not update HR. It was also confirmed that the individual did not abate his pension and as a result they now owe over £10k to the fire pension scheme. The case was then taken to Independent Dispute Resolution (IDR) but the complaint was not upheld.

The Ombudsman has recently been in touch in relation to another complaint from the individual; the claim is that the fire service did not responded to a stage 2 IDR; however, the fire service did not receive the second complaint.

It was confirmed to the Board that the required information has now been sent to the ombudsman and officer are awaiting the result.

The board rose at 15:08

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Chair