

Minutes of a meeting of the CFA - Local Pensions Board held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 23 September 2020.

PRESENT

Mr. W. Liquorish JP CC
Ian Howe
Callum Faint
Graham Vaux

Cllr. H. Rae Bhatia
Alison Greenhill
Elena Johnston
Mark Drinkwater

In attendance

Gemma Duckworth – Democratic Services Officer, Leicestershire County Council

25. Appointment of Chairman.

It was moved and seconded that Mr. W. Liquorish JP CC be elected Chairman of the CFA Local Pension Board.

Mr. W. Liquorish JP CC – in the Chair

26. Apologies.

No apologies were received.

27. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the CFA Local Pension Board held on 12 February 2020 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

28. Conflicts of Interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interests in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No such declarations were made.

29. Scheme Administrators Update.

The Board considered a report from the Pensions Scheme Administrator which provided an update on the fire fighter pension administration in the quarter 1 April – 30 June 2020. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 5' is filed with these minutes.

It was noted that the pensions savings statements were on track to be completed by the deadline of 6 October and that all the Key Performance Indicators were at 100%.

Members were informed that, in relation to the Sargeant case, further national guidance was still awaited. As a result, the Pension Section was currently unable to re-calculate any pension benefits already paid or to base benefits on the 1992 scheme where members were due to or had already transitioned into the 2015 scheme.

RESOLVED:

That the update provided on the administration of the fire fighter pension scheme in the quarter 1 April to 30 June 2020 be noted.

30. Scheme Manager's Update.

The Board considered a report from the Treasurer/Scheme Manager which provided an update on the project to appoint a new administrator of the fire fighters' pension scheme. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 6' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) It was noted that there were two high risk areas in the transfer of the pension administration to West Yorkshire. These related to pressure on staff resources and differences in data. Where there were open tasks, these did not currently migrate to the new system and work was therefore taking place to achieve this.
- ii) The Board was informed that a communications plan to inform scheme members of the change was being developed and would be presented to the next meeting.
- iii) It was reported that an agreement had been signed with the LGA to defend any individual pension claims and Bevan Brittain was being used for this purpose.
- iv) The Scheme Manager asked the Employee Representatives to notify her of any areas they wished to focus on at future meetings of the Board.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

31. LFRS Firefighters' Pension Scheme Risk Register.

The Board considered a report of the Treasurer/Scheme Manager which presented the current risk register. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 7' is filed with these minutes.

It was reported that two risks had been removed. Risk 11 had previously been removed as it had been merged with Risk 6, which related to the issue of local pensions expertise. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officers and Scheme Managers from Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire were discussing the sharing of a pension expert post to support all three fire authorities. This would be a specialist resource and was welcomed. A meeting was due to take place on 13 November to formalise this arrangement.

RESOLVED:

That the risk register be approved.

32. Firefighters' Pension Scheme Breaches Register.

The Board considered a report of the Treasurer/Scheme Manager which gave an update on the Breaches Register. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes. The Breach Register had been circulated to the Board and identified that no breaches had taken place in the reporting period.

RESOLVED:

That the Breach Register, which identified that no breaches have taken place in the reporting period, be noted.

33. Employee Representative's input.

The Board received a verbal update from an employee representative of the Local Pension Board.

In response to a query around the discrimination ruling, it was stated that the guidance issued by the Home Office on 21 August was very much interim and it was therefore currently difficult to clarify what information would be provided with annual benefits statements as there was a risk that members could be mis-informed if asking for a pension forecast. Assurance was given that if more guidance was issued before the next meeting of the Board, the Treasurer/Scheme Manager would write to the Fire Brigade Union. However, it was stressed that individuals could continue to make a decision about their retirement using the current rules before the guidance was issued.

Advice from the Monitoring Officer would be sought around the possibility of individual scheme members signing a waiver due to the issuing of informal guidance. This would be included as an item for discussion at the next meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED:

That the status of informal guidance be included as an item on the agenda for the next meeting of the Board.

34. Date of Future Meetings.

The next meeting of the Local Pension Board will be held on Wednesday 16 December 2020 via Microsoft Teams at 12 noon following the meeting of the Combined Fire Authority.

Future meetings will be held on:

10 February 2021
16 June 2021.

11.45am – 12.13pm
23 September 2020

CHAIRMAN

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