

Minutes of a meeting of the CFA - Local Pensions Board held at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Birstall on Wednesday, 12 February 2020.

PRESENT

Mr. W. Liquorish JP CC (in the Chair)

Cllr. H. Rae Bhatia
Ian Howe
Elena Johnston
Adam Taylor

~~Alison Green~~
~~Karl Anderson~~
~~Mark Drinkwater~~
Adam Taylor

Alison Green
Karl Anderson
Mark Drinkwater

In attendance

Adam Stretton, Area Manager Business Support, Leicester Fire and Rescue Service
Anna Poole, Democratic Services Officer, Leicestershire County Council

15. Apologies.

No apologies were received.

16. Minutes of the previous meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the CFA Local Pension Board held on 19 June 2019 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

17. Conflicts of Interest.

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

No such declarations were made.

18. Fire Pensions Administration Update.

The Board considered a report of the Pensions Scheme Manager regarding the future arrangements for administration of the Pension Scheme. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 4', is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that officers were working together with the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Schemes to find a suitable alternative provider. However, an alternative provider could not be found within the timeframe available without contravening the Public Procurement Regulations. Therefore, the County Council had agreed to continue to deliver the service until the end of December 2020, enabling an open tendering process to be followed according to the regulations.

The County Council would support the drafting of the specification for the tendering process, which would then be carried out across Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and

Derbyshire. It was expected that the administrative support would be much more costly in the future.

RESOLVED:

That the update provided regarding the future arrangements for the administration of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Pension Scheme be noted.

19. Scheme Administrator's Update.

The Board considered a report from the Pensions Scheme Administrator which provided an overview of the key performance indicators, an estimate breakdown and details of metric data. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 5, is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i. All Annual Benefit Statements had been issued by the statutory deadline;
- ii. McCleod/Sergeant case would potentially have a significant impact on the Fire Service depending on when it comes in to effect; this could possibly be with the new pension scheme administrator considering the timelines available;
- iii. The County Council had agreed to continue to provide a pensions administration service for the Pensions Scheme until 31 December while an open tendering process was conducted; a reduced level of service would be provided;
- iv. The 'extra work on Fire' mentioned in paragraph 22 (i) refers to the need to complete the Firefighters' Pension Fund valuation which is every 4 years, presenting additional work this year. This involves the extraction and compilation of a wide range of data from the Fire and Rescue Services, Payroll provider, Finance and Pensions in order to complete the Government Actuary Department's valuation spreadsheets and resolve any queries which may arise from that return.
- v. So far the Pensions Section has been requested by one fire authority to look back at ill health cases which have been completed and compare old scheme benefits with 2015 scheme benefits to check if there would have been an annual allowance breach. Once national guidance has been received, it is anticipated that Pension administrators will then have the necessary information to proceed with the instructions contained within that guidance. Until then all ill health benefits can only be paid as the regulations currently stand. Full details of the actions required by fire authorities was contained within the LGA bulletin number 28 which was issued in January 2020. The Pension Section has not received any cases from Leicestershire Fire Authority at this time.
- vi. Regarding the administration of the Pension Scheme, communications were needed to staff regarding requests for pensions estimates; the number of requests for estimates for each member of staff would be limited due to the changes in service provision. Communications were being prepared on a regional basis for all in Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. Members were assured that, for those making career decisions who would need more accurate estimates, that this would be supported.

RESOLVED:

That the update provided by the Scheme Administrator on the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Fire Fighter' Pension Scheme be noted.

20. LFRS Firefighters' Pension Scheme Risk Register.

The Board considered a report of the Pension Scheme Manager which presented the risk register for the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Pensions Scheme. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 6' is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that two new risks had been added to the Risk Register: Procurement of Pensions Administration (with the risk of not identifying a provider) and the legal ruling from the McCloud/Sergeant case and the impact that this would have on the Pension Scheme.

RESOLVED:

That the update provided on the risk register for the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Pension Scheme, be noted.

21. Firefighters' Pension Scheme Breaches Register.

The Board considered a report of the Pensions Scheme Manager concerning the fire fighters' pension scheme breaches register. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 7' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the report on the fire fighters' pension scheme breaches register be noted.

22. Joint Pension Board - Update.

The Board received a verbal update from the Pension Scheme Manager concerning the formation of a joint Pension Board.

Members were informed that the application for the joint board was with the Secretary of State but had been paused – pending Brexit and the General Election in December. In response to questions, members were informed that the formation of the Joint Pension Board would not affect the procurement of a new administration provider.

RESOLVED:

That the update provided on the proposal of a joint Pension Board be noted.

23. Employee Representative's input.

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

In response to questions, members were informed that the Human Resources staff had identified two fire fighters who had retired on health grounds who were affected by the McCleod judgement.

RESOLVED:

That the Scheme Manager asks the Human Resources Team to seek potential cases that may be impacted by the McCleod judgement.

24. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting of the Local Pension Board will be held on Wednesday 17 June 2020 at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Birstall following the meeting of the Combined Fire Authority.

11.45 am - 12.03 pm
12 February 2020

CHAIRMAN