

FIREFIGHTER PENSION SCHEMES MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING 12 MARCH 2020

PRESENT: **EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVES**

Councillor Teresa Higgins – Chair
Karen Winter

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE

Dave Howe – Vice Chair

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ian Hayton - Scheme Manager
Beverley Parker - Governance/Training Advisor
Diane Snelling - Technical Pensions Advisor
Paul Mudd - Governance Manager, XPS Pensions Unit

APOLOGIES:

Brian Gibson – Employee Representative

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

It was noted no Declarations of Interests were submitted to the meeting.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Local Pension Board Meeting on 20 November 2019 be confirmed.

3. MATTERS ARISING

The Board agreed that Matters Arising should be included as a standard agenda item at future meetings.

The Board discussed the governance arrangements for appointments to the Board, following Councillor Ashley Waters expression of interest in becoming an Employer Representative.

The Board agreed that the Chair should write to the SM recommending the appointment of Councillor Waters and seek to fill the other two vacancies to achieve a 3:3 ratio of employee to employer representatives, as agreed at the Annual Board Meeting on 20 November 2019.

3. MATTERS ARISING cont.

The Scheme Manager acknowledged the pending resignation of Karen Winter as an Employer Representative and asked whether her replacement should be a non-trade union representative. Davy Howe confirmed that he was comfortable the FBU had sufficient representation on the Board.

RESOLVED – that the Chair write to the Scheme Manager recommending the appointment of Councillor Ashley Waters to the Board and seek to fill the current two vacancies to achieve the agreed 3:3 ratio of employee to employer representatives.

4. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The Board considered the report which covered:

- Terms of Reference
- Breaches of Law
- Annual Work Programme 2019/20
- Annual Benefit Statements

The Chair thanked Bev Parker for compiling a handbook of key information for Board Members' reference.

RESOLVED -

- (i) That the report be noted**
- (ii) That no Breaches of the Law were reported.**
- (iii) That the Annual Work Programme 2019/20 at Appendix 1 be adopted.**
- (iv) That the progress of the Annual Benefit Statements (ABS) and completion of the ABS 2019 Survey at Appendix 2 be noted.**

5. COMMUNICATIONS

5.1 FPS Bulletins 25 - 28

The Board discussed the following issues from the previously circulated Bulletins:

- Calendar of Events – the Board noted the Firefighters' Pension Scheme AGM on 22-23 September 2020 and agreed that the Chair and one other member would attend. Mr Mudd confirmed that XPS would endeavor to attend to answer queries.
- The Pensions Regulator – Diane Snelling confirmed that 5 out of 6 of the key processes were in place and Cleveland was working with XPS to achieve the 6th – a 'process to monitor records for accuracy and completeness'. Mr Mudd confirmed that these steps did take place but it was a matter of pulling these together into a written process.
- The SM updated the Board on the transitional protections remedy (Sargeant) which included; HMT Lead Remedies, Technical Discussions, Remedy Timeline and the Current Position. He noted that there had been no representation from XPS at formal national discussions. Mr Mudd reported that as XPS had attended the Police pension meetings and pointed out that the solutions being sought were the same.

5.1 FPS Bulletins 25 – 28 cont.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) That the report be noted**
- (ii) That the Chair and one other Board Member attend the Firefighters' Pension Scheme AGM on 22-23 September 2020**
- (iii) That XPS work with CFB on establishing a 'process to monitor records for accuracy and completeness' in accordance with The Pensions Regulator requirements.**

6. TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

The Board considered the report and agreed that there were no additional topics to include. Mrs Parker noted that the majority of the Board had now completed the online TPR training. She informed the Board that the LGA offered annual on-site training for officers and Members and in light of the potential addition of three new members did they wish Cleveland to host a training event. The Chair supported this and suggested it be pursued in the Autumn after the LGA Pension Boards Annual meeting.

The Board discussed establishing a competency framework using a traffic light system for Board Members to self-declare, to ensure they acquire the relevant skills, knowledge and training needed to govern the scheme. Mr Mudd highlighted that the TPR had an online toolkit which may assist members.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) That Board Members update their Training Needs Analysis Form and forward to Bev Parker for inclusion in the Training Plan.**
- (ii) That the Brigade host an LGA Local Pensions Board training event in the Autumn after the LGA Pension Boards annual meeting.**

7. PROGRESS OF RISK REGISTER

The Board reviewed the Risk Register at Appendix 1. Mr Mudd offered to share Risk Registers from other LPBs as a benchmarking exercise. The Board agreed this would be useful.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) That the Board considered the Risk Register to be current and appropriate.**
- (ii) That Mr Mudd provide the Board with examples of Risk Registers from other Local Pension Boards to assist in benchmarking.**

8. XPS SERVICE DELIVERY REPORT 2019/20 - tabled

Mr Mudd circulated the 2019/20 Service Delivery Report which was discussed and scrutinised by the Board with the following issues highlighted:

- No complaints had been received
- A Common Data Score of 97.99% was recorded for accuracy which was acceptable to the regulator
- Achieved 100% achievement on Service Delivery charts

8. XPS SERVICE DELIVERY REPORT 2019/20 – tabled cont.

Mr Mudd confirmed that XPS was currently changing the format of its Service Delivery Reports to include more narrative with the charts. This would also include information relating to Member Self Service as currently only 17.5% (approx. 250 people) had signed up to this online service which allows Members to check/update their contact details and view pension estimates.

Mr Mudd confirmed that the Head of Risk & Assurance at XPS was currently working with software providers Heywood to provide assurance that adequate cyber security measures were in place. The Chair requested this be brought to the next Board meeting.

RESOLVED:– that Mr Mudd obtain assurance from XPS software providers Heywood that adequate cyber security measures are in place at the next Board meeting.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Notice of Retirement

Mrs Winter informed the Board of the impending retirement of Diane Snelling after 57 years of service. The Board thanked Mrs Snelling for the invaluable support and expertise she has provided to the Brigade.

9.2 Dual Payments Query

Mr Howe asked if there had been issues with scheme members paying two contributions in the same month when transitioning. Mrs Snelling was not aware of any other cases and agreed to raise this issue with payroll.

RESOLVED:– that Mrs Snelling raise the issue with payroll.

COUNCILLOR TERESA HIGGINS
CHAIR