

## FIREFIGHTER PENSION SCHEMES MINUTES OF MEETING 18 MAY 2021 - MICROSOFT TEAMS

<b>PRESENT:</b>	<b>EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVES</b> Councillor Teresa Higgins – Chair Councillor Ashley Waters  <b>EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES</b> Dave Howe – Vice Chair
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Ian Hayton - Scheme Manager Beverley Parker - Governance/Training Advisor Michelle Richardson - Brigade Pensions Advisor Paul Mudd – XPS Business Services
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>	Sidney Walker – 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 16 March 2021 be confirmed.**

### 3. SCHEME MANAGER'S REPORT TO THE BOARD

The Scheme Manager (SM) informed the Board that future meetings would include updates from Brigade Contract Management Meetings with XPS.

The Board considered the SMs report which included the following updates:

- Annual Work Programme 2021/22 – no changes
- Discretions - none
- Membership - currently 360 Members across all 3 schemes (6% in 1992, 1% in 2006, 93% in 2015). 709 pensioners within the schemes. Michelle Richardson (MR) to bring a quarterly trend analysis to Board meetings.
- Complaints - none
- Appeals - one case with Board of Medical Referees relating to an ill health retirement – awaiting outcome.

### 3. **SCHEME MANAGER'S REPORT TO THE BOARD cont.**

- IDPR – two cases - one resolved and one awaiting outcome. All deadlines within timeframe have been achieved by CFB
- Breaches of the Law – none were reported
- Cyber Security – no issues were reported
- Compliance – fully compliant
- Risk Register – age discrimination remedy and immediate detriment remain as high risks
- Training and Development:
  - Chair / Bev Parker attended the virtual training on Remedy and Immediate Detriment with Clair Alcock on 5 May 2021.
  - SM to provide case studies of appeal / dispute to future meetings to demonstrate the process.

#### Legal Update

The SM provided the Board with a detailed update on the age discrimination remedy covering the remedy period 2015-22 with a Government deadline of October 2023 for a solution to be put in place. He acknowledged that there were still many unresolved, complex issues including tax relief, contribution rates, transfer value and tax charges.

Nationally, fire and rescue authorities are working collectively to produce a framework to answer the unresolved issues and deal with current and retrospective cases. The SM confirmed that the statement of intent for this Authority remains to pay immediate detriment cases as soon as possible and work with other FRAs and national bodies to establish the framework.

Davy Howe expressed frustration at the limited influence he had at Brigade and regional level and highlighted how the current uncertainty was having significant financial impact on the retirement plans of many firefighters.

The SM noted that all firefighters will transfer onto the 2015 scheme by April 2022 and reiterated that all age discrimination cases should be dealt with by October 2023.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (i) **that the report be noted.**
- (ii) **that Michelle Richardson provides the Board with a quarterly trend analysis of Membership.**
- (iii) **that the Scheme Manager provides the Board with case studies of appeals / disputes as a training tool to aid understanding of the processes.**

### 4. **PERFORMANCE**

#### 4.1 **Contract Management**

The Board was informed that a schedule of Contract Management Meetings between XPS and the Head of HR was in place and an up-to-date position on all projects would be reported to future Board meetings.

#### 4.2 Complaints

There were no complaints to report.

**RESOLVED - that the Contract Management verbal update be noted.**

#### 5. XPS BUSINESS SERVICES UPDATE

Paul Mudd reported a positive health check for the Brigade for the last three months from the Goldfish Report which detailed 100% achievement on the service level agreement with XPS. There had been no change to the common data score and a planned biennial exercise with the National Fraud Initiative was expected to achieve 100%.

Mr Mudd confirmed that the national exercise to compare XPS data with HMRC was underway with the project team looking to commence rectification as soon as possible. XPS was not expecting this to highlight huge differences.

He informed the Board that XPS was launching a new website for employers and members and links to the beta version will be sent to Board members to feedback comments.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) that the XPS Business Services update be noted.**
- (ii) that the Board receives details of the new XPS website and provide feedback to Paul Mudd.**

#### 6. SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

The Board noted the Scheme Advisory Board Minutes from 16 February 2021 which was attended by the SM. He referred to the GAD cost cap update on page 2 and noted that this was based on the 2016 valuation and was currently under review with the Government putting in place safeguarding measures to ensure that any breach would not impact Members benefits. The SM agreed to monitor the cost cap situation and provide updates to the Board as necessary. He added that the 30% increase to the cost cap in 2018 has been borne by the Government via a separate grant to authorities. This currently equates to £1.5m per year (equivalent to 30 whole-time firefighter jobs). The CSR process is pushing to ensure that position is maintained.

**RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Scheme Advisory Board meeting on 16 February 2021 be noted and any updates from GAD regarding the cost cap be reported back to the Board.**

#### 7. COMMUNICATIONS AND BULLETINS

Members considered the following bulletins:

- Bulletin 43
- Bulletin 44

MR confirmed that the bulletins had been circulated to the Board and all actions would be implemented and monitored via the Contract Management meeting.

**8. COMMUNICATIONS AND BULLETINS Cont.**

Mr Mudd confirmed that the data for the Annual Benefit Statements had been received from CFB and would be validated by XPS prior to being displayed online via XPS's new Pensions Dashboard.

**RESOLVED – that the communications be noted.**

**COUNCILLOR TERESA HIGGINS  
CHAIR**