

FIREFIGHTER PENSION SCHEMES MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING 21 FEBRUARY 2024 – 2.30PM

PRESENT:	EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVES Councillor Ben Clayton - Chair Councillor John Gardner EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES Mr Dave Howe Mr Sid Walker
IN ATTENDANCE:	Ian Hayton - Scheme Manager Michelle Richardson - Brigade Pension Advisor Paul Mudd - XPS Business Services
APOLOGIES:	Councillor Dennis McCabe Mr Alan Turner - Vice Chair Beverley Parker - Governance/Training Advisor Michelle Richardson - Brigade Pension Advisor

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 8 November 2023 be confirmed.

3. **SCHEME MANAGERS REPORT TO THE BOARD**

The Scheme Manager (SM) provided the Board with the following updates:

- Discretions Applied - none
- Ill Health - one Wholtime Firefighter was retired on ill health grounds in December and has an additional claim currently going through the IQMP process.
- Appeals - none
- IDRPs - none
- Members and Movement - noted
- Breaches of the law – none

- Cyber Security - no reported breaches
- Risk Register at Appendix 1 was noted
- Scheme Advisory Board Levy 2023/24 – noted
- Local Pension Board Training Sessions 2024 – noted.

Sargeant and Matthews update

Michelle Richardson (MR) provided a detailed update to the Board and confirmed that 59 out of the 88 members contacted had responded and the GAD calculator was currently being tested. She welcomed any suggestions to increase the response rate. Dave Howe (DH) asked how HR could be sure that contact had been made with Scheme Members. MR gave assurances that copies of the mail-merge letter were kept by HR and those who had failed to respond to the options exercises would have to go down the IDR route.

Pensions Update and Legal Issues

The Scheme Manager (SM) provided the Board with an update on the legal position relating to the interest on money owed and the tax implications which became apparent after remedial statements had been issued. MR confirmed that XPS had the letters for the Ill Health cohort and she was awaiting confirmation of when these calculations would go ahead. Paul Mudd (PM) assured the Board that XPS had a team working solely on immediate choice therefore did not anticipate the need for a delay and could provide written assurance of this from the project team. The SM confirmed that the Brigade was in a positive position compared to other FRSs.

RESOLVED - That the Scheme Manager’s Report be noted.

5. PERFORMANCE

5.1 XPS McCloud Project Position Statement

PM presented the Board with a position statement which provided a comparison between where XPS expected to be on 1 October 2023 in relation to McCloud and the actual position. The statement covered the following areas:

- Contractual
- System Development
- Data Provision
- BAU Service Delivery
- Next Steps

PM highlighted the challenges to service delivery due to the extensive workload. DH raised the issue of delays to firefighters getting their figures within their one month notice period and highlighted the concerns raised by people needing that information to pay off debts etc. The SM acknowledged the complex nature of the Remedy and the impact on the XPS workload which had made the one-month turn around difficult to achieve.

MR highlighted the importance of managing expectations and noted that the position statement issued by the Brigade had asked for 3-6 months notice of retirement to ensure adequate time for calculations to be achieved. She suggested further comms to staff to re-iterate this position may help. DH confirmed this would be useful to support those planning to retire in next 12 months.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) That the Board noted the XPS McCloud Position Statement.
- (ii) That Michelle Richardson to provide further communication to staff regarding changes to pension calculation timeframes.

5.2 XPS Update – tabled

PM tabled the Quarter 3 Performance Delivery Report for 2023-24 which covered Member Self Service, Common Date, Completed Cases, Complaints and IDRP. He acknowledged that performance figures had gone down compared to pre-remedy outcomes and gave assurances that these would improve once XPS achieve a fully automated system.

RESOLVED – That the verbal update be noted.

6. COMMUNICATIONS AND BULLETINS

MR presented the actions from FPS Bulletins 74, 75, 76 and 77 and provided an update on progress.

RESOLVED – that the FPS Bulletin Log be noted.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no additional items for discussion.

**COUNCILLOR BEN CLAYTON
CHAIR**