



Minutes of the meeting of the Local Pension Board held on 28 April 2023 via Zoom

PRESENT

Employer Representatives:

Cllr John B Hughes
Dafydd Edwards, Treasurer

Employee Representatives:

Richard Fairhead, Fire Leaders Association - Prospect, Employee Representative (Chair)
Jane Honey, Fire Officers' Association

Advisors

Helen MacArthur, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Beccy Marfleet, Pensions Officer
Martin Morgan, Dyfed Pension Fund

Minute Taker

Lisa Allington, Executive Assistant

1 APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies were offered and accepted from Gareth Owens, Monitoring Clerk and Cllr Bryan Apsley. It was noted that Stuart Stanley and Matt Ryan representing the Fire Brigades Union were absent without apology.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest to record.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

- 3.1 It was noted that Gareth Owens, Monitoring Clerk, had been recorded as being both present and having given apologies at the previous meeting. It was confirmed that he had offered apologies for that meeting.
- 3.2 The minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2022 were approved as a true and accurate record, with the above amendment taken into consideration.



4. REVIEW OF MEMBERSHIP AND AGREEMENT OF MEETING DATES

- 4.1 ACFO MacArthur proposed that the meeting membership be increased in order to ensure that there was always adequate representation at each meeting for both employees and the employer. It was suggested that the Terms of Reference be amended to include five representatives from both the employer and employee side. ACFO MacArthur would take the proposals to the Fire Authority for approval.
- 4.2 It was further suggested that meetings take place quarterly, in April, July, October and January of each financial year.

RESOLVED to:

- i) amend the Terms of Reference to update the membership to five employee representatives and five employer representatives; and**
- ii) diarise meetings quarterly in April, July, October and January of each financial year.**

5. ANNUAL REPORT

- ACFO MacArthur presented the annual report of the Local Pension Board which detailed the work of the board during the 2022/23 financial year. It was noted that the annual report was attached at appendix 1.
- 5.2 ACFO MacArthur stressed the importance of all Members completing The Pensions Regulator (TPR) Toolkit and an email reminder would be circulated following the meeting.
- 5.3 It was agreed that the Pension Fund account would be included on the agenda for the next meeting to appraise Members of the financial aspects of the firefighters' pension scheme.
- 5.4 **RESOLVED to:**
- i) endorse the Local Pension Board annual report 2022/23 for approval by the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority);**
 - ii) ensure that Members complete the PRT toolkit; and**
 - iii) include the Pension Fund account on the agenda for the next Local Pension Board meeting.**



6. UPDATE REPORT – SCHEME MEMBERSHIP

- 6.1 Beccy Marfleet presented the Firefighters Pension Scheme Update Report which aimed to provide the Local Pension Board (LPB) with an update on current issues relating to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme.
- 6.2 Key areas of the content of the report were highlighted and ACFO MacArthur asked that Members of the LPB recognise that it is not business as usual at the moment. The McCloud and O'Brien Judgments were proving to be very data heavy and this was resulting in a huge increase to workloads. Members were advised that as a result, the services of an additional member of staff had now been secured in order to provide some administrative assistance to the Pensions Officer.
- 6.3 It was noted that as a public sector, having access to this pensions fund was very important and that more work was required in order to ensure all those eligible were provided with adequate information to enable an informed decision about opting-out. Members were informed that employees were now automatically opted-in to the scheme upon appointment and had to put in a request to opt-out. The opt-out process that had been put in place was extremely robust.
- 6.4 **RESOLVED to:**
i) note the content of the report.

7. UPDATE REPORT – ADMINISTRATOR

- 7.1 Martin Morgan presented the Service pensions administration report – March 2023, which aimed to provide a progress update on a number of projects being simultaneously undertaken, along with providing information on relevant issues in the administration of scheme benefits.
- 7.2 The key points contained within the report were highlighted and it was agreed that more work was needed in order to publicise the benefits of My Pension Online with firefighters.
- 7.3 ACFO MacArthur noted that there had been a number of transfers recently and the process had been facilitated in a very timely manner by the Dyfed Pension Fund.
- 7.4 The back-up process for the scheme was discussed and it was agreed that this information be sent through to RM for inclusion on the Risk Register.



- 7.5 **RESOLVED to:**
- i) **note the content of the report; and**
 - ii) **to include details of the back-up process on the Risk Register.**
- 8. UPDATE ON LEGAL MATTERS**
- 8.1 ACFO MacArthur presented this report, which had been written to provide members of the Local Pension Board (LPB) with an update on legal matters affecting the Firefighters' Pension Scheme.
- 8.2 It was noted that both the McCloud Judgment and the O'Brien judgment were creating a heavy workload, and queries were now coming through from some firefighters who had already retired asking to be processed under the McCloud Judgment.
- 8.3 **RESOLVED to**
- i) **note the ongoing legal matters relevant to the Firefighters Pension Scheme and the current status; and**
 - ii) **note the potential impact of both legal challenges on the forthcoming actuarial valuation.**
- 9. RISK REGISTER**
- 9.1 ACFO MacArthur presented the Risk Register report, which provided Members of the Local Pension Board (LPB) with an update on the risk management arrangements.
- 9.2 Members were asked to note that the highest risk on the register by some way was the funding risk.
- 9.3 **RESOLVED to:**
- i) **Consider and approve the assessment of the funding risks associated with the firefighters' pension scheme.**
- 10. TRAINING**
- 10.1 A training session on how the valuation of the pension fund is calculated was delivered, and a presentation given to Members.
- 10.2 **RESOLVED to:**
- i) **note the content of the presentation.**



11. SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD

11.1 ACFO MacArthur presented the Scheme Advisory Board report, which provided members of the Local Pension Board (LPB) with an update on matters discussed at the Scheme Advisory Board for Wales (SABW).

11.2 **RESOLVED to:**

- i) **note the matters discussed at the latest meeting on 30 January 2023.**

12. MATTERS TO BE ESCALATED TO FRA

12.1 It was agreed that the Annual Report be taken to the FRA, and this would be amended to highlight some of the key risks. The amendment to the membership of the Terms of Reference would also be taken for approval.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13.1 The next meeting would be held on 18 July, 2023 at 09:00hrs.

Meeting closed 15:15