



Minutes

Local Pension Board

Date: 13 January 2017

Time: 12.30 p.m

Venue: Fire and Rescue Headquarters, Birkenshaw

Present: Paul Drinkwater (Scheme Member representative – in the chair), Councillors Peter Harrand (Scheme Manager representative), Councillor Bryan Smith (Scheme Manager representative) and Stuart Wilson (Scheme Member representative)

In Attendance: Ian Brandwood – Chief Employment Services Officer, Technical Adviser
Claire Johnson – Technical Adviser
Dan Stacey – Technical Adviser

Apologies: None

17 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of a meeting held on 8 July 2016 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

18 Urgent items

None.

19 Admission of the public

There were no items which required the exclusion of the public and press.

20 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of disclosable interest in any matter under consideration at the meeting.

21 Local Pension Board activity report

The Chief Employment Services Officer submitted a report which informed Members of the performance in key areas for the period 30 May to 30 November 2016.

Members sought further clarification on the following issue;

- Opt in and opt out numbers and statistics (gender and age breakdown)

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted; and
- b) That Members be provided with a short report of age / gender composition with regard to those Firefighters opting in or out of the pension scheme.

22 Pension Ombudsman – update

Members received a report of the Chief Employment Services Officer which presented two sample cases reviewed by the Pension Ombudsman as follows;

- Mr D v. LFEPA (ill-health retirement)
- Mr L v Bedfordshire FRA and London Pensions Fund Authority (pension estimates)

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

23 Legislative update

Members received a report which advised of recent legislative updates with regard to the following issues which impacted upon Firefighter Pension Scheme matters.

- Employee contribution holiday 1992 Firefighters' Pension Scheme
- Tax relief – special members of the Modified 2006 Firefighters' Pension Scheme
- Income tax and national insurance implications
- Transitional protections related to the 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted; and
- b) That a letter be forwarded to the Home Office and the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) as appropriate expressing the Board's concern at the delays in decisions from the Home Office in respect of the Employee contribution Holiday arrangements and receipt of monies to refund overpaid contributions.

24 Scheme Advisory Board – update and budget issues

The Chief Legal and Governance Officer submitted a report which advised of the current position with regard to the operation and associated costs of the national Scheme Advisory Board.

It was reported that a budget of £136,062.50 had been approved by the Board and by the Fire Minister which would be funded with effect from 1 October 2016 by national Scheme Managers based on Pension Scheme membership.

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted; and
- b) That similar update reports be submitted to future meetings of the Local Pension Board as appropriate.

25 Scheme Advisory Board Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Scheme Advisory Board at meetings held on 20 April, 26 May and 7 September 2016 be received.

26 Local Pension Board – support framework

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Legal and Governance Officer which advised of the support framework that had been put in place both on a national and regional basis.

In clarification of governance arrangements, Members were advised specifically that, in those instances where the Board may wish to escalate an issue to the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB), the SAB had a range of options available to it as follows;

- to make a determination that there was insufficient existing guidance for Fire Authorities to make a decision and refer the matter back
- to make a determination that a change to legislation was necessary and to request the Home Office to act accordingly
- to make a determination that legal advice on the interpretation of a regulation would be of value to all Fire Authorities and to act accordingly, and
- to make a determination that the matter could be dealt with through the issuing of a guidance note to all Fire Authorities and to act accordingly.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

27 Scrutiny and review

The Chief Employment Services Officer submitted information on the following areas for scrutiny and review which had previously been raised by the Board;

- annual benefits statements – West Yorkshire Pension Fund now able to comply following delivery and implementation of new software

- internal dispute resolution processes – outcomes, reporting procedures and officer delegated powers
- Service Level Agreement with West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) – monthly activity reports would now be produced for the Fire Authority including updates on regulation changes, member / administration issues and Key Performance Indicators (Min no. 30 refers) and it was noted that a dedicated team of WYPF officers would now be working on pension issues for constituent Fire Authorities

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted;
- b) That a report be submitted to the next meeting with information on the number of opt-outs since the introduction of the annual benefits statement,
- c) That it be noted that officers would make station visits to explain in greater detail the options and possible effects of opting out of the pension scheme; and
- d) That the incorrect ranking information on the West Yorkshire Pension Fund benefits statement be submitted to the next regional technical officer meeting

28 Draft Local Pension Board Annual Report 2016 – 17

A draft Local Pension Board Annual Report 2016 – 17 had been submitted by the Chief Legal and Governance Officer for consideration prior to formal ratification by the Human Resources Committee of the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

RESOLVED

That the Annual Report 2016 – 17 be submitted for formal ratification by the Human Resources Committee at its meeting on 31 March 2017.

29 The Pensions Regulator – view on progress

Members received a report of the Chief Legal and Governance Officer which invited consideration of a report published by the Pensions Regulator in September 2016 in respect of key findings of the 2015 Governance and Administration survey relevant to the administration and governance of Firefighter Pension Schemes.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

30 West Yorkshire Pension Fund - Key Performance Indicators

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Employment Services Officer which advised of West Yorkshire Pension Fund performance in key areas for the period 1 April – 31 October 2016.

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted; and

- b) That it be noted that the presentation of statistics had not been consistent and that the West Yorkshire Pension Fund be requested to submit monthly statistics together with a running annual total for the year to date to allow for better comparative trend analysis by the Board.

31 Date of the next meeting

RESOLVED

- a) That the Board continue to meet on a six-monthly basis and that a special meeting be convened in the intervening period should the current Fire Brigades' Union pension court case be resolved; and
- b) That Mr Malcolm Eastwood, Chair of the Scheme Advisory Board be invited to a future meeting of the Board.

Chair