

## **SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**

### **MINUTES OF THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 3 JULY 2023**

#### **1. PRESENT**

##### **Councillor**

P Drake (Chair)	Vale of Glamorgan
D King	Fire & Rescue Service Association
G Tovey	Fire Brigades' Union
P Jones	Fire Brigades' Union
I Traylor	Pensions Service Director, Pensions, Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC

##### **Apologies:**

D Naughton	Cardiff
R Prendergast	Association of Principal Fire Officers

##### **Absent:**

J Morgan	Blaenau Gwent
C Elsbury	Caerphilly

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** - ACO A Reed – Director of People Services, Mr C Barton – Treasurer, ACO Geraint Thomas, Director of Corporate Services & Monitoring Officer, Ms Kim Jeal, Accountant (People Services)

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Each Member declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in each agenda item which affected their Authority.

#### **3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chair's announcements.

#### **4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The minutes of the Local Pension Board Committee held on 23 January 2023 were read and accepted as a true record of proceedings.

## **5. REVIEW OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The Service Director, Pension, RCT advised Members that the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between South Wales Fire & Rescue Service and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council sets out the manner in which certain duties and responsibilities are expected to be carried out. A key element of the SLA is the reporting on actual performance activity against the agreed key delivery Service Standards. The report presented included an update on key activity undertaken during the reporting period and shares the performance data for the period 01 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

The Service Director, Pension, RCT will make enquiries into the over target of McCloud cases.

In relation to the Scheme Member complaint at Appendix 2, the Director of People Services advised that the Service is currently working through the background to this which dates back to 6 years' and beyond.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

- 5.1 Members noted the performance data contained within Appendix of the report.
- 5.2 Members noted the relevant pension administrative overview and update included at Appendix 2 attached to the report.

## **6. INTERNAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES (IDRP) UPDATE ON CASES OVER LAST 12 MONTHS**

The Director of People Services presented the report which shared the procedures for resolving internal disputes in relation to pension matters. They also updated Local Pension Board Members on the cases that were considered under this procedure during 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Mr Jones, Fire Brigades' Union queried the outcome of the Stage 1 case that progressed to Stage 2. The Director of People Services confirmed the individual requested an aggregated pension which did not reflect current practice within the Service.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

- 6.1 Members noted the procedures for resolving internal disputes.
- 6.2 Members noted the cases considered under the IDRP procedure during the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

## **7. THE PENSIONS REGULATOR RETURNS 2022/2023**

The Director of People Services presented the report which shared the completed Public Service Governance and Administration Survey 2022/213, which was submitted to the Pensions Regulator in relation to the 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

Members noted the returns which were shared for information and awareness purposes.

## **8. NEW MEMBER TRAINING SESSION – MEMBER HANDBOOK, TERMS OF REFERENCE & TOOLKIT**

The Accountant (People Services) provided a brief update on the Members' Handbook which provides Members with an insight into the work of the Local Pension Board. The Terms of Reference are also included within the handbook. Also included are relevant links to legislation, the constitution of this Board and information on frequency of meetings. A good source of information can be found at Section 4 of the handbook which relates to information on the Pension Regulator. Information on the Governance Board including conflict of interest and other key pieces of information can be found at Section 6. This section also includes information on the resolution process and guides for all pension schemes.

Section 12 includes the Firefighter Pension Scheme Comparisons with key factors including normal pension age, deferred pension and death factors. This is a quick guide and very useful for key differences. Section 13 contains information on conflict resolution. Section 14 provides information on breaches of the law, as Members have an obligation to report any breaches to DPR through the Whistleblowing Process. Section 15 explains the Training Strategy and Framework, training sessions are normally carried out at each Board meeting which is a good opportunity to keep up to date with information from the LGA and to keep Members fully updated on all pension related subjects.

At Section 16 Members will find the training needs and analysis form which Members are required to complete to confirm their knowledge in the areas listed within the handbook.

The TPR toolkit is also included and is a very good toolkit for Members. There is a requirement for Members to complete the online toolkit, to ensure Member understanding of all key areas. The Accountant (People Services) will provide support, if required.

Paul Davies, Fire Brigades' Union wished it be noted that a pre-meeting would have been beneficial as this was his first meeting.

## **RESOLVED THAT**

- 8.1 Members review the handbook prior to the next meeting.
- 8.2 Members to complete the training needs and analysis form prior to the next meeting.
- 8.3 Members to complete the online TPR toolkit prior to the next meeting.
- 8.4 Absent Members to be contacted and asked to complete the above.
- 8.5 The Accountant (People Services) to meet with Mr Paul Davie, Fire Brigades' Union outside of the meeting.

## **9. PUBLICATIONS, UPDATES, INFORMATION (STANDARD ITEM)**

The Director of People Services shared a number of publications, updates and information relating to pensions matters with the Board.

## **RESOLVED THAT**

Members reviewed and noted the publications which were shared for information and awareness purposes, as attached at Appendix 1-5.

## **10. FIREFIGHTER PENSIONS – UPDATE ON CURRENT NATIONAL EXERCISES: MCCLOUD AND O'BRIEN**

### **McCloud**

In July 2021, the Fire & Rescue Authority, as Scheme Manager, agreed to provide pension benefit options for those individuals who were considered to be in scope for Immediate Detriment (ID), ie those who are currently in service but intending to retire and have provided notice of their intention to do so. This policy decision came into effect from October 2021. It also confirms next steps in relation to remedying all cases of age discrimination cases.

### **O'Brien**

A further exercise will commence in October 2023 to re-visit the first options exercise that was undertaken between 2013 and 2015, which offered all On Call staff, with service prior to July 2000 the ability to buy pension scheme membership, based on new legislation that came into effect, based on determined discriminatory practices. The initial exercise took 18 months to implement, and the same timescales have been placed

on this second exercise commencing October 2023. Preparatory work is currently underway.

The Accountant (People Services) advised those identified as non-eligible have all been contacted, 2 of which have now been categorised as eligible. Members of staff to be aware that if they are currently categorised as non-eligible but feel they are eligible based on the criteria provided to make contact with the Service. From records held, the earliest service dates back to 1968.

The Government Actuaries Department (GAD) are introducing a fixed model for services that do not hold information prior to 2021, South Wales is one of the services. There will be a large gap in data for some services due to a number of reasons including change of payroll providers and systems etc. The LGA are currently working with GAD on this.

Mr Tovey, Fire Brigade's Union queried if representatives could be of any assistance in relation to communication. The Accountant (People Services) and Mr Tovey agreed to meet outside of the meeting to discuss further.

Mr Davies , Fire Brigades' Union queried how many McCloud cases are category 2. The Accountant (People Services) confirmed there are 60 plus which have already been identified and will take priority. She also advised there are 10,000 plus lines of data to review in relation to McCloud. She further advised that there are significant differences between the Welsh and English consultations, for example if members owe contributions in England there is no offer of periodic payments from the service. The Welsh consultation aim is to attempted be fair in relation to contributions. The process followed here is that no refunds are provided as, in essence, members made that decision in 2018.

## **RESOLVED THAT**

Members noted the content of the report.

### **11. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR LOCAL PENSION BOARD 2023/2024**

The Director of People Services presented the Forward Work Programme for 2022/2023.

## **RESOLVED THAT**

Members noted the content of the Forward Work Programme for 2023/2024.

## **12. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRPERSON DEEMS URGENT (PART 1 OR 2)**

### 12.1 GAD Modeller

Mr Tovey, Fire Brigades' Union requested an update on the current position. The Accountant (People Services) confirmed it is on hold at present due to ongoing technical issues. She further advised that she has made direct contact with GAD with an ask to either fix the issue or provide another system. It is hoped that the issues will be resolved quickly.

### 12.2 Pay Award

Mr Tovey, Fire Brigade's Union raised issues with staff not being awarded payments until the end of the year previously. The Accountant (People Services) advised that all relevant information has been passed to RCT who will pick up all pay adjustments. All queries to be raised directly with RCT. The Pensions Service Director agreed to provide a timeline and gave assurances that this piece of work has commenced.