

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 18 OCTOBER 2021 VIA STARLEAF

15. PRESENT

Councillor

S Bradwick (Chair)	Rhondda Cynon Taff
L Brown	Monmouthshire
V Smith	Monmouthshire
D White	Bridgend
D King	Fire & Rescue Service Association
R Prendergast	Association of Principal Fire Officers
S Saunders	Fire Brigades' Union
G Tovey	Fire Brigades' Union
M Alexander	Fire Brigades' Union
Mr I Traylor	Pensions Service Director, Rhondda Cynon Taff BC

OFFICERS PRESENT:- ACO A Reed – Director of People Services, Mr C Barton – Treasurer, Mr G Thomas – T/ACO – Corporate Support; Mrs K Jeal – Accountant, Pensions & Budget Team

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

17. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Response to FBU

The Chair advised FBU Representatives that he would respond to their recent correspondence in relation to quorum arrangements in due course.

18. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the Local Pension Board Committee held on 28 June 2021 were read and accepted as a true record of proceedings.

19. REVIEW OF LOCAL PENSION BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) QUORATE ARRANGEMENTS

The Director of People Services presented to members an amendment to the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Local Pension Board. She drew members' attention to Section 4 of Appendix A which highlighted the proposed change namely that at least four people must be present, including the Chair with at least one employee representative being present.

The Chair highlighted issues with non-attendance of union representatives therefore not being included in any debates, as part of the constitution.

FBU Representatives disagreed with a quorum without FBU members being present however apologised for the non-attendance at previous meetings. FBU Representatives agreed to ensure they are represented at future meetings. They further explained that they can be called upon at any time due to the nature of their operational duties.

The Chair explained the Board have not advised the FBU not be in attendance, the issue was about ensuring that the meetings were able to proceed without the need for such a prescriptive quorate arrangement. It was noted that there were currently three FBU representatives present.

The Director of People Services explained that this Committee is not a decision making board and as a way forward agreement is to be made on which representatives will attend future meetings. Mike Alexander and Gareth Tovey agreed to make every effort to attend future meetings and if unavailable, will arrange suitable representation.

In relation to voting, it was re-iterated that members of this board do not have the authority to change any policies however they are in a position to make recommendations to the Scheme Manager, ie the Fire and Rescue Authority.

RESOLVED THAT

- 19.1 Members reviewed and agreed the amendment to the current quorate requirements within the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Local Pension Board.
- 19.2 FBU Representatives to make contact with Ms Kim Jeal to undertake the necessary training to be able to sit on this Committee.

20. REVIEW OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND UPDATE ON ANNUAL BENEFIT STATEMENT

Mr Traylor presented a report on the Key Performance Indicators, which were set out in the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between SWFRS and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council. A key element of the SLA is the reporting on actual performance activity against the agreed key delivery service standards. Members were also provided with an update on key activity undertaken during the reporting period and the performance data for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 August 2021.

Councillor Brown required further clarification on intervention targets. Mr Traylor advised that intervention targets are mirrored with local government targets. The intervention targets are included to target those that do not exceed the service standard, each target below 100% is reviewed.

Councillor Brown also queried the varying percentages. Mr Traylor advised that the intervention outturn indicates where an intervention has occurred and was likely to impact the target. The statistics in this column should not fall below 90%. He also advised that less issues are identified with SWFRS as there aren't as many members, this tool also takes into account local authority standards.

Councillor Brown requested further clarity on deferred benefits. Mr Traylor explained that such benefits would remain there until they become payable. Newer schemes will have higher numbers, the number of those on older schemes will reduce over time.

It was noted that neither RCTCBC nor SWFRS provide advice on individual benefits however the Pension Team at SWFRS can go through the annual allowance letters with staff to help make the content clearer around any breaches that have occurred. An appointment can be made with the team however they cannot advise on what steps staff should take.

RESOLVED THAT

- 20.1 Members noted the performance data included within Appendix 1.
- 20.2 Members noted the relevant pension administrative overview and update included within Appendix 2.
- 20.3 A narrative be included under 'Purchasing Modified Membership' for future meetings.
- 20.4 Mr Traylor agreed to provide an update on the Pension Regulator Scheme Return at the next meeting.

Mr Alexander left the meeting to attend an operational call.

21. UPDATE ON MCCLOUD – IMMEDIATE DETRIMENT

The Director of People Services advised Members that it was her intention to provide a training session on the McCloud immediate detriment cases however this will not now go ahead following an update the Service has recently received on this subject. It was noted however, that the training session will be provided at the next meeting.

At the July 2021 meeting of the Fire Authority Members agreed to implement immediate detriment cases, i.e. those wishing to retire from the decision point onwards, and allocation of resources to carry out this work. The Pension Team have commenced this work, using policy documents published by the Home Office and issued in June 2021.

On 8 October, the Service received notification of a framework for managing immediate detriment issues. This framework has been agreed by the LGA and FBU and is enshrined in a Memorandum of Understanding. The Service's view is that this will need to be put to the Fire Authority at its December meeting so that it can formally be adopted. A communication has been issued to those who have contacted the Service with an interest in accessing the arrangements set out in the MOU to advise them of the current situation. FBU representatives will be invited to meet to discuss the MOU in more detail, separately. The picture has moved in terms of what the Service was preparing for and will work closely with Mr Traylor and his team as a way forward in adopting the MOU.

FBU representatives raised concerns with timeframes and queried whether an additional meeting of the Fire Authority could be scheduled prior to December. The Treasurer explained that Fire Authority meetings have already been programmed and bringing this forward would add more pressure on the decision making process and the priority of the Service is to ensure a satisfactory resolution.

RESOLVED THAT

- 21.1 Members agreed to a further report to be presented at the December Fire Authority meeting.
- 21.2 The Director of People Services to schedule a meeting with FBU representatives as soon as possible.

22. UPDATE REPORT FROM SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD (SAB)

The Director of People Services advised that SAB Wales and SAB England have now provided input to the consultation on the Pensions Dashboard which is a national arrangement that will enable individuals to view their pension benefits.

In terms of the Fire sector and Fire Pensions, it was noted that the priority in terms of pensions was to implement McCloud. As it stands, there was a growing view across the sector that onboarding to a central portal when pension information may not be up-to-date may not instil confidence in the new approach. This was in addition to the resourcing implications of onboarding to the new arrangements. The next SAB meeting for Wales is scheduled to take place early November.

Mr Traylor advised Members that Haywood is the software provider and believes the system to be a positive one. RCT will support the process and will provide a further update to the Board, when available.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the update provided.

23. PUBLICATIONS, UPDATES, INFORMATION (STANDARD ITEM)

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

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the publications and updates presented by the Director of People Services for information and awareness purposes.

24. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR LOCAL PENSION BOARD 2021/2022

The Director of People Services presented the Forward work Programme for 2021/2022.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the content of the Forward Work Programme for 2021/2022.

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

There were no items of business that the Chair deemed urgent.