

COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

MINUTES OF THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2024 IN MEETING ROOM 8 & REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

OFFICERS PRESENT:- T/ACFO Dean Loader (Chair) – Director of Service Delivery, ACO Alison Reed – Director of People Services, Ms Gabbie Greathead – Interim Monitoring Officer & Legal Services Manager, Ms Julia Thompson – Pensions Liaison Officer, Mr Lee Bunkham – Senior Procurement Officer, Mr Gareth Tovey – Fire Brigades' Union, Mr Ian Traylor – Pensions Service Director, RCTCBC

1. APOLOGIES

Dave King - Fire & Rescue Service Association, Wayne Thomas – T/Head of Corporate Services

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Each Member of the board declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in each agenda item.

3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

4. LOCAL PENSION BOARD COMMITTEE HELD ON 3 JULY 2024

The minutes were presented from the Local Pension Board Committee meeting held on 3 July 2024.

RESOLVED THAT

- 4.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on held on 3 July 2024 were agreed as a true record, following slight amendment to the attendee list.

5. UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

The Monitoring Officer presented the outstanding actions.

RESOLVED THAT

Pension Board Members reviewed and updated the outstanding actions.

6. REVIEW OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Pensions Services Director RCT reported on the The Service Level Agreement 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 provided Members with an update on key activity undertaken during the reporting period and shares the performance data for the periods April 2024 – August 2024. Each board member wished to commend the Pensions Service Director, SWFRS Pensions Team and ICT for the dissemination of annual benefits within a timely manner, which was a complex piece of work.

RESOLVED THAT

- 6.1 Members of the Local Pension Board noted the performance data included at Appendix 1 attached to the report.
- 6.2 Members noted the relevant pension administrative overview and update included at Appendix 2 attached to the report.
- 6.3 Members agreed to the inclusion of Pension Dashboard Onboarding as a standard agenda item going forward.

7. LOCAL PENSION BOARD – SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT (SLA)

The ACO People Services presented the Service Level Agreement (SLA) which is a contract between a service provider and its customer. It documents the service the provider will furnish and defines the service standards the provider is expected to meet.

There is a Service Level Agreement for the provision of services for Fire Pensions. These services are provided by RCT Pensions.

A discussion arose around 'fees payable by SWFRS' being included in future annual budget discussions, to include all fees and a brief on what the Service will receive for its money, this will also be built into the SLA going forward. There was a discussion in relation to formal contractual requirements and it was agreed this should be discussed further with Procurement.

RESOLVED THAT

- 7.1 Members reviewed the Service Level Agreement attached to the report at Appendix 1.
- 7.2 It was agreed that The Service Level Agreement (SLA) will formally be reviewed by the Members on an annual basis.
- 7.3 The Senior Procurement Officer to consider the development of a contract, link in with the SLA and undertake a review of the SLA whilst receiving input from the Pensions Service Director RCT and Pensions Liaison Officer.

8. LOCAL PENSION BOARD RISK REGISTER

The ACO People Services reported on the newly developed Risk Register for the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority Local Pension Board.

Mr Gareth Tovey wished to take the opportunity to thank the Director of People Service for the work undertaken on the risk register.

It was noted that the register will tie in with the corporate risk register.

RESOLVED THAT

Members considered and agreed the contents of the report and discussed the draft Risk Register at Appendix A. Risks are compiled under the headings of:-

- 1) Operational Pensions; 2) Financial Risks; 3) Funding Governance; 4) Regulatory Compliance.

9. PUBLIC SECTOR PENSION SCHEME LEGISLATION – MCCLOUD & O'BRIEN REMEDY EXERCISES AND THE PENSION DEPARTMENT DASHBOARD PROJECT

The ACO People Services reported on the public sector pension scheme legislation which sets out the statutory timelines imposed by the changes to Public Sector Pension Scheme legislation and more specifically Firefighter Pension Schemes. These are more commonly known as McCloud and O'Brien (Matthews 2) pension remedy exercises.

In addition, the Pensions Dashboard Project, which is being implemented by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), is now gathering pace and Pension schemes in the Fire Sector have been given a connection date of October 2025.

Pensions dashboards are digital services – apps, websites and other tools – which savers will be able to use to see their State Pension. A saver will be able to use dashboards to search records of all pension schemes to confirm whether or not they are a member.

RESOLVED THAT

- 9.1 Members of the board noted the content of the report.
- 9.2 Members noted the statutory obligation placed on the Scheme Manager to ensure that these timelines are met for all 3 national projects.

10. INTERNAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES (IDRP)

The ACO People Services reported on the procedures for resolving internal disputes in relation to pension matters. The ACO People Services also updated Local Pension Board Members on the cases that were considered under this procedure during 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

RESOLVED THAT

- 10.1 Members noted the procedures for resolving internal disputes.
- 10.2 Members noted the cases considered under the IDRP procedure during the period of 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.
- 10.3 Updates will be provided on an annual basis going forward.

11. SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD – VERBAL UPDATE

The ACO People Services reported that the previous meeting was held on 8 July 2024 with a discussion around changes to employee contribution rates which would take effect from 1 April 2025. A discussion ensued upon what the changes would look like. Changes will be implemented by 1 April 2025. Several models were shared at the meeting including gaps, salary and boundaries within bands. No definitive decision has been made at present on this. Ongoing discussions are taking place at present. This continues to be work in progress and will be monitored by the ACO People Services and the SWFRS Pensions Team.

RESOLVED THAT

- 11.1 Pension Board Members noted the update provided on the Scheme Advisory Board.

12. PUBLICATIONS, UPDATES, INFORMATION (STANDARD ITEM)

The ACO People Services provided an update on relevant publications, updates and information relating to pension matters, with Members of the Local Pension Board.

RESOLVED THAT

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

13. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR LOCAL PENSION BOARD COMMITTEE 2024/2025

The ACO People Services presented the Forward work Programme for 2024/2025.

RESOLVED THAT

13.1 Members of the board noted the content of the Forward Work Programme for 2024/2025.

13.2 Members of the Board agreed to the inclusion of Pensions Dashboard, Service Level Agreement and Risk Register.

13.2 Meeting dates to be updated within the forward work programme.

14. 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.