

**Minutes of the meeting of the Local Pension Board held on
7 October 2019 at Rhyl Community Fire Station**

PRESENT

Employer Representatives:

Cllr Bryan Apsley (Chair)
Cllr John Brynmor Hughes
Ken Finch, Treasurer
Gareth Owens, Deputy Monitoring Officer

Employee Representatives:

Duncan Stewart-Ball, Fire Brigades Union
Jane Honey, Fire Officers' Association
Blythe Roberts, Fire Brigades Union

Advisors

Kevin Gerard, Pensions Manager, Dyfed Pension Fund
Martin Morgan, Dyfed Pension Fund
Helen MacArthur, Assistant Chief Officer
Julie Brown, Pensions Manager

Minute Takers

Alwen Davies, Members' Liaison Officer
Cathryn Thomas, Members' Liaison Officer

APOLOGIES

Richard Fairhead, Fire Leaders Association - Prospect, Employee Representative

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1.1 None.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2019 were approved as a correct record.

3 FIREFIGHTERS PENSION SCHEMES – UPDATE REPORT

3.1 The Pensions Manager presented the report which informed members about the scheme membership, together with updates on:

- The All Wales Firefighters' Pension Group and North West Regional Fire Pension Officers Group
- Pensionable Pay Workshop
- Transitional Protections Legal Case

- Annual Benefit Statement Update
 - Overview of FPS Bulletins and Circulars.
- 3.2 Booth v Mid and West Wales FRS – this has different implications for different individuals and the outcome will be based on the underlying contractual position in each FRS. Allowances permanently paid and based on an uplift of basic pay will need to be considered to determine whether they should be treated as pensionable. This matter is being progressed by the Monitoring Officer's team and a legal view is being sought on whether allowances paid by NWFRS fall within scope of the Booth judgment.
- 3.3 My Pension Online – only 50% of members have registered on this system; however, there have been several promotional campaigns to encourage members to look at their pension online. Duncan Stewart-Ball will raise it at the next FBU members' meeting and enquire as to why members are not accessing it. It was suggested that an addendum be sent out with the payslips to remind members to look at My Pension Online. Another suggestion was having a training session webcast for all stations by Dyfed Pension Fund.
- 3.4 Pension Transitional Protection Legal Challenge – it was noted that once a remedy has been agreed it cannot be implemented until Regulations and legislation have been changed.
- 3.5 **RESOLVED to note the report.**
- 4 DYFED PENSION FUND (DPF) UPDATE (SCHEME ADMINISTRATOR)
- 4.1 Kevin Gerard presented the report which updated members on the administration of the schemes by Dyfed Pension Fund.
- 4.2 Mr Gerard gave an overview of the responsibilities as administrators of the firefighters' pension schemes. The report presented provided assurance that the scheme is being properly administered and gave updates on:
- Regulatory Update
 - E-communication
 - Annual Benefit Statements
 - GMP reconciliation
 - Data Quality Reports
 - Appeals
 - Breaches
 - My Pensions Online
 - Workflow.

4.3 Members were made aware that data scores are public information and also that like for like comparators may not have been considered in the same year and that data cleansing is an ongoing issue. The data improvement plan details how the Fund intends to improve the quality of the data collected. Mr Gerard explained the process followed to ensure they have latest information for members and how they identify those who have moved houses or members who have passed away.

4.4 It was noted that Dyfed Pension Fund has its own risk register identifying risks and factors considered to decrease risk.

4.5 **RESOLVED to note the information provided.**

5 PENSIONABLE PAY TRAINING SESSION

5.1 In response to a request from members at the last meeting, the Pensions Manager delivered a presentation explaining pensionable pay.

5.2 During the presentation, it was noted that there have been a number of legal challenges on this issue and all Fire and Rescue Authorities should take action to consider their position. The position for NWFR was noted earlier in the meeting (para 3.2 refers).

6 SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD - VERBAL UPDATE

6.1 The last Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) meeting was recently held. ACO MacArthur confirmed that the issues discussed were common to a number of agenda items being considered by the LPB. In addition the following items were raised during the SAB:

- grant funding for the increases in employer contributions – members will be aware that the employer contributions in 2019/20 increased by about 10% which is £1.3million for the NWFRS. The working assumption was that funding would be provided by WG, some of it has been funded by WG however funding going forward may be a potential issue which will be discussed by SAB at its next meeting on 31 October.
- annual allowances – if they are breached they can be costly as there are tax consequences; SAB is undertaking a piece of work to consider whether the tax consequences of pensions is having a detrimental effect on those putting themselves forward for promotion or retention of existing staff. There is a public consultation on proposals for NHS Pension Schemes and SAB has the opportunity of providing feedback from the perspective of the Firefighters' Schemes.

6.2 **RESOLVED to note the information provided.**

7 RISK REGISTER

7.1 Members were aware that the Pensions Regulator recommends that Local Pension Board members consider and review their Risk Register during each Board meeting. It had been agreed at the previous meeting to undertake a rolling review of particular risk areas during future meetings and therefore the operational risk area was presented at this meeting for consideration.

7.2 Cyber crime is a major issue on the Authority's risk register as well as the Local Pension Board risk register. ACO MacArthur explained that it is a residual inherent risk which means the risk is high regardless of all the work that is ongoing to minimise risk where possible.

7.3 **RESOLVED to note the Operational Risk Area of the Register for 2019-20, and that any changes or updates will be incorporated into the register and the revised document published on the Authority's website.**

8 MATTERS FOR FULL FRA

8.1 There were no matters to be considered by the full FRA.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 For the next meeting, Members requested training on split pensions.

9.2 **RESOLVED to agree to training requirements and where applicable arrange appropriate training provider.**