

**Minutes of the meeting of the Local Pension Board held on 20 April 2016 at
Fire and Rescue Headquarters, St Asaph Business Park**

PRESENT

Cllr W Tudor Owen, Employer Representative (Chair)
Cllr Brian Dunn, Employer Representative
Cllr J Rodney Skelland, Employer Representative
Dawn Docx, Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Interim Treasurer, Advisor
Julie Brown, Head of Finance, Advisor
Richard Fairhead, ACFO, Association of Fire Principal Officers
Ruth Simmons, ACFO, Association of Fire Principal Officers
Geraint Hughes, Fire Officers' Association, Employee Representative
Paul Scott, Fire Officers' Association, Employee Representative
Sandra Williams, Fire Brigades Union, Employee Representative
Alwen Davies, Members' Liaison Officer, Minute Taker

APOLOGIES

Cllr Delyth Macrae, Employer Representative
Shane Price, Fire Brigades Union, Employee Representative

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1.1 None.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2015 were approved as a correct record.

3 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 The following matters arising from the minutes were noted:

4.2 It was noted that councillors who had undertaken pension training with their councils could email their training record to the Members' Liaison Officer for FRA records.

4 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST MODULE

4.1 LPB members are expected to complete training modules on the Pensions Regulator website, therefore at each LPB meeting, members will work together to go through a module per meeting and complete the assessment as a group.

4.2 The Pensions Manager led members through the conflicts of interest module and thereafter the assessment was completed. The learning objectives of the module included: the difference between an actual and potential conflict of interest; potential consequences of failing to manage potential conflicts of interest; process for identifying, investigating and managing potential conflicts of interest.

4.3 Members discussed various aspects of the information contained in the module and asked for advice on dispensations for members. It was agreed that advice would be sought from the Clerk in relation to this matter and further information provided to members at the next meeting. However, the Chair reiterated that it was a matter for the member to make a declaration of interest and seek advice from the Clerk if necessary.

4.4 Members discussed the 'importance of having an equal number of employer and member representatives on the pension board', it was noted that membership of the LPB includes two members from each union and four members from the Fire and Rescue Authority and that for the purpose of a balanced voting process one member from each representation group could vote.

4.5 **RESOLVED to**

(i) note the conflicts of interest training module; and

(ii) request further information from the Clerk about dispensations.

5 UPDATE ON COMMUNICATIONS EFFECTIVENESS

5.1 The DCFO informed members of the various forms utilised in order to communicate pensions information to staff including articles in the staff magazine Y Fflam and regular updates in the Weekly Brief published on the intranet.

5.2 Information had also been received from Dyfed Pension Fund about its communication with staff and it was noted that 'my pension online' tool is used to upload the annual pension statement and ad hoc newsletters are produced. There is also a dedicated section on Dyfed Pension Fund's website for firefighters' pension information.

5.3 It was also confirmed that the pension's data is audited annually, both internally and by the Wales Audit Office. Internal audits are completed on the pension payroll and ICT systems and the recent post review assurance level was deemed 'high' which indicates good controls consistently applied, at low risk of not meeting objectives and low risk of fraud, negligence, loss and damage to reputation.

5.4 **RESOLVED to note the update on communicating information about pensions to personnel.**

6 MODIFIED PENSION SCHEME

6.1 The Pensions Manager delivered a presentation about the retained firefighters' pension scheme also known as the New Modified Firefighter Pension Scheme (NMFPS) 31/12/2014.

6.2 The presentation started with an overview of the various firefighter pension schemes:

- FPS 1992 scheme
- New firefighters' pension scheme 2007
- 2015 scheme
- New modified firefighters' pension scheme

- 6.3 Prior to 2006, RDS personnel were not eligible to join the 1992 firefighter pension scheme and following legal action the NMFPS was introduced to address the identified inequalities in the treatment of retained firefighters. The new modified pension scheme is an amendment to the 2007 provisions, providing improved benefits in line with the 1992 scheme.
- 6.4 The Pensions Manager explained the different categories of membership, eligibility and the benefits of the scheme. It was noted that information packs were sent to all eligible individuals, 643 in total; the final closing date within Wales for election to join the scheme was 29/02/16. Within North Wales 25% of eligible individuals elected to join the scheme. Members were also informed that as the new scheme was linked to a legal case involving equal pay there could be no extension to the deadline. However, the 2015 Firefighters' Scheme is available for all new operational employees. Members discussed the information and thereafter **RESOLVED to note the information provided.**