



Minutes of the Local Pension Board meeting held at 10:00 hours on Wednesday 12 July 2023 via Microsoft Teams

Members present:

Mr Ian Cotter	Employer Officer Representative (Chair)
AM Damien Bence	Employer Officer Representative
Cllr Rebecca Knox	Employer Member Representative
Mr Allan Frias-Robles	Scheme Member Employee Representative
Mr Gerard Senior	Scheme Member Retiree Representative
Mr Sean Frampton	Scheme Member Retiree Representative

Other staff:

Mrs Carol Swan – Head of HR
Mr Mike Rees, Employee Relations Officer
Ms Sadie Price - HR Business Partner and Employee Relations Manager
Mrs Jacqueline Blight, Employee Relations Advisor
Mrs Jacky White, HR Advisor Employee Relations Pensions

Guest:

Ms Helen Scargill, West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) – Administrator (via MS Teams)

Minute taker: David Shaw, Democratic Services Officer

23/25 Welcome and introductions

23/25.1 Ian Cotter, Employer Officer Representative, opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees.

23/26 Apologies

23/26.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Richard Biggs, Employer Member Representative and Cllr Clare Weight, Employer Member Representative (Substitute).

Initials _____

23/27 Election of Chair and Vice Chair

23/27.1 **RESOLVED: That Ian Cotter be appointed Chair and Cllr Richard Biggs be appointed Vice Chair**

23/28 Conflicts of Interest/Code of Conduct

23/28.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any declarations of conflicts of interest. There were no disclosures.

23/29 Minutes from the Local Pension Board meeting held on 27 April 2023

23/29.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the meeting of 27 April 2023.

23/29.2 **RESOLVED: That the Minutes from the Local Pension Board meeting held on 27 April 2023 be agreed as a correct record.**

23/30 Review actions from all Local Pension Board meetings

23/30.1 The actions from the previous meetings were discussed and updated. One action remained open, number 45. Action 53 regarding cyber security arrangements for West Yorkshire Pension Fund had been resolved at the previous meeting held on 27 April 2023 and would be removed from the action log.

23/30.2 Action 45, to arrange for an internal advert to Service staff to seek applications for the two vacant positions, was ongoing. The subject would be covered in the Scheme Manager Update.

23/30.3 **RESOLVED: That the pending actions on number 45 be noted and that action 53 be removed from the action log.**

23/31 Local Pension Board Risk Register

23/31.1 The Chair informed the Board that, following a previous request from Cllr Richard Biggs, the risk register had been updated and whilst the risks themselves remained unaltered, the 'Risk Name / Description' fields had been updated.

23/31.2 **RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

23/32 Scheme Manager update

23/32.1 Carol Swan, Head of HR, presented the Scheme Manager Update for July which covered Update on Pension Dashboards Programme (PDP);

Pension Team – Ongoing Work/Projects; Internal Disputes Resolutions; Breaches; Communications; Meetings, Events and Training.

- 23/32.2 Reference was made to the Remedy Work and the high degree of manual work involved to review 882 records. The deadline for completion of this work to be sent to West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) was 31 July 2023 and as of 4 July 2023, 90% of the work had been completed, with overtime required by the team; there were 86 cases left to work through. Mike Rees, Employee Relations Officer, added that as of the meeting date only 11 cases now remained to be reviewed. The Chair thanked the team on behalf of the Board, and Helen Scargill added that there was confidence in the accuracy of the data to be submitted, which would also be checked by WYPF prior to being uploaded into Members' records.
- 23/32.3 Carol Swan continued that Second Options Exercise had identified over 650 cases, but no action would be taken until the Remedy Work was finished. For Injury Award Pension Review a meeting would be arranged between officers to formally agree the terms of recovery of two overpayments. WYPF had also received some enquiries regarding overpayments.
- 23/32.4 An update was provided on the two internal dispute resolutions. In case 1 concerning an internal dispute from a current member of staff regarding access to a firefighter's pension scheme, the stage two appeal had not been upheld. In case 2, the claimant contended that the 20% day crewing allowance should all be pensionable, rather than the 5% element only. The Service was taking further legal advice before contacting the individual and an update would be provided to future Pension Board meetings.
- 23/32.5 There had been no reported breaches.
- 23/32.6 In respect of communications, Local Government Association (LGA) Pension Bulletins 67, 68, 69 and 70 and Monthly Reports from West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) had been circulated to Pension Board Members since the last meeting in April 2023. Articles had also been placed in the Weekly Update.
- 23/32.7 Staff had also been advised of important information about post-September 2023 retirements. WYPF were currently not able to process any retirement notifications or issue any retirement packs for members retiring after 30 September 2023 who were subject to Remedy.
- 23/32.8 The vacancy for an Employee Scheme Member Representative had been advertised on a rolling monthly basis in the Weekly Update and on Connect pages and this would continue until the vacancy was filled. Via Sadie Price, HR Business Partner and Employee Relations Manager, Andrew Corben, the Fire Brigade Union representative, had also been trying to encourage interest in this vacancy but there had been no applications to date.

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- 23/32.9 Information on meetings, events and training were also provided.
- 23/32.10 In reply to a question from the Chair, Carol Swan and Helen Scargill explained the implications for members retiring after 30 September 2023 who were subject to Remedy. Where a member was retiring after October 23, and they had also requested a pension estimate, they would be given a figure after rollback on the legacy scheme so that they could have figures for their forward planning. There might be a delay in payment of benefits but this was unknown. Members had to be provided with retirement figures on a document called an Immediate Choice Remediable Service Statement (IC RSS). The IC RSS would be made available via the LGA who were currently procuring a provider to produce these statements. This would lead to no future legal claims stating that members did not know the figures in order to make decisions. The information needed to be embedded into software systems and as yet the timescales were unknown, but hopefully prior to October 23. If a member was retiring in the short term, then their request could be prepared, but information could not be sent out until the IC RSS was available. It might be in the member's interest to retire later in October rather than earlier as the lump sum might not be available on the retirement date.

23/32.11 **RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

23/33 West Yorkshire Pension Fund update

- 23/33.1 Helen Scargill gave a verbal update based on the WYPF report.
- 23/33.2 Helen Scargill referred to the LGA bulletins and the client reports. Meetings attended by WYPF were also highlighted together with the topics covered. At the Scheme Advisory Board attended on 8 June 2023 both Civica and Heywards, the primary suppliers of pension software, were in attendance and provided an update on when their latest software might be available to clients.
- 23/33.3 Reference was made to the regulation amendments and specifically the Rectification Regulation, which related to the Matthews remedy, and had now been deferred from 24 July to early or mid-September.
- 23/33.4 The deadline for the pension's dashboard had also been deferred, however WYPF was working towards the initial deadline and would be ready for this date.
- 23/33.5 An extremely high percentage of Annual Benefit statements had been resolved and dispatched to scheme members. Where scheme members' pensions had grown by greater than £39,000 the data had been checked by the WYPF team. All cases would be processed by the October deadline

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- 23/33.6 There had been no data breaches and other matters were covered in the monthly bulletins.
- 23/33.7 Helen Scargill continued that P60s had been issued in May 2023
- 23/33.8 Fact cards had been made available on the website for both employers and employees for scheme members to observe
- 23/33.9 In reply to a question from the Chair regarding Annual Benefit Statements, Helen Scargill stated that there was a slight increase, which might be attributable to pay awards, with 36 cases under consideration of which approximately 10 could have a tax charge.
- 23/33.10 The Chair thanked Helen Scargill for her report.
- 23/33.11 **RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

23/34 Training and development

- 23/34.1 The training and development information detailed on the agenda was noted. The Chair commented that as there were a number of new Board members and to ensure good governance, an audit would be made of training undertaken and to encourage the completion of pensions regulation training and also the LGA courses.

23/35 Local Pension Board work programme

- 23/35.1 The work programme was noted.

23/36 Items agreed with the Chair (AOB)

- 23/36.1 There were no additional items of business.

23/37 Date of Next Meeting

- 23/37.1 The next Local Pension Board meeting would be held at 10:00am on 11 October 2023 via MS Teams, or an alternative date would be arranged following discussion between the Chair and Vice Chair.

The meeting closed at 11.00am