



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE**

**Minutes of the Local Pension Board meeting held at 14:00 hours on Wednesday
18 October 2023 via Microsoft Teams**

Members present:

Mr Ian Cotter	Employer Officer Representative (Chair)
AM Damien Bence	Employer Officer Representative
Cllr Richard Biggs	Employer Member Representative
Cllr Clare Weight	Employer Member Representative (Substitute)
Mr Allan Frias-Robles	Scheme Member Employee Representative
Mr Sean Frampton	Scheme Member Retiree Representative

Other staff:

Mr Ryan Maslen, designate Head of Finance and Treasurer
Ms Sadie Price, HR Business Partner and Employee Relations Manager
Mr Mike Rees, Employee Relations Officer
Mrs Jacky White, HR Advisor Employee Relations Pensions

Guest:

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

Minute taker: Mr David Shaw, Democratic Services Officer

23/38 Welcome and introductions

23/38.1 Ian Cotter, Employer Officer Representative and Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees.

23/39 Apologies

23/39.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Rebecca Knox, Employer Member Representative, Mr Gerard Senior, Scheme Member Retiree Representative and Mrs Carol Swan – Head of HR

23/40 Conflicts of Interest/Code of Conduct

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23/40.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any declarations of conflicts of interest. There were no disclosures.

23/41 Minutes from the Local Pension Board meeting held on 12 July 2023

23/41.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the meeting of 12 July 2023.

23/41.2 **RESOLVED: That the Minutes from the Local Pension Board meeting held on 12 July 2023 be agreed as a correct record.**

23/42 Review actions from all Local Pension Board meetings

23/42.1 The actions from the previous meetings were discussed and updated. One action remained open, number 45.

23/42.2 Action 45, to arrange for an internal advert to Service staff to seek applications for the two vacant positions, was ongoing. Cllr Richard Biggs observed that this presented a governance risk and was required to be resolved. Following debate, Area Manager (AM) Damien Bence stated that he would encourage staff who were pension scheme members to become Scheme Member Employee Representatives. Sadie Price, HR Business Partner and Employee Relations Manager, would forward the scheme role and the advertisement to AM Bence.

23/42.3 **RESOLVED: That the pending actions on number 45 be noted.**

23/43 Local Pension Board Risk Register

23/43.1 The Chair informed the Board that there had been some clarification around pension matters, for example on immediate detriment, however the risks remained on the register.

23/43.2 **RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

23/44 Scheme Manager update

23/44.1 Sadie Price, presented the Scheme Manager Update for October which covered Pension Team – Ongoing Work/Projects; Internal Disputes Resolutions; Breaches; Communications; Meetings, Events and Training.

23/44.2 Reference was made to the Remedy Work under Ongoing Work/Projects and the review of 882 records. The deadline for completion of this work to be sent to West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) had been 31 July 2023, and the work had been completed ahead of schedule.

23/44.3 Sadie Price continued that in respect of implementing retrospective cases, the legislative position was that the Authority had 18 months from the 1

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October 2023 to fully implement retrospective cases. Details on the information falling within the four tranches, as set out in the report, was provided.

- 23/44.4 Helen Scargill clarified that the numbers in the first tranche of the prioritisation for beneficiaries and deceased cases was not nil as set out in the report but was two.
- 23/44.5 In reply to a question from Sean Frampton, Scheme Member Retiree Representative, Sadie Price explained that there were two employees affected by the contingent decision and information was awaited from the Local Government Association (LGA) before these could be progressed. Mike Rees, Employee Relations Officer, explained that this matter related to staff that had opted out of the 92 Scheme when the 2015 scheme came into being. If they had opted out before the 1 April 2016 for the 2015 scheme, they could no longer opt back into the earlier scheme. There remained an issue about when the individuals originally opted out of the schemes and the interpretation of this could be subject to future legal challenge.
- 23/44.6 It was noted that the calculations associated with the McCloud cases were very manual tasks, including checking whether the correct tax was affected by the remedy, and it was explained that the pension section had a vacancy as Jacqueline Blight, Employee Relations Advisor, had left the organisation. Cllr Biggs enquired if the risk on staffing levels needed to be added to the risk register. Sadie Price stated that the matter was being handled internally and there was confidence that the task could be undertaken through prioritisation. The Chair added that any adjustments arising from recovered contributions, compensations and tax would need to be entered through the Authority's finance system.
- 23/44.7 Sadie Price provided details on the second options exercise, injury award pensions review, pension dashboard and also internal dispute resolutions as set out in the report.
- 23/44.8 There had been no reported breaches.
- 23/44.9 In respect of the WYPF portal, Helen's Scargill commented that all staff were encouraged to register on the site.
- 23/44.10 Reference was made to the meetings, events and training and the requirement for new Board members to receive pension training. It was also noted that that the LGA were providing training sessions and that the WYPF had pre-retirement webinars specifically designed for fire authorities with events scheduled for 31 October and 30 November. It was agreed that these could be communicated in the Weekly Update and FireWire for pension scheme members to attend. Helen Scargill commented that the WYPF also had a training package on remedy which could be delivered.
- 23/44.11 In reply to a question from the Chair, Helen Scargill explained the latest situation with annual benefit statements and pension saving statements.

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All those that had breached had received a statement and all those not affected by remedy on the 2015 scheme would be receiving a follow up letter. All those affected by remedy would receive a revised remedy scheme statement before October 24, with links to remedy tax calculations and also to explanatory notes provided by the LGA.

23/44.12 **Action: That details on the training events be circulated to Board members and be advertised to all staff where relevant.**

23/44.13 **RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

23/45 West Yorkshire Pension Fund update

23/45.1 Helen Scargill gave a verbal update based on the WYPF report.

23/45.2 Helen Scargill referred to the LGA bulletins and the client reports. Meetings attended by WYPF were also highlighted together with the topics covered, including the Sergeant remedy and Matthews cases. The need for data sharing agreements had also been discussed.

23/45.4 In respect of the pension's dashboard, in order to become an integrated service provider an agreement had been entered into with a third-party company for their cloud services.

23/45.5 A pensions estimate could now be provided to all scheme members. At DWFRS this could be provided via a web form.

23/45.6 There had been no data breaches and other matters were covered in the monthly bulletins.

23/45.7 Helen Scargill continued that in respect of retirements from the 1 October 2023 (which was 43 across all services) the LGA did not have a statement to be sent, as explained in bulletin 72. WYPF had created its own covering letter and normal statements and normal pension claim forms and deferred choice election forms and was using the Government Actuary Department (GAD) for calculations for its spreadsheets. When the correct information was received from the GAD it would be uploaded to populate the statements. Although there may be a gap, WYPF would produce a bulk file for 800 plus members to populate the information into the statements. The deadline was the 31 March 2025. Cllr Biggs asked whether GAD could be chased for a speedy response. Helen Scargill replied that they had 18 months to produce the information so they could still comply with the necessary deadlines to have updated 2025 statements.

23/45.8 From 1 October 2023 existing members could be rolled back into their legacy scheme but this did not apply to retired members, who maintained their existing situation.

23/45.9 In reply to a question from Cllr Clare Weight, Helen Scargill explained the forms that were available to scheme members including deferred choice

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members and immediate choice members. It was also confirmed to the Chair that the Board was taking all actions that it could undertake at present to seek resolution.

23/45.10 In reply to a question from Allan Frias-Robles, Scheme Member Employee Representative, Helen Scargill explained that the 2023 benefit statements had been circulated prior to 31 August in 2023, but additional information would be included in the 2024 statements and distribution would be closer to the 31 August date in that year.

23/45.11 The Chair thanked Helen Scargill for her report.

23/45.12 **RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

23/46 Training and development

23/46.1 The training and development information detailed on the agenda was noted. The Chair commented that ensure good governance, Board members would be encouraged to complete pensions regulation training and also the LGA courses.

23/47 Local Pension Board work programme

23/47.1 The work programme was noted.

23/47.2 **RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted**

23/48 Items agreed with the Chair (AOB)

23/48.1 There were no additional items of business.

23/49 Date of Next Meeting

23/49.1 Dates for the 2024 Local Pension Board meetings would be circulated for approval.

The meeting closed at 15.05pm