



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE**

Minutes of the Local Pension Board meeting held at 14:00 hours on Thursday 1 February 2024 via Microsoft Teams

Members present:

Cllr Richard Biggs	Employer Member Representative (Vice Chair in the Chair)
Mr Ryan Maslen	Employer Officer Representative
AM Damien Bence	Employer Officer Representative
Cllr Clare Weight	Employer Member Representative (Substitute)
Mr Sean Frampton	Scheme Member Retiree Representative
Mr Gerard Senior	Scheme Member Retiree Representative
Mr Paul Cobb	Employee Officer Representative

Other staff:

Ms Sadie Price, HR Business Partner and Employee Relations Manager
Mr Mike Rees, Employee Relations Officer
Mr Richard Ellis, Employee Relations Advisor

Guest:

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

Minute taker: Mr David Shaw, Democratic Services Officer

24/01 Welcome and introductions

24/01.1 Cllr Richard Biggs, Employer Member Representative and Vice Chair in the Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees. It was explained that Ian Cotter, Employer Officer Representative and Head of Finance and Treasurer would shortly be retiring from the Authority and would be replaced by Mr Ryan Maslen. Mr Maslen was welcomed to the meeting as an Employer Officer Representative. Firefighter Mr Paul Cobb was also welcomed to the meeting as an Employee Officer Representative.

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24/02 Apologies

24/02.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Rebecca Knox, Employer Member Representative, Mr Ian Cotter, Employer Officer Representative, Mr Allan Frias-Robles, Scheme Member Employee Representative and Mrs Jacky White, HR Advisor Employee Relations Pensions.

24/03 Conflicts of Interest/Code of Conduct

24/04.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any declarations of conflicts of interest. There were no disclosures.

24/04 Minutes from the Local Pension Board meeting held on 18 October 2023

24/04.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the meeting of 18 October 2023.

24/04.2 **RESOLVED: That the Minutes from the Local Pension Board meeting held on 18 October 2023 be agreed as a correct record.**

24/05 Review actions from all Local Pension Board meetings

24/05.1 The actions from the previous meetings were discussed and updated. One action remained open, number 45.

24/05.2 Action 45, to arrange for an internal advert to Service staff to seek applications for the two vacant positions. The Board noted that Firefighter Mr Paul Cobb had kindly filled one of the vacant positions as an Employer Officer Representative.

24/05.3 **RESOLVED: That the pending actions on number 45 be noted.**

24/06 Local Pension Board Risk Register

24/06.1 The Chair referred to the risks regarding the interpretation of legislation and observed that policy changes could impact on pensions in terms of contingency planning, being agile and quick to respond and mitigation. This also related to the ability to have a voice in government, to be an advocate and to respond to consultation.

24/06.2 Mr Ryan Maslen would consider suitable wording to cover this risk, to share with the Chair, for consideration for it to be included in the risk register.

24/06.3 **RESOLVED: That the report be noted and that Mr Ryan Maslen consider suitable wording to cover the risk of the interpretation of legislation, to share with the Chair, for consideration for it to be included in the risk register.**

24/07 Scheme Manager update

24/07.1 Sadie Price, HR Business Partner and Employee Relations Manager, presented the Scheme Manager Update for February which covered Pension Team – Ongoing Work/Projects; Internal Disputes Resolutions; Breaches; Communications; Meetings, Events and Training.

24/07.2 Reference was made to the Remedy Work under Ongoing Work/Projects and the review of 882 records. The Pension team were currently working on the tax contributions and interest calculations using the Government Actuary Department (GAD) calculator. This work was required to be completed by 31 March 2024 and, to date, 224 calculations had been completed. Plans were in place to complete the work, including the appointment of Richard Ellis, Employee Relations Advisor as a staff member and working additional hours.

24/07.3 Sadie Price continued that in respect of implementing retrospective cases, the legislative position was that the Authority had 18 months from the 1 October 2023 to fully implement retrospective cases. Nationally, a prioritisation had been set for processing remedy cases and West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) would send out briefing letters on behalf of the Authority. Details on the information falling within the four tranches, as set out in the report, was provided.

24/07.4 Sadie Price provided details on the second options exercise, with further members identified resulting in over 750 cases. The initial correspondence along with an expression of interest had been sent to all members. There had been approximately 80 cases which had been returned on a return to sender basis and these cases would be referred to the Department of Works and Pensions tracing service to make contact on behalf of the Authority in order to exercise due diligence.

24/07.5 Further details were provided on injury award pensions review, pension dashboard and also internal dispute resolutions as set out in the report. In reply to a question from Sean Frampton, Sadie Price explained that in respect of an earlier internal dispute reported to the Board, the individual had been retired under the Local Government Pension Scheme and the option to report to the pensions ombudsman remained.

24/07.6 There had been no reported breaches.

24/07.7 In respect of communications, Local Government Association (LGA) Pension Bulletins 74 (October), 75 (November) and 76 (December) and monthly reports from West Yorkshire Pension Fund had been circulated

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to Pension Board Members since the last meeting in October 2023. In respect of the WYPF portal, articles had been placed in the Service's Weekly Update encouraging staff to register on the WYPF website with 'My Pension'.

- 24/07.8 Reference was made to the meetings, events and training. Sadie Price highlighted that the most recent events had focussed on the valuation of the 2015 scheme, and it was envisaged that employer's contribution was increasing from 28.8% to 37.6% with effect from 1 April 2024. This increase was being funded by the Home Office for the first year. Ryan Maslen added that the increased contribution rate for the Authority was approximately £2.1m in value, and it was not guaranteed that the Home Office would fund it after the first year.
- 24/07.9 Sean Frampton commented on a presentation at a LGA Coffee Morning where the Pensions Regulator had referred to a survey of the six key processes stating and that some organisations struggled with knowledge and understanding. Sadie Price stated that this could be covered in the next Scheme Manager update, referring to governance and administration results, and the new Code of Guidance document.
- 24/07.10 Area Manger Damien Bence mentioned feedback from a retirement presentation, as an individual had indicated to him that the pension statement timetable was presently five months. Mr Mike Rees, Employee Relations Officer, stated that WYPF would process statements as quickly as they could, and he would speak with AM Bence in order to assist the individual.
- 24/07.11 The Chair enquired about the impact if the deadlines for Remedy work were not met. Sadie Price replied that the impact would be on WYPF, but there was confidence that the deadlines would be met by the 31 March 2024 as planned. The Chair also commented that the work on the Pensions Dashboard and the Second Options Exercise should also be recognised.
- 24/07.12 **RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

24/08 West Yorkshire Pension Fund update

- 24/08.1 Helen Scargill gave a verbal update based on the WYPF January report which had been circulated to Board members.
- 24/08.2 In reply to a question from the Chair, Helen Scargill explained that the delay in providing pension estimates, which had been three times the usual time period resulting in a lower Key Performance Indicator, was the result of a software update to input cases including deferred choice, those under age discrimination and legacy cases. This had now been resolved with the software update in place.

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24/08.3 The Chair observed that on page 6, the number of pension scheme members with web access had plateaued, and it was asked how the numbers could be increased further. Helen Scargill replied that it was expected that the numbers would increase when deadlines were advertised, for example 31 March 2024 for Remedy.

24/08.4 The Chair thanked Helen Scargill for her report.

24/08.5 **RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

24/09 Training and development

24/09.1 The training and development information detailed on the agenda was noted. Sadie Price reminded new members of the Board of the requirement to undertake pensions regulator training.

24/10 Local Pension Board work programme

24/10.1 The work programme was noted.

24/10.2 **RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted**

24/11 Items agreed with the Chair (AOB)

22/11.1 There were no additional items of business.

24/12 Date of Next Meeting

24/12.1 The next Local Pension Board meeting would be held on 25 April 2024 via MS Teams.

The meeting closed at 14.35pm