



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE**

Draft Minutes of the Local Pension Board meeting held at 14:00 hours on Thursday 25 April 2024 via Microsoft Teams

These are draft minutes to be approved by the Board at their next meeting.

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 Allan Frias-Robles	Scheme Member Employee Officer Representative
Mr Paul Cobb	Scheme Member Employee Officer Representative

Other staff:

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

Guest:

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

Minute taker: Mr David Shaw, Democratic Services Officer

24/13 Welcome and introductions

24/13.1 Cllr Richard Biggs, Employer Member Representative and Vice Chair in the Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees.

24/14 Apologies

24/14.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Rebecca Knox and Mr Gerard Senior Scheme Member Retiree Representative.

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24/15 Conflicts of Interest/Code of Conduct

24/15.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any declarations of conflicts of interest. There were no disclosures.

24/16 Minutes from the Local Pension Board meeting held on 1 February 2024

24/16.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the meeting of 1 February 2024.

24/16.2 Arising out of consideration of the minutes it was confirmed that Paul Cobb was a Scheme Member Employee Officer Representative and that in respect of minute 24/07.8, there was no further update on funding by the Home Office for the increase in employer's contribution.

24/16.3 RESOLVED: That the Minutes from the Local Pension Board meeting held on 1 February 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

24/17 Review actions from all Local Pension Board meetings

24/17.1 The actions from the previous meetings were discussed and updated. One action remained open, number 45.

24/17.2 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 a Scheme Member Employee Officer Representative, and the action log would be updated accordingly when Mr Cobb had signed the acceptance of office forms.

24/17.3 RESOLVED: That the action on number 45 be noted and that it be removed from the action log.

24/18 Local Pension Board Risk Register

24/18.1 The meeting noted that the risk register had been updated to include reference to the risks of policy changes impacting on pension regulations, as requested at the previous meeting of the Board.

24/18.2 Ryan Maslen explained that the risk register was updated prior to Board meetings and when changes were expected.

24/18.3 RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

24/19 Scheme Manager update

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- 24/19.1 Sadie Price, HR Business Partner and Employee Relations Manager, presented the Scheme Manager Update for April which covered Pension Team – Ongoing Work/Projects; Internal Disputes Resolutions; Breaches; Communications; Meetings, Events and Training.
- 24/19.2 Reference was made to the Remedy Work under Ongoing Work/Projects and the review records. The Pension team had now completed in excess of 99% of remedy calculations, with those relating to ill health outstanding. The data sharing agreement was now in place which allowed for the transfer of payroll data to and from other Fire and Rescue Services (FRS's) for individuals who had served at more than one FRS.
- 24/19.3 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. This was a priority and letters had been sent out by West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) to beneficiaries. Nationally, a prioritisation had been set for processing remedy cases and 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.
- 24/19.4 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 85 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. To date 350 returns had been received. The calculation process had commenced, which was very detailed and resource intensive. It was hoped that the calculations would be completed by the end of September 2024.
- 24/19.5 Further details were provided on injury award pensions review, pension dashboard and also internal dispute resolutions as set out in the report.
- 24/19.6 There had been no reported breaches.
- 24/19.7 The Service had finalised its response to an internal dispute under the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure. The dispute reported at the previous meeting had now been resolved from the Service's perspective, with the claim by the individual being rejected. The individual had now appealed with the case to be considered by the Appointments and Disputes Committee. In addition to this case, a further internal dispute had been lodged and a response was being prepared.
- 24/19.8 In respect of communications, Local Government Association (LGA) Pension Bulletins 78 (February), 79 (March) and monthly reports from West Yorkshire Pension Fund had been circulated to Pension Board Members since the last meeting in February 2024. In respect of the WYPF portal,

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articles had been placed in the Service's Weekly Update encouraging staff to register on the WYPF website with 'My Pension'. Pre-Retirement Courses for uniformed staff for 2024/25 had been advertised in the Weekly Update and would be delivered by Affinity.

- 24/19.9 The Chair observed that undertaking remedy was resource intensive and enquired about the treatment of tax. The officers explained that confirmation on the treatment of tax was awaited from the LGA and Government. The officers explained further how information was shared between the Service, WYPF, His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the LGA over the treatment of tax in the payment of pension arrears, the interest on pension arrears and lump sums and the work that was being undertaken to achieve an acceptable solution.
- 24/19.10 In reply to the Chair, the officers explained that there were sufficient resources within the HR department to manage the workload at present and that this would be kept under review. The impact of the workload was reported to the Home Office.
- 24/19.11 The Chair referred to correspondence to the Board from an individual who had written to the Board regarding Immediate Detriment and the age discrimination case which had led to the individual receiving a reduced monthly pension and the owing to the pensioner of an additional lump sum along with back pay. The situation was still ongoing and impacted on retired members. The Chair stated that the Board did take the impact of Immediate Detriment seriously and the officers would update the scheme member after the Board meeting.
- 24/19.12 Sean Frampton enquired about the Government Actuary Department (GAD) calculations on the second options exercise. The officers explained that the Authority had made only one calculation for a single scheme member which had worked well and provided confidence going forward.
- 24/19.13 The Chair asked about the procedure if a scheme member was retired and the calculations were procedurally incorrect. Helen Scargill explained that the individual could challenge and would be required to provide proof via pay and employment data.
- 24/19.14 RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

24/20 West Yorkshire Pension Fund update

- 24/20.1 Helen Scargill gave a verbal update based on the WYPF monthly reports which had been circulated to Board members since the last meeting.
- 24/20.2 Reference was made to slight delays to pension estimates following the death of a scheme member where the next of kin had to be traced. The number of active members was approximately 1000 including those dual

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employed and the number of web registrations had increased. Scheme members would be provided with their P60s by the end of April. There were no breaches to report. Following consultation with the LGA, a follow up letter to those scheme members affected by ill health would be dispatched by the end of the month. The WYPF had been audited by another pension authority and had been found to have robust procedures in place, including for the recovery of overpayments.

24/20.3 Helen Scargill continued that a client meeting had been held recently to consider annual benefit statements that were not affected by age discrimination to have them completed by 31 August 2024. Those affected by age discrimination were more likely to be completed by the end of the year. Correspondence would be undertaken when more detail was available. The data would be formally reported to the Pensions Regulator (TPR) in due course.

24/20.4 Helen Scargill referred to pension savings statements and possible breaches of the annual allowance thresholds, as the allowances had now to be reassessed back to 1992 (previously 2006). The reassessment had been paused as HMRC had temporarily withdrawn the remedy tax calculator to apply the correct tax rates.

24/20.5 The data exchange portal had now been established with HMRC to consider age discrimination cases. There was a large number of cases to consider which may lead to delays.

24/20.6 In reply to a question from Sean Frampton, Helen Scargill explained that the TPR were aware of the delays in processing age discrimination cases and if a plan to deal with the cases was in place there may be some flexibility if breaches occurred.

24/20.7 The Chair thanked Helen Scargill for her report.

24/20.8 RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

24/21 Training and development

24/21.1 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. The Chair noted that the last GAD newsletter was dated 2019 and asked if there was a recent update.

24/21.2 It was noted that there was a training session available to Board members provided by the LGA and that Cllr Claire Weight was to attend a training session in London in September 2024, which was also available all Board members to attend. Helen Scargill added that LGA training sessions were held four times per annum and were available to Board members. The Chair mentioned the on-line training provided by the TPR. Sean Frampton

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referred to the benefits of attending the LGA coffee mornings which were valuable and interesting and encouraged other Board members to attend. It was agreed as an action that these training opportunities be brought to the attention of Board members.

24/21.3 ACTION: That Sadie Price inform Board members of training opportunities for example those provided by the Local Government Association, including coffee mornings.

24/22 Local Pension Board work programme

24/22.1 The work programme was noted.

24/22.2 RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted

24/23 Items agreed with the Chair (AOB)

22/23.1 There were no additional items of business.

24/24 Date of Next Meeting

24/24.1 The next Local Pension Board meeting would be held on 11 July 2024 via MS Teams.

The meeting closed at 16.00pm