



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE  
FIRE AND RESCUE**

## **Minutes of the Local Pension Board meeting held at 15:30 hours on Thursday 11 July 2024 via Microsoft Teams**

### **Members present:**

Cllr Richard Biggs	Employer Member Representative
Cllr Clare Weight	Employer Member Representative (Substitute)
Mr Ryan Maslen	Employer Officer Representative
AM Damien Bence	Employer Officer Representative
Mr Sean Frampton	Scheme Member Retiree Representative
Mr Allan Frias-Robles	Scheme Member Employee Representative
Mr Paul Cobb	Scheme Member Employee Representative

### **Other staff:**

Mr Mike Rees, Employee Relations Officer

### **Guest:**

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

**Minute taker:** Mr David Shaw, Democratic Services Officer

### **24/25 Welcome and introductions**

24/25.1 Cllr Richard Biggs, Employer Member Representative, opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees.

### **24/26 Apologies**

24/26.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Paul Hilliard, Employer Member Representative, Mr Gerard Senior, Scheme Member Retiree Representative, Ms Sadie Price, HR Business Partner and Employee Relations Manager and Mrs Jacky White, HR Advisor Employee Relations Pensions.

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**24/27 Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

24/27.1 **RESOLVED: That Cllr Richard Biggs be appointed Chair and that Ryan Maslen be appointed Vice Chair**

**24/28 Conflicts of Interest/Code of Conduct**

24/28.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any declarations of conflicts of interest. There were no disclosures.

**24/29 Minutes from the Local Pension Board meeting held on 25 April 2024**

24/29.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the meeting of 25 April 2024.

24/29.2 Arising out of consideration of the minutes it was confirmed that Paul Cobb was a Scheme Member Employee Representative and that in respect of the minutes, that in minute 24/20.3 fourth line the word 'be' be replaced by the word 'by' so that the sentence reads: 'Those affected *by* age discrimination were more likely to be completed *by* the end of the year'. In addition, that in minute 24/21.2 the word 'for' be added between the words 'available' and 'all' so that the sentence reads: 'It was noted that there was a training session available to Board members provided by the LGA and that Cllr Clare Weight was to attend a training session in London in September 2024, which was also available *for* all Board members to attend.'

24/29.3 **RESOLVED: That subject to the above amendments the Minutes from the Local Pension Board meeting held on 25 April 2024 be agreed as a correct record.**

**24/30 Review actions from all Local Pension Board meetings**

24/30.1 The actions from the previous meetings were discussed and updated. One action remained open, number 46.

24/30.2 Action 46, That Board members are informed of training opportunities, for example those provided by the Local Government Association, including coffee mornings. Ryan Maslen provided an update that training and development opportunities would be included as a standard agenda item for all future meetings to ensure Board members were kept up to date with forthcoming opportunities.

24/30.3 **RESOLVED: That the action on number 46 be noted and that it be removed from the action log as it was complete.**

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**24/31 Local Pension Board Risk Register**

24/31.1 The Chair enquired as to how the cyber security of third-party partners was assured, including those of the West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF). Helen Scargill outlined the measures undertaken at WYPF stating that many of the systems were under the operating control of Bradford Council. Details of system updates were included in the monthly client reports. Clients would be notified if there was an impact from a cyber security breach. Sean Frampton referred to third party pension audits that WYPF had undertaken and Ryan Maslen stated that the DWFRS Internal Audit review of WYPF and the audit controls that were in place would be updated as a mitigation.

24/31.2 Ryan Maslen explained that in accordance with the Board’s work programme, the annual review of the risk register had been undertaken.

**24/31.3 RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

**24/32 Scheme Manager update**

24/32.1 Mike Rees, Employee Relations Officer, presented the Scheme Manager Update for July which covered Pension Team – Ongoing Work/Projects; Internal Disputes Resolutions; Breaches; Communications; Meetings, Events and Training.

24/32.2 Reference was made to the Remedy Work under Ongoing Work/Projects and the review of records. The Pension team had now completed in excess of 99% of remedy calculations, with those relating to ill health retirements outstanding (28 cases), which were pending new certificates and transfers. The category 2 persons had now been written to, to advise of delays associated with the tax implications for unauthorised payments.

24/32.3 Remedy Compensation Awards work was ongoing in relation to loss incurred through the delays in implementing remedy. Applications for compensation received would be reviewed by the Scheme Manager in accordance with guidance provided by the Local Government Association (LGA) on what constituted compensation.

24/32.4 Mike Rees continued that in respect of implementing retrospective cases, there was no further update from the previous Board meeting.

24/32.5 Mike Rees provided details on the second options exercise, with to date 388 cases returned and the calculation process for these was ongoing. It was anticipated that there would be significant costs associated with this work. The number of cases calculated to date was 119 and it was anticipated that the exercise would be completed by the end of September 2024.

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- 24/32.6 Further details were provided on the injury award pensions review, pension dashboard and also internal dispute resolutions as set out in the report.
- 24/32.7 There had been multiple claims for injury to feelings. This topic was being considered nationally and an agreed position on how these would be resolved was yet to be determined.
- 24/32.8 There had been no further progress to date on the Injury Award Pension Review. The pensions team were awaiting the agreed protocols in relation to the recovery of overpayments and to rectify underpayments.
- 24/32.9 The Service continued monitoring for revised deadlines for the pension's dashboard. The Service would be involved in this alongside WYPF.
- 24/32.10 It was anticipated that the deadline of 31 August 2024 for the issue of Annual Benefit Illustrations (ABIs) would not be met. This was due to new software delays. This would mean that the Service would need to self-refer to the Pensions Regulator, along with all other Services who relied on Civica for the production of ABI's.
- 24/32.11 There had been no reported breaches.
- 24/32.12 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 now due to be considered by the Appointments and Disputes Committee. In addition to this case, a further internal dispute that had been lodged has been responded to and the individual had six months to appeal the decision.
- 24/32.13 In respect of communications, Local Government Association (LGA) Pension Bulletins 80 (April), 81 (May), 82 (June) and monthly reports from WTPF had been circulated to Pension Board Members since the last meeting in April 2024. 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'. Pre-Retirement Courses for uniformed staff for 2024/25 had been advertised in the Weekly Update and would be delivered by Affinity.
- 24/32.14 Paul Cobb, Scheme Member Employee Representative, enquired about the second options exercise, stating that some scheme members had reported to him that they had not received a reply to their enquiry. Mike Rees confirmed that all applications had been acknowledged and were being processed. Those that were out of scope had also been contacted. It was agreed that Paul Cobb and Damien Bence, Employer Officer Representative, would contact Mike Rees if a scheme member raised with them that they had not been contacted by the pensions team.

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- 24/32.15 In reply to a question from Sean Frampton, Scheme Member Retiree Representative, Mike Rees explained that Government funding had been committed to cover the costs associated with the second options exercise, with some funding received upfront.
- 24/32.16 The Chair asked about potentially missing the deadlines for Annual Benefit Illustration returns (ABIs), which was entered in the risk register as an unlikely event. Mike Rees replied that this was a risk shared nationally and the remedy of others would be similar to our own. At the request of the Chair, it was agreed that the risk register include an annotation to this effect.
- 24/32.17 In reply to a question from Sean Frampton, Helen Scargill explained the multiple reasons that had led to delays in ABIs, including legislation not been available, leading to delays in information from the Government Actuaries Department (GAD), which resulted in delays in the development of IT systems. The regulators were aware of the situation and wished to see that a plan was in place for processing the ABIs. WYPF was working towards 31 December 2024 to have annual benefit and remedial statements in place. An update would be provided at the next Board meeting.
- 24/32.18 Paul Cobb asked that with the dates being fluid, could an update be included within the staff Weekly Update, including signposting. Mike Rees replied that this would be undertaken when information was firmer.
- 24/32.19 Helen Scargill added that all active scheme members had received a letter depending on their category. The letter would be made available to the next Board meeting for its information.
- 24/32.20 In reply to a question from the Chair, Helen Scargill stated that the new staging date for the pension's dashboard was October 2025 and that a contract had now been signed with an internet provider and a testing site established. Updates would be provided in the monthly client reports.

**24/32.21 RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

**24/33 West Yorkshire Pension Fund update**

- 24/33.1 Helen Scargill gave a verbal update based on the WYPF monthly reports which had been circulated to Board members since the last meeting.
- 24/33.2 Helen's Scargill referred to a breach on a key performance indicator (KPI) with one case not completed within the required timescale regarding an estimate of a death in retirement. The reasons for this were explained. It was reported that the backlog of cases had now been addressed but there was an increase in the number of cases which required a repeated calculation, which was affecting the KPIs.

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- 24/33.3 Also affecting KPI's was the substantial number of cases, in excess of 1000, calculating the CARE pension uplift for 2022 in order that pensions could be increased by the correct recalculation rates.
- 24/33.4 There had been no disclosure breaches.
- 24/33.5 An ongoing area of work was the processing of the outstanding leavers for 31 March 2024 in order that the right status could be obtained for the calculations.
- 24/33.6 Web registrations for scheme members had increased by a small amount.
- 24/33.7 Regarding immediate choice, the first notification had been made to a single WYPF member, not within DWFRS, with the calculation taking a week to undertake. This would provide a remedial service statement for scheme members to make choices, with a breakdown of their options.
- 24/33.8 Details were provided on the provision of pension saving statements for those that might have breached annual allowances in the tax year. A deadline of 6 October 2024 had been set for reassessment for all those rolled back into the final salary statements and with benefits accrued in the legacy scheme. These calculations had to be made manually with approximately 70 individuals affected across all WYPF authorities. Calculations had to be worked back to 2015/16. Replying to questions from Cllr Biggs and Cllr Clare Weight, Employer Member Representative (Substitute), Helen Scargill stated that it was for an individual to be responsible to declare if they had a separate private pension in addition to their fire authority pension.
- 24/33.9 Helen Scargill updated the Board that the number of active member benefits statements in scope for age discrimination was 394 and those not in scope for age discretion (not meeting the eligibility after April 2012) was 527; all the out-of-scope members had received their active benefit statement. Of the 394 in scope for age discretion, 49% had been contacted.
- 24/33.10 Sean Frampton appreciated the work being undertaken by the WYPF to keep to deadlines and asked if the pension fund fell behind on these could it be challenged. Helen Scargill responded that the March 2025 deadlines would be met, and that an update would be provided to the October meeting of the Board.
- 24/33.11 The Chair thanked Helen Scargill for her report.
- 24/33.8 RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

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**24/34 Training and development**

24/34.1 The training and development information detailed on the agenda was noted. The Chair commented that the last GAD newsletter was dated 2019 and asked if there was a recent update. Ryan Maslen responded that the report on agenda now includes additional links which displayed the latest version of the GAD newsletter and also additional information. He added that he had attended the June meeting which had proved useful.

24/34.2 It was noted that there was a training session available to Board members provided by the LGA and that Cllr Weight was to attend a training session in London in September 2024, which was also available all Board members to attend. Cllr Weight stated that as she was now a substitute member of the Board it would be beneficial if Cllr Paul Hilliard, Employer Member Representative, attended this training session and this was agreed. Mike Rees would contact Cllr Hilliard to progress.

**24/34.3 RESOLVED: That the training and development report be noted.**

**24/35 Local Pension Board work programme**

24/35.1 The work programme was noted.

**24/35.2 RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted**

**24/36 Items agreed with the Chair (AOB)**

22/36.1 There were no additional items of business.

**24/37 Date of Next Meeting**

24/37.1 The next Local Pension Board meeting would be held on 17 October 2024 via MS Teams.

The meeting closed at 16.40pm