

**Minutes of the meeting of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
Pension Board**

**Held via MS Teams / in the Sycamore Room, Headquarters
on Thursday 6 July 2023 at 2 pm**

Present

Members

Employer Representatives

Guy Williams	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Support) (Chair of Pension Board)	ACFO
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Member Representatives

Matt Lamb		ML
Steve Morris		SM
Tony Talbot	Fire and Rescue Service Association (FRSA)	TT

Officers

Tina Grindley	Human Resources Assistant (for Agenda Item 4)	TG
Lynn Ince	Executive Support Officer	ESO

1 Apologies for Absence

Employer Representatives

Joanne Coadey, James Walton

Officers

Wendy Edwards, Human Resources Manager
Suki Kaur, West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF)
Helen Scargill, West Yorkshire Pension Fund

2 Conflicts of Interest

Board Members were reminded that they should declare any interests or responsibilities, which may lead to conflicts of interest in the subject area or any specific agenda items for this meeting.

None were declared.

3a Minutes

There were a couple of issues with the minutes of 16 March 2023 meeting that were sent out in the agenda pack for the original meeting date of 7 June 2023. These related to the contact list for staff affected by the Matthews Case and that the Board received training on Matthews case from Helen Scargill.

As this meeting did not take place and was moved to today's date, a revised agenda pack was sent out with an amended version of the minutes.

Action: Sergeant Case to be added as a standing item on the agenda for Pension Board meetings.

Resolved that the minutes of the Pension Board meeting, held on 16 March 2023, be agreed and signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.

3b Pension Board Action List

Progress on the Action List is recorded on that document.

Resolved that the Board note the progress recorded against the action on the Action List.

4 Contract Management Update and Issues

TG advised the Board of the following points:

- The financial data spreadsheet is still being worked on and is now the Service's Accountant, who is working on it with the seconded Pensions Officer.
- The Service is still waiting for further directions on the Matthews Case and the Immediate Detriment (ID) issue.
- The Service is on target with regard to the data for those affected by Immediate Detriment. There is a form for each person and Officers are starting to work on completing these forms. The Pensions Officer has access to the relevant systems and is able to help with this.
- There is the potential for additional funding to provide extra support within the HR Department if required to address the Immediate Detriment issue.

The ACFO advised that WYPF have notified the Service that any scheme members retiring after 1 October 2023 will not have their Immediate Detriment claims processed immediately as WYPF are awaiting the relevant software to do this. The ACFO suggested that this raises three 3 questions: why; when; and where do they go, i.e., into the immediate processing group or into the main group.

SM said that the inference is that ID will start to be paid from 1 October 2023; if so, what is the mechanism for doing this and what part of the software is awaited.

ML reported that it has been established that there is still quite a lot of work needed on the data; there are still issues with the software, and queries over those who are in the queue for payment.

ML also said that 40% of Fire and Rescue Services are making ID payments now and asked the question of whether it is worth advising the Scheme Manager that the legalities of not making ID payments should be re-assessed.

The Board agreed that it would be worthwhile for representation to go from the Pension Board to the Scheme Manager, to raise the issue again and asking them to reconsider the Service's position and to look at making ID payments ahead of the October deadline. The Board also thought that it would be advantageous to the Pension Board to be seen to be doing this.

Action: ACFO to talk to WYPF and have a strategic conversation in the Service and then report back to the Board.

ML suggested that the appropriate wording be put to the Scheme Manager via this Board.

Action: ACFO to work with Board outside of meeting to devise suitable wording and produce a communication from the Pension Board to the Scheme Manager.

5 Terms of Reference

Resolved that the Pension Board agree its Terms of Reference without amendment.

6 Conflicts of Interest Policy

Resolved that the Pension Board agree its Conflicts of Interest Policy without amendment.

7 Update from Pension Administrator

As there were no representatives of the Pension Administrator attending the meeting to present an update, the Chair asked Board Members if they had any issues to raise in relation to the monthly client reports from West Yorkshire Pension Fund.

ML referred to the link to the Scheme Advisory Bulletin in the May 2023 Client Report which included information about employees who work on secondary contracts and access to the compensation scheme for employees on fixed term contracts.

The Service has said there are no issues, or grey areas related to this within this Service. ML, however, contests that this is not correct; he believes that eligibility to both the pension and the compensation schemes is limited to permanent staff only and is not applicable to those on fixed term contracts.

Action: The ACFO suggested that the Board should receive an update on the position with secondary contracts.

Action: ACFO to seek further clarification on this from the Head of HR and Admin.

Resolved that the Pension Board note the updates from the Pensions Administrator.

8 Pension Board Risk Register

The Board discussed and agreed the following updates to its Risk Register.

ID 3 – Poor Record-keeping (i.e., the receipt and management of correct data)

The Board agreed to maintain the risk rating as medium and the RAG rating as amber for now. This may change when the detriment element has been resolved. Officers are currently dealing with legacy records which has an effect on this issue. The data for the Matthews case, which goes back further than the Sergeant case, will also need to be taken into consideration.

ID 8 – Recruitment and retention of staff or knowledge

The Board agreed that the risk is stabilising but is not reducing and agreed to maintain the risk rating as medium and the RAG rating as amber for now.

ID 9 – Lack of knowledge, effectiveness or leadership among key personnel

The Board agreed to leave the overall risk score as is for now. It was also agreed that Board Members be encouraged to complete The Pensions Regulator (TPR) training modules to help address this risk.

ID 17 – Impacts of significant changes to legislation

The Board believe that this relates to the re-evaluation of Pension schemes. As this is ongoing, it was agreed to leave the risk rating at medium for now.

9 Breaches Register

Resolved that the Board note that there have been no breaches in the period since the last meeting of the Pension Board.

10 Register of Internal Disputes

Resolved that the Board note the update on the Register of Internal Disputes and that there have been none in the period since the last meeting of the Pension Board.

11 Training

Notice of upcoming events

A Local Government Association Fire Pension Board Training session is being held on Tuesday, 24 October 2023. The session is being delivered via Microsoft Teams and will run from 10.00 am to 12.00 pm.

Action: ESO to share link for training session with Board Members

12 Any Other Business

None

13 Next Meeting Date

**Tuesday, 26 September 2023, 2.00 pm in the Beech Room, Headquarters
/ via MS Teams.**

The meeting closed: 3.40 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____