



Minutes

Name of meeting	ISLE OF WIGHT FIRE AUTHORITY FIRE FIGHTERS PENSION BOARD
Date and time	THURSDAY 5 DECEMBER 2019, COMMENCING AT 8.30 AM
Venue	MEETING ROOM 3D, COUNTY HALL, ISLE OF WIGHT
Board Members	Ross Singleton (Chairman), Sean Harrison, Cllr Reg Barry, Cllr Stuart Hutchinson
Also Present	Matt Collier, Jo Thistlewood, Megan Tuckwell

14. Changes in Membership

Members noted the recent changes in Board membership including the appointment of Sean Harrison as Scheme Member Representative. The resignation of Cllr Tig Outlaw from the Board (following his resignation as Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Protection), and the subsequent appointment of Cllr Stuart Hutchinson as Employer Representative, had resulted in the Board being non-compliant with its internal terms of reference which states that one of the employer representatives shall be the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Public Protection. The board was however compliant with legislation which was satisfactory per the Monitoring Officer.

Discussion took place regarding the operation of the Board. It was advised that the Monitoring Officer was undertaking an extensive review of the Isle of Wight Council's Constitution which would include a review of the Pension Board and would enable a more proactive approach than the existing framework allowed.

RESOLVED:

THAT the changes in board membership and updates on the operation of the board be noted.

15. Minutes

RESOLVED:

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2019 be confirmed.

16. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received at this stage.

17. Membership Numbers

The Employment Services Lead Officer presented membership data and highlighted the key changes since last reported in July 2019. The Technical Finance Manager provided an overview of the schemes and discussion took place regarding the complexities of the administration including possible implications of the McCloud ruling. It was noted that an emphasis would be on data cleansing and if additional resource was required, a business case would be developed. Members noted the detailed explanation provided by the Employment Services Lead Officer and Technical Finance Manager and were confident that officers were informed as best they could be.

RESOLVED:

THAT the update be noted.

18. Feedback from Hampshire Fire Pension Board

The Technical Finance Manager provided an update on the feedback from the meeting of the Hampshire Fire Pension Board held on 9 October 2019. It was advised that the key issues discussed were mainly around legislation and updates from the Local Government Association including discussion on the McCloud ruling, the O'Brien case on part-time judges buying back benefits, and the Langford case regarding survivor benefits.

RESOLVED:

THAT the update be noted.

19. The Pensions Regulator's Scheme Returns 2019

Members considered the completion and submission of the scheme returns for 2019 in advance of the deadline. Attention was drawn to the response to Record Keeping, that common and scheme-specific data had not been measured in the last three years. A notice was subsequently issued by the Pensions Regulator stating that a data review must be completed by April 2020 and agreement had been received from Chief Fire Officer advising that the cost would be charged to councils fire budget. A procurement exercise was now underway, and an update would be provided at the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

THAT the completion and submission of the scheme returns be noted.

20. The Pension Regulator's 2019 Survey

Technical Finance Manager presented the Pension Regulator's 2019 Governance and Administration Survey and drew members attention to the following key points.

- The current policy in respect of board members' conflicts of interest is linked to the council's constitution, which is not entirely suitable for the purposes of board members. A review of this, in conjunction with the LGPS board, is planned.

- Due to quorum issues only two of the four scheduled meetings were held last year, against the Pensions Regulator's recommendation to meet quarterly.
- There was a need to develop a training plan in response to the current frequency of evaluating the knowledge, understanding and skills of board members.
- It was noted that a risk register would be developed, primarily around administration and legislation, as the board did not have its own documented procedure for assessing and managing risk. Members were reassured that risks are checked by auditors.
- Discussion took place regarding cyber risk and the process for reporting breaches.

RESOLVED:

THAT the survey be noted.

21. Report on Breaches and Complaints

The Employment Services Lead Officer provided an update on breaches and complaints reported since the last meeting. A potential complaint had emerged, and it was confirmed that a meeting was scheduled with the scheme member to address and resolve any queries they may have. Two breaches had been identified, both in relation to the membership of the board. Neither breach was not deemed significant enough to report to the Pensions Regulator as the board was compliant with legislation.

RESOLVED:

THAT the updates be noted.

22. Combined Fire Authority (CFA)

The Employment Services Lead Officer provided an update on the progress towards the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Combined Fire Authority (CFA). It was advised that all paper membership records had been scanned onto the system to make the transfer of files easier, and meetings had taken place with the Hampshire fire pensions team to discuss the schemes' membership details. There was a focus on ensuring that the data was the best possible quality for the transition, and the GMP reconciliation project was awaiting final confirmation from HMRC.

RESOLVED:

THAT the update on the progress towards the Combined Fire Authority be noted.

23. Items Circulated for Members' Attention

The committee noted the items circulated for information since the papers were published for the last meeting (3 September 2019). Members agreed they were happy to continue receiving updates via email between the formal meetings.

RESOLVED:

THAT the updates be noted.

24. Members' Question Time

Members were reminded next meeting Wednesday 18 March 2020. Questions were raised regarding knowledge and understanding, and the Technical Finance Manager agreed to circulate an assessment to board members.

CHAIRMAN