

West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Local Pension Board

3 April 2023 – At a meeting of the West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Local Pension Board held at 2.00 pm at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Peter Rickard (Chairman)

Richard Abbot, Dave Bray, James Diston, Giles Sparkes and Joseph Weir

Apologies were received from Gary Ball

Part I

1. Apologies

None

2. Declaration of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality

None declared

3. Urgent Matters

None raised

4. Part I Minutes of the last meeting

Part 1 Minutes agreed by board members

5. Part II Matters

No items brought forward

6. Risk Register

Items were reviewed by exception. RW explained that the format was new with a full project scope had been provided to set out resource requirements, responsibilities and milestones. Implementation will be monitored by the Pensions Team and updates to be provided to Board.

R7 - Has the resource been supplied and signed off?

RW confirmed that more detail is available in the Administration Procedures and Performance paper regarding local and national steps being built in for this, but work is ongoing in the payroll team for Matthews in pulling together the records ready for when we have more clarity. A more detailed resourced-based decision plan will be agreed to ensure appropriate steps are taken for when McCloud and Matthews remedial regulations are laid.

R20 – JW confirmed that it is highly likely the unions will seek to appeal the decision in relation to the Cost Cap. RW confirmed that

the Pensions team are cognisant of this being challenged and so the risk is remaining open.

7. Administration Procedures and Performance

The Board is asked to note the report and request any further information that is required.

RW explained that there has been an update in format to align with specific projects such as McCloud. The paper also reflects what is on the horizon

A question was raised around the number of ill health retirements that will need to be considered as part of the McCloud remedy. When the legislation is changed in Oct 2023, how quickly will these situations be remedied? One dates to 2018 so there is significant financial hardship being experienced over a prolonged period.

Action PR – will find the answer and bring back to the board in writing.

Action JW - Joe Weir agreed to share the details of those he is aware of with ill health retirements and who are awaiting this consideration

8. Regulations and Guidance Update

RW - this paper summarises what has come out through Local Government Association (LGA), with the exclusion of items covered elsewhere in agenda.

A question was raised around the recent settlement on pay dating back to July 2022. What is the process in place to make sure the pensions are updated accordingly? Previously members had to write individually to request the pensions be updated. Is this still the case?

It was confirmed that the individual must still write to the Pension Scheme Manager to specifically state that they wish their pension to be treated in this way. There is nothing locally in terms of a discretionary process.

Action PR/RW to investigate the option regarding the establishment of an internal process to avoid members having to write in

9. Communication Strategy

Increased communications will be required over the next 6 months, particularly as the McCloud and Matthews judgements are made.

The Pension newsletter will be emailed out to members and sent as hard copy along with member's payslips where they have opted out of electronic communication.

10. Knowledge Assessment

This board will monitor compliance and will send out emails for any gaps in training identified.

The Register of Interest forms need to be completed, thank you to those who have done so. There is one outstanding.

Action AT to email reminder to that board member.

We have booked an extended session on 14 June to allow for the provision of training by the LGA. All members to attend if possible and any items you would like covered please email the Chair and it will be accommodated within the training session as appropriate.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Joe Weir and Giles Sparks are unable to attend

Action AT will look at moving the date

12. Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved – That under Section 100(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I, of Schedule 12A, of the Act by virtue of the paragraph specified under the item and that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption of that information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Exempt: Paragraph 3, financial or business affairs of any person (including the authority).

13. Part II Minutes of the last meeting

The Part II minutes were confirmed by the Board.

The meeting ended at 4.00 pm

Chairman