

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Pension Board

Minutes of the meeting of the Pension Board held on Wednesday 27 January 2016 at 10.30 am at North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Thurston Road, Northallerton.

Present:-

Employer Representatives:- Area Manager Jez Rushworth (in the Chair), Group Manager Jonathan Foster and Group Manager Stuart Simpson.

Member Representatives:- Steve Howley (FBU) and Simon Wall (FBU).

Advisors in attendance:-

Ruth Gladstone (assisting the Secretary to North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority), Barry Khan (Legal Adviser, Monitoring Officer and Secretary to North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority) and Jan Sams (Head of Human Resources).

Apology for absence:-

An apology for absence was received from Member Representative Carl Boasman (FOA).

All documents considered are on NYFRS's website

10. Minutes

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the Board's meeting held on 29 July 2015 be noted.

11. Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interests

No conflicts of interest were declared that this meeting.

12. Local Pension Board Training

Considered –

The report of Jan Sams (Head of Human Resources) which advised of information and training now available to assist Board Members in acquiring, developing and maintaining the skills and knowledge required to carry out their role.

It was reported that:-

- The Local Government Association (LGA) intended to provide further training for Members of Pension Boards in the region. Dates would be circulated to Board Members once such information became available.
- The LGA online forum was now available for Members of Pension Boards at <https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/group/firefighters-pension-scheme-local-pension-board-members-group-forum>

- The Pensions Regulator had produced information, including an e-learning training programme, to assist Members of Pension Boards in learning about managing public service pension schemes and to increase knowledge and understanding in carrying out the role. The information could be accessed at <http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/public-service-schemes.aspx>. It was understood that this e-learning training programme should cover the majority, if not all, the training needs identified in the personal training needs analysis completed, during August/September 2015, by each Member of this Board. It was suggested that Board Members should complete all modules of this e-learning as soon as possible and by no later than 30 April 2016.

During discussion, it was suggested that Substitute Members should also be requested to complete all modules of the e-learning by no later than 30 April 2016. Members expressed support for that suggestion.

Resolved –

- (a) That the content of the report be noted.
- (b) That Board Members and Substitute Members undertake, by no later than 30 April 2016, the e-learning programme provided by the Pensions Regulator and subsequently email their development records and updated training needs analyses to the Head of Human Resources so that knowledge gaps can be identified and addressed as part of future regional training to be provided by the LGA.

13. Pensions Update

Considered -

The report of Jan Sams (Head of Human Resources) which provided information concerning the following:-

- Schemes membership information, namely:
 - The numbers of Wholetime and Retained Firefighters in each of the various firefighters' pension schemes, as at December 2015, and the numbers of those who had opted out.
 - The numbers of active members, as at 1 April 2015, in each of the various firefighters' pension schemes, including the numbers protected and tapered in the 1992 and 2006 schemes.
 - The numbers of pension members of each scheme as at pension pay date 1 January 2016.
 - The numbers of deferred members of each scheme as at 1 January 2016.
 - The number of North Yorkshire complaints dealt with during the previous five years under the West Yorkshire Pension Fund's Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure.
- Updates concerning the establishment or implementation of:-
 - The Scheme Advisory Board.

- Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992 – Pension Ombudsman decision in the Milne v GAD case.
 - 2006 Firefighters' Modified Pension Scheme.
 - Industrial action pension buyback.
 - Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015.
 - Auto Enrolment.
 - Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992 – Contribution Holiday.
 - Government Actuary's Department (GAD) Firefighters' Pension Schemes Valuation as at 31 March 2016.
- Pensioner re-employment and abatement.
 - The process for obtaining pension forecasts.
 - An extract from the contract with West Yorkshire Pension Fund which set out the service specification and schedule of work for the delivery of a Firefighters' Pension Scheme and Payroll Service.

The Chairman asked the FBU Member Representatives to confirm whether the Head of Human Resources' report included the information which they had asked to be submitted to this meeting. Steve Howley and Simon Wall confirmed that the information they had requested was included in the report.

During discussion, it was suggested that the numbers of active members, as at 1 April 2016, in each of the various firefighters' pension schemes, including the numbers protected and tapered in the 1992 and 2006 schemes, might be submitted to the Board's next meeting so that a comparison might be made with the situation as at 1 April 2015. Members expressed support for that suggestion.

Steve Howley (FBU) advised that he understood that Authorities had now received the necessary information in order to write to relevant retired firefighters to implement the contribution holiday under the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992. Jan Sams (Head of Human Resources) advised that the Authority was not currently in a position to write because guidance was still awaited from DCLG. The Chairman asked Steve Howley and Jan Sams to share information on this issue outside the meeting.

Jan Sams (Head of Human Resources) offered to circulate to Board Members, for information purposes, the form which new starters were now required to complete to provide information relating to a public sector pension in payment, thereby enabling the calculation and application of any pension abatement which might be necessary.

Steve Howley (FBU) asked whether the Authority was actively informing relevant individuals, who the Service had re-employed, that they might have a tax liability arising from the outcome of the Pension Ombudsman's decision in the case of Milne v GAD. Jan Sams (Head of Human Resources) undertook to include such information in a letter to relevant individuals.

Steve Howley (FBU) asked whether the Authority would be circulating information about the implications of the ending of contracting-out of State Pension. Jan Sams (Head of Human Resources) advised that such information had already been circulated and that she would arrange for a reminder to be sent out.

Resolved –

- (a) That the content of the report be noted.

- (b) That the numbers of active members, as at 1 April 2016, in each of the various firefighters' pension schemes, including the numbers protected and tapered in the 1992 and 2006 schemes, be submitted to the Board's next meeting.
- (c) That Steve Howley (FBU) and Jan Sams (Head of Human Resources) share information to clarify when the Authority will be in a position to write to relevant retired firefighters to implement the contribution holiday under the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992.
- (d) That the Head of Human Resources circulate to Board Members, for information purposes, the form which new starters are now required to complete to provide information relating to a public sector pension in payment, thereby enabling the calculation and application of any pension abatement which might be necessary.
- (e) That the Head of Human Resources write to relevant individuals, who the Authority has re-employed, to advise them that they may have a tax liability arising from the outcome of the Pension Ombudsman's decision in the case of Milne v GAD.
- (f) That the Head of Human Resources arrange for a reminder to be circulated to staff about the implications of the ending of contracting-out of State Pension.

14. Reporting Breaches of the Law to the Pensions Regulator

Considered -

The report of Barry Khan (Monitoring Officer) which advised of the Pension Board's responsibility to report breaches of the law to the Pensions Regulator and set out a proposed procedure for doing so.

During discussion, Members expressed support for the proposed procedure, subject to correcting the title of the post of Director of Finance and Technical Services.

Resolved -

That the Procedure for reporting breaches of the law to the Pensions Regulator, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be approved, subject to correcting the title of the post of Director of Finance and Technical Services.

15. Future Dates

Resolved –

- (a) That the next meeting of the Board be held in June 2016, the date/time/venue to be notified by Ruth Gladstone (assisting the Secretary to the Authority) following email consultation concerning Members' and Advisors' availability.
- (b) That a half-day's training be held during May, July or September 2016, the date/time/venue to be notified.

There being no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 11.05am.