**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**MINUTES OF THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD MEETING**

**HELD ON MONDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2019, 10:30HRS AT**

**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS**

**10. PRESENT**

S Bradwick (Chair) Rhondda Cynon Taff

L Brown Monmouthshire

R Prendergast Fire Leaders Association

D King Fire & Rescue Services Association

S Saunders FBU, Brigade Chair

**APOLOGIES:**

V Smith Monmouthshire

**ABSENT:**

L Jones FBU

J Harries Rhondda Cynon Taff

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** ACO A Reed – Director of People Services; Mrs S Watkins – Head of Corporate Support & Deputy Monitoring Officer; Mr Ian Traylor – Service Director, RCT Pensions

**11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Each Member declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in each agenda item which affected their Authority.

**12. CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed Mr Steve Saunders who was deputising for Mr Alex Psaila and Mr Ian Traylor who was representing RCT Pensions Team.

**13. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the Local Pension Board meeting held on 24 June 2019 were received and accepted as a true record of proceedings.

**14. LOCAL PENSION BOARD – MEMBER HANDBOOK**

The Director of People Services presented the index for the Handbook which has been developed for the purpose of ensuring all Local Pension Board Members have the requisite knowledge, skills and understanding to enable them to fulfil their role on the Board. Member feedback was sought on the content of the Handbook.

**RESOLVED THAT**

14.1 A section be included on transitional arrangements in relation to issues with varying schemes and the principles of those schemes.

14.2 The section relating to Retained Firefighters be replaced with On-Call Firefighters.

14.3 Each chapter be presented to Members, once developed.

14.4 On completion of the handbook, copies be sent to all staff affected.

**15. LOCAL PENSION BOARD – TRAINING STRATEGY & FRAMEWORK**

The Director of People Services presented the Training Strategy & Framework which is required to meet the statutory requirements of ensuring all Board Members have the requisite knowledge, skills and understanding to enable them to fulfil their role on the Board.

**RESOLVED THAT**

15.1 Members approved the Local Pension Board Training Strategy as outlined in Appendix 1.

15.2 Members approved the skeleton outline of the Local Pension Board Training Framework as outlined in Appendix 2, which will be developed by Officers, for approval, at a future Board meeting.

**16. LOCAL PENSION BOARD – SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

The Director of People Services explained to Members the purpose of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) and its content. The Pensions Team at RCT have agreed to assist with the skills, knowledge, technicalities and expectations required of Board Members. Knowledge and skills sessions will be provided at the conclusion of future meetings of the Board.

Mr Traylor provided copies of the Administration Activity Report for Members to review and consider.

Mr Traylor advised Members that sections of the SLA have been kept broad in relation to Divorce and Death situations due to legislative standards placed on RCT. He further advised that members of the RCT Pensions Team liaise closely with affected family members and each aspect of their contact is dealt with in a highly sensitive manner.

In instances of death, the importance of nominated persons being made aware exactly what benefit they will receive in a timely manner was highlighted. Mr Traylor will consider adding this to the Administration Activity Report. It was confirmed that payments are usually received within 5 working days from the date all relevant paperwork is received by the Pensions Team. The team cannot proceed with the process until a copy of the death certificate is received.

Previous delays were discussed and Mr Traylor will consider how improvements can be made. He also stressed that some schemes are complex and varied and assured Board Members that the SLA will help to minimise any delays in future.

A discussion arose in relation to complexity of tax in relation to instances of unpaid leave and the impact on pensionable pay. Mr Traylor agreed to provide a training session on annual allowances and this scenario be used as an example case study. Representatives from RCT & SWFRS to attend this training session.

The Chair wished to thank Members of RCT Pensions Team and SWFRS staff for the time taken in completing the SLA.

**RESOLVED THAT**

Members approved the draft SLA outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

**REPORT ON THE FIREFIGHTERS’ PENSION SCHEME 2015 TAPER PROTECTIONS – LEGAL CHALLENGE**

The Director of People Services provided Members with an update on the legal challenge in relation to the Firefighters’ Pension Scheme 2015 Taper Protections. The court of appeal ruled that the pension policies applied to firefighters were age discriminatory. The Government then sought permission to appeal, which was later denied by the court.

A Pensions Remedy Hearing will take place on 18 December.

**RESOLVED THAT**

Members noted the update provided.

**17. WG PRESENTATION – MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE OF THE FIREFIGHTERS’ PENSION SCHEME**

The Director of People Services drew Members’ attention to the presentation circulated previously with information containing the Firefighters’ Pension Scheme presentation held in June and the Weightmans case law workshop held in July. The case laws will be contained within future Member training sessions.

**RESOLVED THAT**

Members noted the content of the presentation.

**18. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2019/2020**

The Director of People Services presented the Forward Work Programme for 2019/2020.

**RESOLVED THAT**

Members accepted the Forward Work Programme for 2019/2020.

**19. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DEEMS URGENT (PART 1 OF 2)**

There were no items of business deemed urgent by the Chair.