

**LINCOLNSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE FIRE
PENSION SCHEME BOARD
6 MARCH 2024**

PRESENT:

Employer Representatives: Councillor L A Cawrey and Mark Baxter

Employee Representatives: Paul Brown

Officers in attendance:- Sue Maycock (Scheme Manager Delegate), Elizabeth Hipworth (HR Advisor to the Board) and Thomas Crofts (Democratic Services Officer)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND INTRODUCTIONS

An apology for absence was received from William Dziadkiewicz.

Paul Brown replaced William Dziadkiewicz as an Employee Representative for this meeting only.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this point in proceedings.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2023

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed and signed by the Chair.

4 PERFORMANCE DATA (WEST YORKSHIRE PENSION FUND)

Consideration was given to the latest monthly report from West Yorkshire Pension Fund.

RESOLVED

That the report and agreed actions be noted.

5 CURRENT ISSUES

An update on current issues was given by Elizabeth Hipworth, HR Advisor to the Board. The status concerning current cases was as follows:

- Number of breaches – 1.
- When the legislation came into effect on the 1 October 2023 for the Matthews 2nd options exercise, the employer needed to contact all those in scope by the 31 December 2023 to comply with disclosure requirements. There were 865 individuals in scope. The employer wrote to all those in advance of the deadline, where there was an address (308 individuals) and used multiple sources to verify addresses but had to use a tracing company to trace missing addresses (554 individuals). Addresses were found for 432 individuals and letters were issued to these.
- 30 deaths had been confirmed as the tracing included mortality screening.
- Extended screening was ongoing for the remaining 95 records.
- A breach assessment had been carried out and it was recommended that this was not reported to the Pensions Regulator as there had been no detriment to individuals as reasonable endeavours had been made to trace and write to individuals.

- Sargeant / McCloud Age Discrimination Remedy – 590 pension records in scope (some individuals had more than one pension record) and of these, 221 records were also in scope of the Matthews 2nd Options Exercise.
- Since the introduction of the legislation on the 1 October 2023, 10 retirement notifications had been received. 6 of these had chosen legacy scheme benefits, 1 individual was still to reply and 3 were still in process.

- Matthews 2nd Options Exercise – There were 865 individuals in scope and 740 letters had been sent and a tracing company had been used to track down the missing addresses. Of the returned expressions of interest, 4 had indicated that they did not wish to pursue purchasing additional pension.
- There were 30 deceased members and separate arrangements applied to beneficiaries.

The Board discussed the report, and the following comments were raised:

- The Board thanked officers for their hard work in managing increased workloads.
- The employer had focused on making contact with scheme members at the greatest risk of financial detriment.
- Deliberate effort had been demonstrated by the employer to trace and make contact with scheme members where contact had been lost.
- Multiple channels had been explored to trace scheme members including social media campaigns. The employer had shown that it had been proactive and had followed best practice.
- It was agreed that all options had been explored.
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RESOLVED

1. That the update be noted.
2. That the Board was satisfied with the employer's actions to trace missing scheme members.

6 FIRE PENSION BOARD PLAN

An update on the Fire Pensions Board Plan was given by Mark Baxter, Employer Representative (Chair). The following matters were highlighted:

- Regarding the Plan, confirmation was needed that the TPR Public Service Governance & Administration Survey had been received and was being completed.
- It was also confirmed that work was underway to complete the year end return to Home Office - Fire Pension Top-up Grant and that a meeting had been arranged for the coming weeks to agree process.
- There were no training updates.
- The Risk Register had been amended at A4, Lack of skilled resources - LCC and WYPF, to state that there was a lack of skilled resources due to loss of staff and that the risk rating be changed from a green (2) to an amber (4).
- The Sargeant and Matthews projects had significantly increased workloads and the loss of key staff had placed strain on the service.
- Additional funding and resourcing were being secured for the service to manage the disruption.
- Officers were confident that more resources will be made available and that this had been agreed by the Assistant Director.

ACTIONS

- To confirm that the TPR Public Service Governance & Administration Survey had been received and completed.
- To record that work had commenced concerning the year end return to Home Office - Fire Pension Top-up Grant.

RESOLVED

1. That the Fire Pensions Board Plan be noted.
2. That the Board agree the changes to the Risk Register.

7 FIRE PENSIONS SCHEME BULLETINS

An update on recent scheme bulletins was given by Elizabeth Hipworth, HR Advisor to the Board. The following matters were highlighted:

November 2023

- Matthews 2nd Options Exercise
 - Deceased members – there were specific provisions in the Firefighters' Pension Schemes (England) (Amendment) Order 2023 that relate to deceased members:

- Special Death Grant – for those who had died in the period 7/4/2000 to 5/4/2006
- Additional Death Grant – for those who
 - Joined the modified scheme as part of the 1st options exercise
 - Purchased their past service to 1 July 2000
 - Been entitled to purchase pre-July 2000 service as part of the 2nd options exercise but died before having the opportunity to make a positive election
- Sargeant Age Discrimination Remedy
- Aggregation of concurrent service was not supported in the scheme regulations. A section covering this had been included within the members short guide to the FPS 2015 on the FPS regulations and guidance website.

December 2023

- Matthews – Deceased Members – template letters had been published on the special members of the FPS 2006 section of the FPA regulations and guidance website for FRA's to use.

January 2024

- Sargeant Age Discrimination Remedy
 - Added Pension Compensation – Added Pension arrangements did not exist in the legacy schemes so when members were 'rolled back' to their relevant legacy scheme any Added Pension Contributions that had been paid between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 must be returned to the member. There were currently two cases and both individuals had been written to.
 - Contingent Decisions Guidance updated to confirm there were no circumstances where a member would need to make a contingent decision for transfers. The guidance related to opt out and additional service.

February 2024

- The Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 came into force on 27 March 2024 and allowed for provision of unpaid carer's leave to be included in calculating pensionable service.
- Sargeant Age Discrimination Remedy – Remediable Service Statement Member video – was available on the FPS member website. This had been communicated in the Fire Weekly Bulletin.

It was clarified that weekly bulletins were made available to scheme members and were posted on the intranet.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

LINCOLNSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE FIRE PENSION SCHEME BOARD
6 MARCH 2024

An update was given by Elizabeth Hipworth, HR Advisor to the Board. It was reported that at the meeting held on the 17 January 2024 issues discussed had all been resolved, such as the Sargeant Contingent Decisions Guidance which had now been issued and communicated through the Fire Weekly Bulletin along with the member videos. It was confirmed that the administrative burden of the Age Discrimination Remedy and Matthews did not sit with FRAs and funding was being allocated to assist with this.

It was confirmed that the funding application for the administrative burden of Age Discrimination Remedy and Matthews was underway.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

9 UPDATE FROM SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD

No update was received.

ACTION

That the Chair confirm with West Yorkshire Pension Fund that a deputy be available to attend future Board meetings if the designated officer is unavailable.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Board was scheduled for 21 June 2024, 10am.

The meeting closed at 10.35 am