

# SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

## LOCAL PENSION BOARD

6 OCTOBER 2022

PRESENT: A Bosmans (Chair)

Members: Councillor S Sansome (Rotherham MBC),  
S Smith (SY Fire Brigades' Union), J Weston, DCFO T Carlin  
(South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue) and S Kelsey (South  
Yorkshire Fire and Rescue)

Advisors: C Davies (South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue  
Service), A Kilner (South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service),  
L Stones (South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service) and  
C Hey (LGA)

M Mott (West Yorkshire Pension Fund) – In attendance  
virtually

Officers: M Bray and D Thorpe (Barnsley MBC)

Apologies for absence were received from P Bragger,  
M Nicholls and S Slater

### 1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

A Bosmans welcomed everyone to the October 2022 meeting of the Board. He welcomed D Thorpe to her first Board meeting.

### 2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

### 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

### 4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JULY 2022

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Local Pension Board held on 26 July 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

a) Matters Arising / Actions

At the LGA training session held on 6 October 2022, Members had noted that due to the complexity of the different pensions schemes, a total of 61% of the active members who responded to a survey by the SAB did not understand the pensions benefits that they were entitled to. It had been suggested that the Board should facilitate a communication meeting with members. The Service would look into the suggestion and liaise with the FBU to ascertain the level of clarity required by the members. C Hey had offered the services of the LGA regarding how the session could be facilitated. Councillor Sansome had suggested that the session could also be beneficial for those retired members. J Weston had suggested that the session could potentially be held jointly with other fire and rescue services, as it could be beneficial for their members.

This would form a new action on the Actions Table under Action No. 4 entitled 'Communications – Update'.

5 IMMEDIATE DETRIMENT: UPDATE

S Kelsey provided Members with an update on Immediate Detriment. Following the decision made by the Scheme Manager to commence processing the Category 1 and 2 cases, the Service had provided all of the Category 2 individuals with an application pack, and had invited them to apply to the Service to enable their claims to be processed. Discussions had been held with the FBU colleagues to ascertain whether there was any flexibility around the 90 day processing requirement.

There was an approximate turnaround time of 4 weeks on the estimates from WYPF. It was stated within the application pack that the Service required a 90 day processing time.

C Davies commented that responses had been received from approximately 23/24 out of the 31/32 Category 2 individuals. The shortfall in responses could be attributable to the individuals either having not yet completed their application forms, or others may have decided to hold off submitting their applications until the legislation was in place in October 2023.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

6 RISK REGISTER

Members were presented with the Risk Register for consideration and comment.

D Thorpe commented that there were no increased risks or risks that were recommended for closure at this time.

Members were requested to highlight any risks for a deep dive to be undertaken at the next Board meeting in January 2023.

J Weston suggested the following risks for deep dives to be undertaken at the next Board meeting in January 2023:-

Risk Number 004 'Failure to ensure Member data is complete and accurate and is of suitable quality to be relied upon'.

Risk Number 006 'Failure to ensure there are timely and accurate communication arrangements in place'.

D Thorpe commented that she would liaise with S Slater regarding the above suggested deep dives.

In relation to the Trend Report, J Weston expressed his concern that there had been no change to any of the risks over the last 18 month period, and that no new risks had been identified. He also considered that the dashboards were a significant risk.

A Bosmans suggested that those amber rated risks should identify whether they had an upward or downward trend.

C Hey considered that the Risk Register should also refer to other specific issues in relation to Remedy, the Matthews case and cyber security. The Regulator would be keen to observe cyber security as an individual risk.

A Bosmans suggested that D Thorpe should liaise with S Slater regarding the dashboard and to seek clarification on some of the issues around the current legislation.

S Kelsey added that many of the risks on the Risk Register were very generic; one risk covered legislation as a whole. It could be necessary to break down the risks.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the contents of the Risk Register.

## 7 UPDATE FROM WEST YORKSHIRE PENSIONS FUND (SEE ISSUES BELOW)

M Mott provided Members with an update from WYPF, which included the Monthly Client Reports for July, August and September 2022.

Members noted the following key points:-

- Arrangements would be made to provide the Board with the confidential cyber security document. A full review and change to the WYPF IT provision had recently been made. The first disaster recovery exercise had recently been implemented, which had reduced the process to recover all systems from 10 hours down to 4 hours.
- Dashboards were becoming increasingly important. M Mott assured the Board of the close working with the software providers to procure a cloud based software solution. Further information would be provided to the Board over the next 12 month period, to enable a full understanding of the provision.

- A full set of the KPIs would be put together and reported on a monthly basis. It was not envisaged that any areas would be downgraded. A whole suite of KPIs had been written; checks and analysis would be undertaken. It was the intention to release the KPIs during the first week of December 2022 together with the full Client Reports. The last 3 months of results for SYFR had totalled 100%. There were no plans to change the initial measures that had first been introduced by CIPFA. However, the new KPI measures would produce less than 100% results.
- All of the Annual Benefit Statements had been issued. The process would be reviewed next year to increase the provision and to speed up the process.
- Two additional posts had been created within the Fire Team. Recruitment had been made to one of the posts.

In response to a question raised by J Weston regarding those firefighters that had been in other pension schemes prior to becoming a firefighter, M Mott commented that the all of the pensions schemes data for each member would be stored within the dashboard. It was envisaged that approximately 52,000 pensions schemes would sign up to the dashboard.

J Weston congratulated WYPF following the Administration Survey that had been undertaken in September 2022.

A Bosmans expressed his thanks to WYPF for all of the support provided.

M Mott requested Members to contact either H Scargill or himself to provide assurance on any specific issues when required.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

## 8 ADMINISTRATION STRATEGY - DRAFT

Members recalled the consultation process held in June/July 2021 regarding the draft template Administration Strategy that had been set out by the Scheme Advisory Board and LGA. All schemes had been invited to comment during the consultation process.

S Kelsey commented that the matter had recently been discussed again within the Service. Whilst taking into account the Service's capacity regarding the ongoing work around McCloud and Sargeant and Matthews, S Kelsey sought the Board's agreement to defer developing the Administration Strategy for 6 months.

Members recognised that it would be a challenge to populate a specific Administration Strategy for the Board at this moment in time. However, the Board agreed in principle to adopt the Administration Strategy and to look for it to be developed in April 2023.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

9 BREACHES/FRAUD - UPDATE

Members noted that no breaches had been received.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

10 INTERNAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE (IDRP) - UPDATE

L Stones confirmed that there had not been any new IDRP's received since the last Board meeting. There was one IDRP that was being dealt with by S Slater, however due to the nature of the query it was no longer relevant to the IDRP process. L Stones would request an update from S Slater on the position. An update would be provided to the next Board meeting.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

11 PENSIONS ISSUES/WORKLOADS

C Davies would meet with S Slater in the upcoming few weeks to review the impact of the Category 1 and 2 Immediate Detriment and the Matthews cases, and to discuss the staffing issues. The matter was under constant review.

In response to a query raised by A Bosmans regarding whether the requisite skills were freely available, C Davies commented that the Service was restricted within the current pay scales and grades within the fire sector in comparison to the private sector.

S Kelsey added that at present the requisite skills were scarce within the market. The Service utilised agencies when required.

A Bosmans expressed his thanks for the update and the assurance provided to the Board.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

12 COMMUNICATIONS - UPDATE

Members noted that the Annual Benefit Statements had been issued and the Pensions Savings Statements would be issued individually to those that were effected.

The Service liaised with WYPF regarding access to the Member Portal on their website, to which the Annual Benefit Statements could be accessed. The majority of active members that received the Annual Benefit Statements utilised the online Member Portal.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

13 NATIONAL SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD – UPDATE

Members noted that the last National Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) meeting had been held on 8 September 2022. C Hey referred to a number of discussions that had ensued at the meeting which included the confidential papers regarding temporary firefighters and the retrospection of pensionable pay. The LGA hoped to provide some guidance/information in the future to provide direction on the matter.

It was noted that the SAB could only provide best practice or recommendations, and not actual advice.

GAD had completed the initial work around the 2020 valuation, and work was underway to set the assumptions. A response was awaited from the Treasury on the consultation around the discount rate that was applied for valuations. Due to the uncertainty around Remedy, the changes may not take effect until 2024.

A Bosmans, J Weston and Councillor Sansome would be attending the LGA Firefighters' Pensions Annual Conference on 25 – 26 October 2022 in London. A Bosmans commented that the registration would remain open up to two weeks prior to the event, if any other Members wished to attend.

A Bosmans thanked C Hey for her update.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

14 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT: UPDATE / EVENTS

Members noted the links to the online learning resources that were contained within the agenda pack.

15 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME - QUARTERLY

Members were requested to inform D Thorpe/M Bray of any additional items for inclusion onto the Annual Work Programme.

D Thorpe would update the Annual Work Programme to be presented to the Board meeting in January 2023.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the Annual Work Programme.

16 SELF-ASSESSMENT UPDATE

D Thorpe presented the Self-Assessment update to Members. The document had last been updated prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which had been paused whilst the meetings had been held in a virtual format.

A Bosmans considered that it would be useful for the Board to revisit the Self-Assessment at the next Board meeting in January 2023.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

J Weston commented that he had been a Member of the Board since its inception in 2015. He considered it good practice for the Independent Members not to remain on the Board indefinitely, and he requested that a potential replacement be sought for him in some 18 months' time.

A Bosmans commented that the objectives and rulings of the Board for the Independent Members were slightly different in comparison to other the Scheme Manager boards/committees. The membership could be renewed indefinitely.

18 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted the future meeting schedule (all meetings to commence at 1.00pm and to be held at Barnsley Town Hall):-

- Thursday 19 January 2023 - To be held in a hybrid format.
- Thursday 13 April 2023 - To be held in a hybrid format.
- Thursday 6 July 2023 - To be held in a hybrid format.
- Thursday 5 October 2023 - To be held in a hybrid format.

19 AGREED ACTIONS

	Action	Timescale	Officer(s)	Status/Update
1	<b>Risk Register</b>			
	To weave cyber security into one of the existing risks which related to information and governance.	Next Board meeting on 19.01.23	S Slater	<b><u>Update 06.10.22</u></b>  An update would be provided to the next Board meeting.
	To liaise with S Slater regarding the deep dives into risk numbers 004 and 006.	Next Board meeting on 19.01.23	D Thorpe/ S Slater	
	To liaise with S Slater regarding the dashboard, and to seek clarification on some of the issues around the current legislation.	Next Board meeting on 19.01.23	D Thorpe/ S Slater	

2	<p><b>Communications - Update</b></p> <p>To ensure that there was continuous adequate communication to the Members regarding the pensions benefit illustrations for the transition Members and the move into the 2015 Scheme.</p> <p>A document to be created to contain the actions from the LGA Firefighters' Pensions Bulletins, to ascertain whether the actions were underway or complete.</p> <p>To consider holding a communication meeting for members to explain the complexity of the different pensions. Liaison to be made with the FBU to ascertain the level of clarity required by the members.</p>	<p>Update to the next Board meeting on 19.01.23</p> <p>Next Board meeting on 19.01.23</p> <p>In due course</p>	<p>S Slater/ C Davies</p> <p>D Thorpe</p> <p>S Slater/ C Davies/ S Kelsey/ L Stones</p>	<p><b><u>Update 06.10.22</u></b></p> <p>The document to become a standard agenda item from the next Board meeting.</p>
3	<p><b>Update from West Yorkshire Pensions Fund</b></p> <p>To provide the Board with the confidential cyber security document.</p>	<p>ASAP</p>	<p>C Davies/ D Thorpe</p>	

4	<p><b>Administration Strategy</b></p> <p>For an Administration Strategy to be developed in April 2023.</p>	April 2023	S Slater/ C Davies/ S Kelsey/ L Stones	
5	<p><b>IDRP</b></p> <p>To request an update from S Slater on an IDRP. An update to be provided to the next Board meeting.</p>	Next Board meeting on 19.01.23	L Stones/ S Slater	
6	<p><b>Annual Work Programme</b></p> <p>To update the Annual Work Programme. To be presented to the next Board meeting.</p>	Next Board meeting on 19.01.23	D Thorpe	
7	<p><b>Self-Assessment</b></p> <p>To revisit the Self-Assessment at the next Board meeting.</p>	Next Board meeting on 19.01.23	D Thorpe	
8	<p><b>Recruitment Process</b></p> <p>To look into the recruitment process for Independent Members on the Board.</p>	In due course	D Thorpe	

CHAIR