

## **SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**

Meeting	<b>FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>
Meeting Date	<b>20 NOVEMBER 2023</b>
Report of	<b>CLERK TO THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>
Report Sponsor(s)	<b>SERVICE DIRECTOR – LAW &amp; GOVERNANCE</b>
Subject	<b>LOCAL PENSION BOARD – ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23</b>

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Members will be aware that the Public Services Pensions Act 2013 for public sector pension schemes required all Authorities – including Fire and Rescue Authorities – to establish Pension Boards. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority (SYFRA), as Scheme Manager, established its Pension Board to oversee the Firefighters' Pension Schemes on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 following several reports to the Authority to appoint the Members and agree the Board's Constitution.

The Local Pension Board Constitution requires the Board to produce an Annual Report on its activities highlighting any areas to the FRA as Scheme Manager.

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

Members are recommended to:-

- a) Note the eighth Annual Report of the Local Pension Board for 2022/23.

---

### **CONTENTS**

Main Report

## **BACKGROUND**

1. Members will be aware that the Public Services Pensions Act 2013 for public sector pension schemes required all Authorities – including Fire and Rescue Authorities – to establish Pension Boards.
2. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority (SYFRA), as Scheme Manager, established its Pension Board to oversee the Firefighters' Pension Schemes on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 following several reports to the Authority to appoint the Members and agree the Board's Constitution.
3. It is worth noting that, whilst the Authority is Scheme Manager, powers are delegated to the Chief Fire Officer ([B24 of the Scheme of Delegation](#)) to exercise the Authority's powers and duties under the LGPS and FPS pensions legislation.
4. The Local Pension Board Constitution requires the Board to produce an Annual Report on its activities highlighting areas of concern and identifying good practice. The report also contains information on the number of retirements (natural and ill health), new starters, membership of the Pension Schemes and opt-outs.

## **LOCAL PENSION BOARD**

5. The Local Pension Board has a Constitution and Terms of Reference. These documents are reviewed regularly, and the Constitution is reviewed annually.
6. The primary role of the Local Pension Board, as defined by the Public Service Pensions Act 2013, is to:
  - Secure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Firefighters' Pension and Compensation Schemes (FPS).
  - Provide the Scheme Manager (SYFRA) with such information as it requires to ensure that any member of the Local Pension Board, or person to be appointed to the Local Pension Board, does not have a conflict of interest.

## **NATIONAL SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD (SAB)**

7. The National Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) is Chaired by Joanne Livingstone who took up appointment on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020. The Board is very ably supported by the LGA's Firefighter Pensions Team Secretariat.
8. Chief Fire Officers and HR Directors were informed by the LGA on the 21 November 2022 that the total levy for 2022-23 year will be £6.27 per firefighter, which is calculated at £4.39 for the SAB and £1.88 for employers.
9. The SAB continues to be both reactive and proactive to carry out the following functions:
  - Provide advice in response to a request from the Secretary of State on the desirability of making changes to the scheme and any connected scheme.
  - Provide advice to scheme managers and local pension boards in relation to the effective and efficient administration and management of this scheme and any connected scheme.

- Seek to encourage best practice, increase transparency, coordinate technical and standards issues, and build positive relationships with stakeholders and industry bodies – such as the Home Office, the Pensions Regulator (TPR) and the Government Actuary’s Department (GAD).

10. In order to deliver the above, SAB have set up three sub-Groups:

- Cost-effectiveness.
- Local Pension Board Effectiveness.
- Scheme Management and Administration.

John Weston, an Independent Member of our own Local Pension Board, sits on the Cost Effectiveness Sub-Group. Additionally, the representative from West Yorkshire Pensions Fund, Helen Scargill holds several roles at a national level – Practitioner Advisor to the SAB, member of the Cost Effectiveness Sub-Group, Chair of the Fire Technical Group and a member of the Fire Communications Group.

These roles provide invaluable links with the work of the SAB and ensures the Board has access to timely information.

11. The SAB has a dedicated website - <http://www.fpsboard.org/index.php> - which provides a wealth of information and helpful resources to support Local Pension Boards.
12. The Annual Firefighters’ Pensions Conference was held at the LGA, 18 Smith Square, Westminster, London, SW1P 3HZ on 26 October 2022.

## **SURVEYS / SELF-ASSESSMENT**

13. The Board has contributed to three surveys in this municipal year:

- FPS Self-assessment survey.
- The Pensions Regulator (TPR) Governance and Administration Survey.
- Pensions Ombudsman Survey.

Furthermore, the Board also provided its views to inform the Fire and Rescue Service’s response to the McCloud / Sergeant Pensions Remedy: Phase Two Consultation.

14. Results / feedback from the Surveys were reported to the Board, and Members of the FRA, as Scheme Manager, can be assured that any issues pertinent to South Yorkshire’s Local Pension Board are picked up and discussed further with a view to improving the way the Board operates.
15. The Board keeps under review a self-assessment which was originally issued by The Pensions Regulator as a helpful checklist for Local Pension Boards to assist them in focussing on any gaps or weaknesses. The self-assessment is reviewed by the Board annually and was last considered in October 2023.

## **LOCAL PENSION BOARD – MEMBERSHIP & MEETINGS**

16. The Local Pension Board has met five times since the last Annual report in July 2022 – 6 October 2022, 19 January 2023, 13 April 2023, 6 July 2023 and 5 October 2023. The Board’s next scheduled meeting is for 25 January 2024.

17. Membership of the Board for 2022/23 is as follows:

Employer Representative / Chair – Andrew Bosmans  
Independent Member – John Weston  
Employer Representative – DCFO Tony Carlin, SYFR  
Employer Representative – Sue Kelsey, Director of People and Culture, SYFR  
Employee Representative – Matt Nicholls, Fire Brigades' Union  
Employee Representative – Stuart Smith, Fire Brigades' Union  
Employee Representative – Paul Bragger, Fire Officers' Association (to 9 June 2023)  
Adviser Member – Sara Slater, Financial Services Manager, SYFR  
Adviser Member – Claire Davies, Payroll and Pensions Manager, SYFR  
Adviser Member – Andy Kilner, Senior Payroll and Pensions Officer, SYFR  
Adviser Member – Liz Stones, People Relations Manager, SYFR  
Adviser Member – Helen Scargill, West Yorkshire Pension Fund  
Adviser Member – Matt Mott, West Yorkshire Pension Fund  
Adviser Member - Sukhjot Kaur, West Yorkshire Pension Fund  
FRA / Scheme Manager representative – Councillor Stuart Sansome (to 14 September 2023)

18. The LGA continues to be extremely complimentary about the work of the Board – the work programme, agenda setting and issues discussed.
19. The Board has a work programme which is discussed with the Chair and the Board's Adviser Members' – the People Relations Manager and the Payroll and Pensions Manager – prior to each meeting. Invaluable support is also provided by West Yorkshire Pensions Fund (WYPF). Standing items include Risk, Communications, Pensions Issues and Workloads, Breaches, Monthly Client Updates (via WYPF), any New Regulations, National Updates and the work programme as well as a range of single items ('hot topics') that are put forward by the members of the Board.

## **LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT**

20. Since the last Annual Report in July 2022 there have been two learning and development events, as detailed below:
- On 6 October 2022, the LGA delivered a session for the scheme Manager (FRA) and Board Members.
  - The Chair of the LPB attended the Annual Firefighters' Pensions Conference held on 26 October 2022 in London.
21. The Board also has access to numerous self-help resources via The Pensions Regulator online toolkit and the SAB website.

## WORKFORCE INFORMATION

### 22. Membership (31<sup>st</sup> March 2023)

Scheme	Actives	Deferred	Pensioners	Beneficiaries (i.e widows/children)
1992	0	41	1105	200
2006	0	35	2	1
2006/RDS	0	1	14	0
2015	630	102	16	2
2015/RDS	4	1	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>1137</b>	<b>203</b>

### 23. No of Retirements (between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023)

Normal = 16

Ill Health = 2

### 24. New Scheme Members (between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023)

Wholetime = 43

RDS = 10

### 25. Opt outs (between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023)

Wholetime = 8

RDS = 0

## RECORDED BREACHES

26. This is a standing item on the Board's agenda. There were no reported breaches during 2022-23.
27. The Local Pension Board has its own Breaches Policy, developed in collaboration with the LGA and this is available on the [website](#).
28. It is also important that the FRA (as Scheme Manager) is aware that The Pensions Regulator (TPR) can issue fines under legislation to the Scheme Manager for breaches, and some of these fines can be quite substantial. This is why it is important for the Scheme Manager to be fully aware of its role.

## BUDGET / EXPENSES & COSTS

29. The Local Pension Board budget is £5,000. Expenditure for 2022-23 was £1,830.17, which was used to develop Members' skills and knowledge, e.g. attendance at conferences, commissioning training etc.

## CONTRIBUTION TO OUR ASPIRATIONS

- Be a great place to work-** we will create the right culture, values and behaviours to make this a brilliant place to work that is inclusive for all
- Put people first-** we will spend money carefully, use our resources wisely and collaborate with others to provide the best deal to the communities we serve
- Strive to be the best in everything we do-** we will work with others, make the most of technology and develop leaders to become the very best at what we can be

## CONTRIBUTION TO SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

- [HMICFRS Inspection Framework e.g. Diagnostic area and/ or diagnostic questions](#)
- [SYFR Inspection report Areas for Improvement \(AFIs\)](#)
- [Fit for the Future Improvement Objectives](#)
- [Professional Standards for Fire & Rescue Services in England](#)
- [SYFR Service Plan 2023-24 Priorities](#)
- [SYFR Community Risk Management Plan 2021-24](#)

The report relates to the governance arrangements of the Authority. Whilst not linked to the above specifically, the effective governance arrangements of the Authority supports service improvement in general.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

- Yes
- No

If you have ticked 'Yes' please provide brief details in the box below and include the third party/parties it would involve:

The legislation provides for Local Pension Boards to be merged where feasible and cost-effective to do so, and based on a sound business case to the Secretary of State.

South Yorkshire had discussions with West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority when the Board was established in April 2015, but it was felt the Boards should operate as separate entities for governance and geographical reasons.

Discussions were held in 2019 around regional collaboration for efficiencies, and this was being advocated at a national level. However, the Board discussed this at their meeting in February 2019 and agreed to remain as a stand-alone Board for the time-being.

More informally, learning and development can be shared with other Local Pension Boards when cost-effective and practical to do so.

### CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY IMPLICATIONS

30. The Board is established by statute with the objective of providing greater transparency and opportunity for challenge on a significant cost element of the Authority's budget.

### EQUALITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED

Yes

If you have ticked 'Yes' please complete the below comment boxes providing details as follows:

Summary of any Adverse Impacts Identified:	Key Mitigating Actions Proposed and Agreed:
There are no adverse impacts arising from the establishment of the Local Pension Board.	

No

N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why an EA is not required/is outstanding:

### HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

Yes

No

N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why a Health and Safety Risk Assessment is not required/is outstanding:

The establishment of a Local Pension Board is a governance issue and has no health and safety implications.

### SCHEME OF DELEGATION

31. Under the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority [Scheme of Delegation](#) a decision \*is required / \*has been approved at Service level.

Delegated Power

Yes  
 No

If yes, please complete the comments box indicating under which delegated power.

This report is not submitted under delegated powers. It relates to the procedural / governance arrangements of the Authority.

### IMPLICATIONS

32. Consider whether this report has any of the following implications and if so, address them below: Diversity, Financial, Asset Management, Environmental and Sustainability, Fleet, Communications, ICT, Health and Safety, Data Protection,

Collaboration, Legal and Industrial Relations implications have been considered in compiling this report.

<b>List of background documents</b>		
Previous Annual Report 2022		
Report Author:	Name:	Andrew Shirt, Council Governance Officer, Barnsley MBC Claire Davies, Payroll and Pensions Manager, SYFR
	e-mail:	AndrewShirt@barnsley.gov.uk CDavies@syfire.gov.uk
	Tel no:	01226 772207 0114 253 2472