# Pensions Board

## 29 March 2023 at 13:00 hrs

## Conducted at headquarters and digitally via Microsoft Teams

## **Attendance**:

**Chair:** Alan Tranter – Employee Representative

| **Employer Representatives:** | **Employee Representatives:** |
|---|---|
| Julie Felton | Adam Harper |
| Kal Shoker | Paul Bennett |
| Kamla Devi-Ahir | |

**Officers and advisors in attendance:**

Tom Embury – Deputy Clerk to the Authority

Paul Gwynn – Pensions and Payroll Manager

Kirsty Tuffin – Democratic Services Officer

Ferg Slade – Communications Manager

1.  **Apologies**

    Apologies were received from Cllr Miks, Scheme Manager Representative.

2.  **Declarations of Interests**
    No declarations of interest were submitted. Members were reminded to complete their declaration of interest forms and submit them to Tom Embury, Deputy Clerk or Kirsty Tuffin, Democratic Services Officer.

3.  **Minutes of the Previous Pension Board held on 08 December 2022**

    Resolved:
    1.  That the minutes of the Pension Board held on 08 December 2022 be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

4.  **Matters Arising**

    There were no matters arising.

5.  **Business as Usual Performance Report**

    Paul Gwynn, Pensions and Payroll Manager, presented the Business-as-Usual Performance Report, that outlined the basic demographics, activity levels/performance and the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure.

Following queries on the time lag for the process of requests from members of the scheme, Paul Gwynn, Pension and Payroll Manager, advised the Board that not all requests would fall therein the 2-month response deadline, as per regulations, so could take longer to process/respond to. System providers would not be implementing relevant changes until revised legislation had been provided. This had been anticipated to be published in October 2023. Paul Gwynn acknowledged the issues faced and advised the team may be required to only provide statutory responses. The Chair of the Board expressed the need to communicate this with Members and the need to have a dedicated page on the WMFS website on pensions. This would be raised with Ferg Slade under agenda item 8.

Following queries around the use of two systems, as per report, that there had been no correlation between the systems and the use of two systems had been deemed as the most cost-effective option. All Membership would be added to the Oracle Fusion system and would go live on 1 May 2023 for all active members and before the 1 August for the remaining members. A trial had been underway of the system, with some of those trialling the system being unable to access the system. The IT team had been working with the system provider, but it was acknowledged the issue had been a national problem. The timescales had been unclear at this stage as it was acknowledged that the trial would need to end, and any issues raised would need to be rectified before the system could be implemented. It was agreed that Kamla Devi-Ahir and Paul Gwynn would discuss the timescales with the responsible officer to agree timescales and approach moving forward. The need to communicate with members was emphasised.

Resolved:
1.  That it be agreed that the Business-as-Usual Performance Report be noted.
2.  That it be agreed that Kamla Devi-Ahir and Paul Gwynn would discuss the timescales for Oracle with the responsible officer to agree timescales and approach moving forward.

6.  **Pension Board – Action Plan**
    Tom Embury, Deputy Clerk, presented the Pension Board – Action Plan that outlined the actions arising from the Pension Regulator Supervisory Report 2020-2021 and actions arising from previous Pension Board meetings.

    Tom provided an overview/update on the action plan, as per agenda pack, as follows:

| Reference | Update |
|---|---|
| A1 | The Scheme Manager had received LGA training on 27 March 2023. The Pension Board training had been scheduled following the Pension Board meeting on 29 March 2023, as per agenda pack. |
| A2 | Training analysis would be circulated to members following the completion of the LGA training. |
| B2 | Had been delayed due to the delay in the election process. It was agreed that the election process would begin in the second year of the employee representative's tenures, with the three representatives to step down one at a time. |
| C | Complete. |
| D1 | A Pension Board Update report to be submitted to the Scheme Manager following each Pension Board meeting. To align the |

| | updates, Pension Board meeting would now be scheduled weeks before the Scheme Manager meetings to ensure updates could be provided. |
|---|---|
| E1 | Would be covered under agenda item 9. |
| F | Complete. |
| G | Complete. |
| H1/H2 | Complete |
| J-M | Aligned to the implementation of Altair. |
| N1 – N2 | Draft KPIs had been agreed by the Scheme Manager on 20 March 2023, with final sign off delegated to the Chair of the Committee. It had been agreed to keep the KPI on payslips until the systems had been implemented adequately. |
| 0 | Dates to be amended to May 2023. |
| P | Further update to be provided once Altair had been implemented, with a further report to the Scheme Manager. |
| Q2 | Feedback was still required form Pension Board Members on the draft strategy. |
| 1 | Complete. |
| 3 | Part of the communications strategy. |
| 4, 5 & 6 | Complete. |
| 8 | Paul Gwynn confirmed all data had been amended. Pension Board would be updated if any future issues arise. |
| 9 | Complete. |
| 15 | A report to the Scheme Manager was taken on 20 March 2023 and had been ongoing. |

Resolved:
1.      That it be agreed that the Pension Board – Action Plan be approved.
2.      That it be agreed that the election process would begin in the second year of the employee representative's tenures, with the three representatives to step down one at a time.


**7.  Risk Register**

Julie Felton, Employer Representative, presented the Risk Register that outlined the key risk areas, categorised and scored against their likelihood to occur and the impact that would have.

The Board were advised that, as previously agreed, the Risk Register had been reviewed and updated on 3 February and 6 March 2023, by Alan Tranter, Julie Felton and Paul Gwynn. Following queries on Risk 1 and if it had still been deemed or could be added to the Business Continuity Plan, Board Members voted as follows to remove the Risk from the Risk Register:

| Alan Tranter | For – Remove |
|---|---|
| Adam Harper | For – Remove |
| Julie Felton | For – Remove |
| Paul Bennett | For – Remove |
| Kal Shoker | Against – Keep |

Due to timing and the upcoming training with the Local Government Association (LGA) training, due to take place at 3pm, it was agreed that Julie Felton would circulate the Risk Register for any comments/actions to Board Members following the meeting.

Resolved:
1. That it be agreed that Risk 1 be removed from the Risk Register.
2. That it be agreed that Julie Felton would circulate the Risk Register for any comments/actions to Board Members following the meeting, due to timing.

## 8. Communications Plan

Ferg Slade, Communications Manager, provided an overview of the draft Communications plan for the Pension Board that outlined a structure approach on communications across all communication platforms.

The Board were advised that the plan would ensure that everyone would follow the same principles/standards and would make it easier for people accessing the communications to raise issues easier. Ferg was keen to provide the Board with support and consistency through an agreed approach.

Following discussions on the lack of information on the WMFS website on Pension Board and lack of information to contact the Pension Board Members, Ferg reassured Members that a page could be added to the WMFS website with information the Board felt relevant and a Q&A section to aide the pressures on the Pension team with the assistance of the Board. Due to capacity within the communications team, it was agreed that Ferg Slade provide the Board Members with a suggested timeline for implantation/development. It was agreed that a further update be brought to the next Pension Board meeting.

Resolved:
1. That it be agreed that the draft communication plan be noted.
2. That it be agreed that that Ferg Slade provide the Board Members with a suggested timeline for implantation/development of a Pension focused paged on WMFS website.
3. That it be agreed that a further update be brought to the next Pension Board meeting.

## 9. Draft Business Continuity Plan

Resolved:

1. That it be agreed that the draft business continuity plan be deferred to the next meeting, due to timing.

## 10. Systems/Process Update
Resolved:
1. That it be agreed that the Systems/Process update be deferred to the next meeting, due to timing.

## 11. Recruitment – Independent Chair Update (Verbal)

Tom Embury, Deputy Clerk to the Authority, provided a verbal update on the recruitment process for the Independent Chair of the Board vacancy held on the Board.

The Board were advised that following no applications being received for the advert of an Independent Chair of Pension Board, the Scheme Manager at its meeting on 20 March 2023, decided to remove the Independent Chair from the Board. They agreed to do a rotational approach between both the employee/employer representatives for a fixed period of time. Employee representatives raised concerns around this approach, and it was agreed that this be reflected within the Pension Board Update report to the Scheme Manager at its next meeting. It was agreed that the representatives would chair meetings for a 6-month period at one time, with Alan Tranter remaining as Chair for the first 6-month period.

Resolved:
1. That it be agreed that the verbal update on recruitment be noted.
2. That it be agreed that the Employee representatives concerns around the removal of the Independent Chair be reflected within the Pension Board Update report to the Scheme Manager at its next meeting.
3. That it be agreed that the representatives would chair meetings for a 6-month period at one time, with Alan Tranter remaining as Chair for the first 6-month period.

## 12. Pension Board Terms of Reference

Tom Embury provided an overview of the Pension Board Terms of Reference. The Board were advised that following the Scheme Managers decision to remove an Independent Chair, all reference in the Terms of Reference would be removed. Following discussion on the wording of representatives on the Board, it was agreed that the wording would be reworded to be clearer. It was agreed that the revised document would be circulated to Board Members for any further comments.

Resolved:
1. That it be agreed that the representatives on the Board section be reworded to be clearer.
2. That it be agreed that the revised document would be circulated to Board Members for any further comments.

## 13. Pension Board Work Programme 2022-2023

Tom Embury provided an overview of the Pension Board Work Programme for 2022-2023 that outlined the proposed agenda items for upcoming meetings. The Board were advised that the annual report of the Pension Board would be brought to the July meeting for consideration before its submission to the Audit and Risk Committee.

Resolved:
1. That the Pension Board Work Programme for 2022-2023 be approved.

14. **Update on Topical, Legal and Regulatory Issues (Verbal Report)**

There were no updates on Topical, Legal and Regulatory Issues.


15. **Home Office Consultation – Pension Scheme Regulations**

Resolved:
1. That it be agreed that Kirsty Tuffin would re-circulate details of the consultation to Board Members via email, for consideration.


16. **Fire and Police Pension Data Conference**

Resolved:
1. That it be agreed that Kirsty Tuffin would re-circulate details of the conference to Board Members via email for consideration.


17. **Date of the next meeting**

Resolved:
1. That it be agreed that Members would confirm availability for 4 July 2023, via email.


*The Board meeting adjourned for a comfort break at 3pm.*

*The Board reconvened at 3:15pm.*


18. **Training**

Members of the Board received training provided by a LGA representative. It was agreed that Kirsty Tuffin would share the slides used to Board Members following the training.

Resolved:
1. That it be agreed that the training provided by the LGA be noted.
2. That it be agreed that Kirsty Tuffin would share the slides used to Board Members following the training.


The Pension Board meeting ended at 16:44hrs.