

SUBJECT: PENSION BOARD FIREFIGHTERS' PENSIONS SCHEME ANNUAL
REPORT 2015/16

Report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive

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PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform Members of the current duties and actions taken since the formation of the Board in April 2015/16.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Public Services Pensions Act 2013 requires Scheme Managers of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme to set up a Pension Board to help it comply with its legal obligations relating to the administration of the Firefighters' Pension Schemes.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

2. On the 23rd April 2015 the Fire Authority approved the establishment of a Pension Board. This report provides an annual account of the duties and actions taken since the formation of the Board for the year 2015/16.

CURRENT POSITION

3. This is the first annual report of the Local Pension Board ("the Board") for the Greater Manchester Firefighter Pension Scheme (FPS) which was constituted as part of changes introduced by the Public Service Pensions Act 2013. It is the intent of the Board to use the annual report to inform the 'Scheme Manager' (i.e. Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority) of the work undertaken by the Board.

MEMBERSHIP

4. The Board consists of the following members:

Paul Argyle	Employer Representative & Chair
Councillor David Acton	Employer Representative
Paul Etches	Employee Representative
Gary Keary	Employee Representative

The Board is supported by Nina Purcell, Scheme Manager, Penny Wright, Pensions Administrator and Donna Parker, Democratic Services Manager.

MEETING DATES AND ATTENDANCE

5. The following Pension Board meetings have taken place:

14th July 2015
23rd September 2015
22nd February 2016
15th June 2016
27th July 2016
28th September 2016

Two Employee and Employer Representatives have attended all the meetings held except the 28th September 2016 meeting.

PURPOSE

6. The purpose of the Board was discussed at length at the initial Board meeting and at subsequent meetings, a draft terms of reference was agreed by the Board.

The role of the Board is to scrutinise the administration and functions of all the Firefighters' Pension Schemes, their associated data and report any matters of concern to the Fire & Rescue Authority. The Pension Board will ensure it effectively and efficiently complies with the code of practice on the governance and administration of public service pension schemes issued by the Pensions Regulator.

The Board is not responsible for the day to day management of the Firefighter Pension Scheme administration nor does it perform the role of final arbiter in any disputes.

GENERAL

7. The Board has had to absorb a considerable amount of information, both technical and constitutional over the past year. This relates both to the hugely complex nature of the FPS and the role and requirements of the Board itself. Ordinarily, the Local Pension Board would take instruction and guidance from the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) on how the Board should operate and the areas to consider. However, due the late implementation of the SAB, no instruction or guidance has been received and the Board has been mainly focused on training and educating itself on the relevant Pension Schemes and discussing the issues faced by the delegated Scheme Manager (Assistant HROD Director) and the Pensions Administrator.

8. It is envisaged that the role and requirements of the Board will become clearer as time progresses and the Board becomes more assured of its role and responsibilities.
9. The following arrangements have been discussed and agreed by the Board:
 - Terms of Reference Policy
 - Conflicts of Interest Policy
 - Training Needs Analysis for Board Members
 - Declarations of Interest Form
 - Training and Development Plans for 2015/16 and 2016/17

TRAINING

10. The Board has received training on the following:
 - The Firefighter Pensions Schemes benefits and differences
 - Death In Service awards
 - Ill Health/Injury awards
 - Auto Enrolment
 - Opting out
 - Transitional Protections
 - Pensionable Pay
 - CPD
 - Leaving before retirement
 - Taxation
 - 2015 scheme – partial retirement
 - Re-employment and Loss of PPA
 - Medical appeals
 - IDRP processes
 - Overview of Pension Board roles and responsibilities
11. The Board has received training from Clair Alcock – LGA and Penny Wright, GMFRS Pensions Administrator. The Pension's Regulator toolkit training is available for all Board Members to use.
12. Penny Wright, GMFRS Pensions Administrator had also provided the Corporate Leadership Team with training on the role and functions of the Pension Board.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Agenda/Minutes of Meetings

13. The Agenda and Minutes for each Board Meeting are published on the Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Authority website by the Democratic Services Manager.

RESOURCES/IMPLICATIONS

14. a) Financial
There are no immediate budget implications.
- b) Human Resources (Including Equality & Diversity Implications)
As detailed in the report
- c) Legal & Constitutional
The Fire Authority must have a Pension Board to fulfil the requirements contained in the Pension regulations.
- d) Health & Safety
None
- e) Sustainability
None
- f) ICT Support
None
- g) Communications Support
None

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. Members to note the work of the Local Pension Board for 2015/16.

PETER O'REILLY
COUNTY FIRE OFFICER
& CHIEF EXECUTIVE

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

DOCUMENT	DATE	FILE OR OTHER REFERENCE	PLACE OF INSPECTION
Corporate Governance Documents and Minutes and Agenda from Meetings	July 2015 onwards	Various	Fire Authority Website http://manchesterfire.gov.uk/ GMFRA Fire & Rescue Service HQ 146 Bolton Road Swinton Manchester M27 8US

P. O'Reilly
(Proper Officer)
23.09.16