

Notes of the Pension Board
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Tuesday 9 May 2017 at 1030 hours  
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present:	Neil Chamberlain Wendy Browning-Sampson Kal Shoker	Independent Chair Employer Representative Employer Representative
Apologies:	Stuart Bourne Andy Dennis	Employee Representative Employee Representative
Officer:	Paul Gwynn Pension Advisor	Payroll and Pension Manager

21/17      Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

22/17      Progress Report on Action Plan for Production of Annual Benefit Statement

Further to the Extraordinary meeting of the Pensions Board held on 25 October 2016, the Pension Adviser outlined the details of the Breach of Disclosure Regulations by the failure to issue an Annual Benefit Statement to all scheme members by 31 August 2016 for the benefit of the Board, and the action plan required to avoid a recurrent of the delay when Annual Benefit Statements are issued in 2017.

Action to prevent a recurrence in 2017

To avoid a recurrence of the delay when statements are issued in 2017 the following process will be used.

1. Membership data will be checked during the period January to March 2017. This is to ensure that all records are updated as needed with the correct scheme information.
2. Discussions will take place with the Admin team to ensure that they will have an appropriate level of staff availability to envelope and distribute the statements.

3. The documents to be produced will be reviewed during March 2017 to ensure that they are as uniform as possible and hold all the required data.
4. Payroll data will be loaded to ALTAIR at the earliest opportunity after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.
5. A test batch of statements for each of the 4 groups will be produced by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2017. Any errors will be notified to Aquila Heywood as soon as discovered and a fix will be requested.
6. An informal Pension Board meeting will be held during May to monitor progress of this action plan and to consider alternative solutions should any issue be encountered.
7. The test batch will be reprocessed following delivery of any fix.
8. If no errors remain unfixed statements will be printed during July 2017 and issued during August to ensure receipt prior to 31<sup>st</sup>.
9. If errors remain at 30<sup>th</sup> June these will be escalated to Aquila Heywood management team and statements will be produced for all members unaffected during July as planned.
10. Any statements which are still in error at 31<sup>st</sup> July will be amended and issued manually.

A briefing note confirming the progress against the action plan is attached to these notes.

The Adviser had looked at his Section and the management of the workload to ensure there was no repetition.

All work has been amended with software.

User group have input into the design of the statement

The statement will be different

The Advisers/User Group felt this was good for the LGPS but not for the Firefighters Pension Scheme.

Revised the statement – new schemes.

Old style statement -

Everyone will now get a modified statement this year.

All Fire and Rescue Services will use the statement (tested) by Aquila Heywood.

The statement will include an estimate of benefits to be paid at normal pension age, the date Members are due to retire either 55 or when they have served 30 years or age 60.

From the 31 March 2017 the estimates will be for age 55 and age 60.

The Adviser had been part of the testing Working Party but had not consulted internally.

It was suggested that this could be shared with the Unions at the Joint Consultative Committee in June.

The Statements will continue to be provided as a paper version. Self-service had not been implemented due to costs.

It was noted that the LGPS statement are self-service but this obligatory.

Administration will be enveloping and posting the statements. Pensions team were currently working on the P60s.

Actions 4 and 5 had not been completed but the Pensions Team would have this work loaded onto Altair and completed by the 31 May 2017. A test batch of statements would then be produced.

If there were any problems the Adviser would inform the Kal Shoker and Wendy Browning-Sampson.

It was suggested that the Adviser request support from the Administration Team re the distribution of bulk work and to make them aware of the statutory requirements of the distribution of the statements and that it should be treated as a priority.

It was confirmed that the statements would be prepared for July and posted in August.

The test batch would be provided for the JCC meeting scheduled for 6 June 2017.

The Statements set out benefits, payments, service and any strike action dates. They can run to three pages in total and are printed on single pages.

There had been quite a few requests the previous year for reprints. The Statements had been posted to work addresses and 95% had reached the recipients. It was felt that an electronic self service system would overcome this problem.

It was agreed that an example of an Annual Benefit Statement would be provided at the next Pensions Board meeting in July.

The Adviser would email members of the Board if there were any issues.

An action plan/summary of work undertaken would be provided and the Risk Register would be updated.

23/17

The Adviser stated that a valuation of the scheme was awaited. The Chairman of the English Firefighters' Scheme Advisory Board had made a statement about this and he had asked for recommendations on how to reduce the number of administrators nationally.

A meeting of senior Fire Officers had been held and attended by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Strategic Enabler (Finance and Resources). There didn't appear to be an appetite for regionalisation and Hereford and Worcester were tendering for a pension provider. It was noted that West Yorkshire provide LGPS and Fire Pension Fund services for several organisations.

Opportunities for collaboration were being considered for regional provision.

The meeting closed at 1200 hours.

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