

# West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

## Audit and Risk Committee

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee to be held on Monday, 01 June 2020 at 13:30 at Fire Service HQ, 99 Vauxhall Road, Nechells, Birmingham B7 4HW for the purpose of transacting the following business:

### Agenda – Public Session

#### Standing Item

Declarations of interests

To receive apologies for absence (if any)

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#### **Distribution:**

David Barrie - Member, Manjit Gill - Vice Chair, Catherine Miks - Chair, Peter Miller - Member, Sybil Spence - Member

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## **WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

### **AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE**

**23 MARCH 2020**

#### **1. REVIEW OF ILL HEALTH PENSIONS DECISION**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED that in their role as Scheme Manager for the Firefighters' Pension Schemes, the Committee agrees the approach the scheme should take to the review of Ill Health Pensions.

- 1.1 That the Scheme Manager agree to the proposed approach outlined in section 4.
- 1.2 That, the Scheme manager consider section 3.4 and confirm or otherwise that the 9 pensioners currently in receipt of an Ill Health Pension under the 1992 scheme be reviewed.

#### **2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted to the Committee to inform them of their responsibility as required by the Firefighters' Pension Scheme regulations, to set the frequency of the review of future Ill Health Pensions. Additionally, the Committee should consider what action and, if necessary, frequency in respect of pensions currently in payment.

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Under the rules of the 2006 and 2015 Firefighters' Pension Schemes, West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority are required to review the payment of Ill Health pensions providing that the pensioner is under state pension age and has been in receipt of the benefit for less than 10 years.

The rules of the 1992 scheme allow for but do not require Ill

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Health Pensions to be reviewed. An Ill Health pension can be reviewed irrespective of the length of time that it has been in payment providing that the member has not reached the earliest date at which they could have retired if they had remained fit.

- 3.2 The rules of all three schemes allow the Authority to decide how frequently any review should take place.
- 3.3 No review has been carried out within the last 5 years.
- 3.4 There are currently 3 Ill Health pensions in payment under the 2006 and 2015 schemes which the Authority must now re-assess. There are a further 9 Ill Health Pensions in payment under the 1992 scheme which the service may re-assess.

#### 4. **PROPOSED APPROACH**

- 4.1 As there is a requirement to review Ill Health Pensions paid under the 2006 or 2015 scheme these must be reviewed.
- 4.2 Whilst there is no requirement to review Ill Health Pensions paid under the 1992 to ensure equity these will also be reviewed.
- 4.3 For future reviews, it is proposed that the frequency of the review will be a matter for the Independent Qualified Medical Practitioner (IQMP) at the time they consider the Ill Health request. Should the application for Ill Health Retirement be supported by the IQMP, they will be asked to confirm a suitable review time.
- 4.3 A process to achieve the above will be agreed between Occupational Health, People Support Services, and the Pensions Team.

#### 5. **DECISIONS REQUIRED**

- 5.1 The Scheme Manager is asked to confirm that they agree with the approach proposed or to recommend an alternative to be used from the date of the decision forward.
- 5.2 The Scheme Manager is asked to confirm whether they wish the service to review the 9 Ill Health Pensions currently in

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payment under the rules of the 1992 Pension Scheme.

6. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out.

7. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The decision of the Scheme Manager in this case may be challenged by an employee in receipt of the allowance. The challenge would be made through the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure. If this process does not resolve the matter the issue can be taken to The Pension Regulator and finally to the Supreme Court.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The value of the Ill Health Pensions currently in payment, which may be eligible for review, is £78,281.95 per year.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Firemen's Pension Scheme Order 1992  
The Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) Order 2006  
The Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) Regulations 2014

The contact name for this report is Assistant Chief Officer Gary Taylor (Strategic Enabler - Process) telephone number 0121 380 6914.

PHIL LOACH  
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Ref. AU//2020/Feb/22702207



## Pension Board

16 December 2019 at West Midlands Police Headquarters

Attendance: Neil Chamberlain (Chair),  
Alan Tranter, Employee Representative  
Emmett Robertson, Employee Representative  
Wendy Browning Sampson, Employer  
Representative  
Kal Shoker, Employer Representative  
Julie Felton, Employer Representative  
Paul Gwynn, Pensions Adviser  
Karen Gowreesunker, Clerk to the Authority  
Observer: Councillor C Miks, Chair,  
Audit and Risk Committee  
Clair Alcock, Bluelight Senior Pension Adviser

### 42/19 Apologies

Apologies were received from Adam Harper.

### 43/19 Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2019

The minutes were approved as received as a correct record of the meeting.

It was noted that Item 31/19 on page 8 of the agenda pack was incorrect and should read”

“It was confirmed by Wendy Browning-Sampson that reviews are not undertaken every three years.”

The actions arising from the minutes were discussed.

23 The Auditors Report had been circulated.

24 The number of leavers and starters formed part of the supporting information report.

25 The Risk Register was an agenda item for the meeting.

26 Feedback on the Risk Register would also be discussed during the meeting.

27 Feedback from the Audit and Risk Committee would be covered by the report from Paul Gwynn.

28 Paul Gwynn would continue to check GAD news and circulate.

29 The Activity Log had been updated.

The Chair requested that the Action Log be completed before future meetings.

44/19 **Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 29 July 2019**

The minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 29 July 2019 were received.

45/19 **Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 2 September 2019**

The minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 2 September 2019 were received. The Committee had made two decisions at their meeting and details would be provided by Paul Gwynn as part of his Supporting Information report.

46/19 **Risk Register March 2019**

The Risk Register had been updated and Members had been requested to comment by the end of October 2019. Kal Shoker requested that the Risk Register should be colour coded to match the Corporate Risk Register as this helps to make items stand out. It was recommended that Wendy Browning Sampson contact Strategic Hub about the Corporate Risk Register.

In light of the recent court ruling on the Transitional Regulations and the how the awaited remedy would impact on the Risk Register.

It was recommended that two further risks be added to the Risk Register:

- Financial Risk of Remedy
- Inability of Administrators to deal with the impact of remedy

#### 47/19 **Pension Section Supporting Information**

The Board received an update from the Pensions Adviser including the Firefighters' Pension Schemes Membership as at 30 November 2019. There had been less retirements subsequent 2015 scheme. There had been an increase in the number of Opt Outs. The cause for the number of Opt outs was generally the cost, but many Opt back in at a later date. The Opt Outs included those who had opted out following auto-enrolment.

In answer to an enquiry from the Chair, Clair Hey confirmed that it was difficult was often the reasons given were hard to understand and each case had a different story and there were not enough patterns. There is usually a trigger for individuals and further reform may cause many more opts out.

It was confirmed that the Payroll and Pensions Team and People Support Services talk to recruits as do the Fire Brigades Union.

Paul Gwynn confirmed that he had emailed half a dozen of those who had opted out and the primary reason for opting out was cost.

#### **Opt Out Levels and Reasons**

During the 12 months to 31 August 2019, 72 members opted out of the schemes. Of these 68 were from the 2015 and 4 from the 2006 scheme. 44 of these were members who had been auto-enrolled on 1 June 2019 and had deductions taken in that month.

The remaining 28 members had an average length of service of 2 years at the date of opt out.

83 new recruits were enrolled in the scheme contractually during the year and 10 of those had opted out within 6 months of joining. The remainder continued to be members.

The most popular driver for opt outs appeared to be cost and lifestyle and average age was 36 and in Paul’s opinion many are getting married or starting a family. New recruits are informed of the benefits of the scheme, particularly the employers contribution the scheme. It is also explained that they can recover their contributions within 3 – 5 years of starting. The Board discussed the reasons why people leave the scheme.

Predicted Starters and Leavers

The predicted starters and leavers were set out in a table for the years 2019/20 to 2024/25.

	20	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Starters		83	77	62	67	62	57
Retirements		71	65	50	55	50	45

There had been 5 IDRP cases, in one case the Authority had purchased additional pension for a member to recognise that there had been poor communication, in a second case the member was allowed to complete a new option form. A further response was awaited in respect of Stage 1 from a third member. Members of the Authority had been asked to hear a Stage 2 hearing and legal advice was awaited in this matter.

Ill Health and Injury Pensioners

The Board were informed that there are 724 Pensions who retired due to incapacity and are in receipt of Ill Health Pension under the rules of the Schemes. Of these 198 also have an injury pension. 6 pensioners receive injury pension but not an ill health pension. 5 of these cases relate to deferred pensioners whose pensions came into payment

early due to ill health. One case is an individual who retired following an on duty injury under the 1966 scheme. A full list of those individuals has been provided to HR managers for review.

It was confirmed that the Service does not review under the 1992 regulations.

1 or 2 are in the 2015 regulations  
2 or 3 are in the 2016 regulations

It was confirmed that the rules allow the organisation to review those individuals, on a frequency to be decided by the Scheme Manager, as long as the individuals have been receiving a pension for ten years and are not of an age where they could retire on age grounds.

Paul Gwynn confirmed that the name of 13 individuals, who are receiving ill health pensions, had been passed to Wendy Browning Sampson for consideration. A report would then be prepared for the Audit and Risk Committee for the Scheme Manager to make a decision.

For the individual they would need to see an independent, qualified medical practitioner for a determination on whether they would be able to undertake the work of a firefighter or meaningful work.

This would need to be agreed and reported back to both the Pension Board and Audit and Risk Committee. The Board requested that further information be provided on the costs, the regulations, best practice and the plan for reviews to take place in the future.

Kal Shoker enquired about the 6 pensioners who received an injury pension but not an ill health pension. Paul Gwynn stated that they were retired from deferred status, ill health and potentially injury pension and then retired or left the scheme and subsequently health deteriorates.

Ordinary pensioners not an ill health pension, they may get injury pension on 1966 scheme.

Alan Tranter enquired about GAD. It was confirmed that this had not been updated on the system as it related to retained members and officers do not have the relevant software due to the cost and therefore not worthwhile. There were only 1 or 2 members and they could be picked up individually.

### Scheme Manager Decisions

The Scheme Manager had been requested to make two decisions at its meeting on the 2 September 2019.

The first decision was in the case of a member of the 2006 scheme who wished to discontinue the purchase of additional service by periodical payments. The Scheme Manager decided to allow this request.

The Scheme Manager was also asked to determine whether an allowance paid to a member of the Technical Rescue Unit for having responsibility for the unit's dog should be classed as Pensionable Pay. The decision was that the payment was pensionable.

### Other Issues

The Employee Representatives would be undertaking a review on behalf of the Board into the application of split pensions.

### Data Review and Scoring

Paul Gwynn reported a score of 98% in respect of the latest measurement of common data. The score was based on a local view and had not been calculated using the SAB guidance. Scheme specific data had not been measured. A data review is currently ongoing though no timescales for completion or improvement had been set.

It was noted that a data improvement process was not in place but was a requirement of the Regulator. All of the data for Membership sits within cabinets in the Section and the date is available through systems.

99.5% of the data is complete but cannot be proved and the Board were asked to consider this. It was noted that it would be a large piece of work and was subjective, but in reality this leaves the Scheme Manager vulnerable and the Board needed some assurance that there was a plan regarding the data.

Julie Felton stated that a piece of work was currently being undertaken in respect of Occupational Health documents and suggested that the external company may be able to undertake the work to create a data base and quotes could be obtained, dependent upon budgets.

Paul Gwynn stated this would assist with possible future office moves and agile working in the future.

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee was horrified to hear about the files and recommended that the work was undertaken as soon as possible.

Karen Gowreesunker confirmed that a report would need to be prepared for the Audit and Risk Committee setting out the recommendations to the Committee and would the financial implications. It was recommended that Paul Gwynn liaised with Mike Griffiths, Strategic Enabler, Finance and Resources in respect of the preparation of the report.

The Chair felt there were two issues involved:  
Manual documents  
Accuracy of the data being held

He requested that assurance be given to the Board on these issues and Paul Gwynn agreed to confirm the scheme specific information for the next Board information and then the data storage, a large piece of work, would be commenced.

The Board noted that only two organisations have their own internal pension departments. The Pension and Payroll team were not creating large paper files and had been stripping files out and scanning. There were 2,500 files only.

### Salary to be used for Benefit Purposes

Adam Harper had raised a number issues and the Payroll and Pensions Manager would be meeting Adam at Headquarters to review the current process.

The feedback from the Firefighter Pensions Conference was discussed as part of the agenda item on training.

### McCloud Judgement – Administration meeting 18 December 2019

The initial meeting to set the timeframes and scope for remedy in the McCloud case was due to take place on 18 December and it was expected that the initial announcement regarding the treatment of members transferred from the 1992 to the 2015 scheme would be made on the 16/17 December 2019.

The impact of the announcement could not be estimated but would probably result in additional work for the Payroll team in January and increased costs to the Service. The Board were asked to consider additional board meetings or to monitor the progress of any work resulting.

Paul was concerned about the remedy and how the ABS would be calculated. There was a major risk that the system would not be able to produce anything which was not ideal unless a solution could be reach. Some outsourced providers had been withdrawn and there was a risk that others would withdraw because of the remedy.

18 December 2019 was a key date and also the January date, however, Clair confirmed that the remedy would not be issued as soon as January. Information would be shared with Senior Management. The remedy would only apply to complainants. This had not happened in previous cases with Police or Judges and this had been escalated to the Home Office.

### 48/19 **Bulletin 24**

The FPS Bulletin 24 was noted.

49/19 **Bulletin 25**

The FPS Bulletin 25 was noted.

50/19 **Bulletin 26**

The FPS Bulletin 26 was noted. Paul Gwynn requested that Members read the bulletins and to contact him with any queries.

Adam Harper had emailed Paul Gwynn on 19 September and had subsequently held a meeting with Paul and the issues had been addressed in the Pension Section Supporting Information. The three items would be combined into a review to be undertaken by the Employee Representatives on behalf of the Board. The final item was for the Board to consider a definition of what constitutes reasonable endeavours.

Reasonable endeavours related to the efforts made to contact firefighters to provide them with an opportunity to buy some 2015 pension. Letters had been sent to retained firefighters who had been at Sedgley. There had not been a response in the timeframe and but one person had queried this. The person had moved, however, the member was an active wholetime member of the pension scheme. It was accepted that an email could have been sent and the member agreed to buy some 2015 pension.

The Board discussed the issue and it was suggested that a Routine Notice could be sent out reminding people to keep their contact details up to date and it was an individual's responsibility to keep up to date. A portal was suggested and even placing a message on pension slips. However, it was noted that pension slips are not posted due to costs. A reasonable number of active members had email addresses. The problems arose when people had left the service or where they had died and not informed the team of their next of kin. The team also had the advantage of old files and thought that the team went over and above in respect of reasonable endeavours to find someone.

Emmett Robinson felt that the quarterly updates provided covered everything and Kal Shoker stated that the benefit statements provided another method of checking.

It was suggested that Wendy Browning-Sampson and Paul Gwynn come up with a solution to remind members that they have an obligation to keep their records up to case.

Clair Hey stated she would share the details of a case where the Ombudsman had agreed that an Authority following a that had made reasonable endeavours to contact a Member.

It was noted that representatives were being sought to joint the Fire communication Group and Technical Working Group.

51/19 **Times Up for Pension Scammers**

The Board noted The Pensions Regulator's summer 2019 edition of their Regulatory round-up for scheme managers.

52/19 **Governance Administration – Risks public service pensions – The Pensions Regulator**

The return had been submitted and a copy would be added to the TEAM site for reference

53/19 **The Pension Regulator Public Service Governance Survey 2019**

Paul Gwynn, Kal Shoker and Wendy Browning-Sampson had completed the Survey and it was suggested that in future, the TEAM chat should be utilised so that all members of the Pension Board would have access.

The Survey had been signed off by the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and it was suggested that the signing of the survey be added to the Audit and Risk Committee Workplan for future years. The Board agreed that Paul Gwynn should forward the survey on their behalf.

## 54/19 **Training**

Update on Pension Board Training in Shropshire  
Feedback from Annual Pensions Conference.

Wendy Browning-Sampson, Julie Felton and Adam Harper had attended the basic pension board training in Shropshire. This was seen a top up to the training received in December 2018. It had been very useful for the new members of the Board as they had now received the same training at the rest of the Board. It was agreed that notes from the training would be placed in the TEAM documents folder for future reference.

Paul Gwynn had attended both days of the Annual Pension Conference in September 2019. The first day had focused on the role of the Scheme Manager and Councillor Miks, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee had attended.

The second day had been a more technical event and had been attended by Adam Harper, who had found the event useful. Several relevant issues had been discussed including the outcome of the Benchmarking review and possible national Key Performance Indicators.

Councillor Miks stated that she found the Conference useful, but felt that the timings should be adjusted to earlier in the day.

Emmett Robinson had attended a training event in London and stated this had been a good experience. He had also meet with Paul and felt that the general training should be early in the Employee Representatives time of office to achieve the best value from the training.

The dates for future training opportunities and Conferences would be added to the Pension Board Activity log.

## 55/19 **Pension Board Activity Log 2019/20**

The activity log to be updated for the next meeting.

56/19 **Pension Board Work Programme 2019/20**

The work programme was noted. The Board wished to factor in training and annual events and requirements.

57/19 **Topical legal regulatory issues**

The Board were informed that the Regulator was taking a greater interest in the public sector. The West Midlands Pension Board had been approached, as it was one of the larger schemes, by The Pension Regulator to visit the Board and meet with the Members and Members of the Audit and Risk Committee. They will be looking at information and providing feedback in the form of a management report early in the New Year. The Board were recommended to look at the Pension Regulators site particularly in respect of Relationship Supervision. Contact would be made early in the New Year and the Chair requested further information for the next Board Meeting. Paul Gwynn agreed to brief the Scheme Manager in January 2020.

In respect of the Court ruling in respect of retained firefighters, Paul Gwynn confirmed that a modified exercise had taken place a number of years ago. The 2006 Scheme would now be modified back to the 2001, and subsequently the Judge had stated there should have not been any restriction to access pension schemes and Members should be allowed to access any pension scheme. The outcome of the court case was expected in January 2020. Halesowen and Bilston had been confirmed as being retained stations. Paul Gwynn had been required to contact everyone to ask them to contact the Pension Team to confirm if they had worked at those stations. There were approximately 15 at each station. It was agreed that Paul Gwynn would report back to the next meeting on the number of people involved, however, it was noted that not all would be found.

The outcome of the McCloud case was awaited and it was intended to publish further details by Friday 20 December and brief the Board at the same time.

Kal Shoker recommended using the retired and serving firefighters facebook page and other forms of social media such as yammer and twitter to contact previously retained firefighters. He also suggested contacting NARF.

58/19 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Pension Board was scheduled for March 2020. Alan Tranter requested that consideration be given to holding the next Pension Board on the same date as the SAB LPB Pensions Effectiveness Committee on 5 March 2020 in order that members of both groups could meet.

59/19 Training Session

Following the meeting, Members of the Board together with the members of the Audit and Risk Committee received formal Scheme Manager Training.

Julie Connor Strategic Hub 0121 380 6906 Email: Julie.Connor@wmfs.net
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## Pension Board

16 December 2019

## Actions

30	Wendy Browning Sampson to contact Strategic Hub re Risk Register	
31	Risk Register to be colour coded to match Corporate Risk Register	
32	Additional Risks to be added to Risk Register	
33	Report to be prepared for the Audit and Risk Committee on ill health pensions	Draft Prepared
34	Paul Gwynn to liaise with Mike Griffiths re report for Audit and Risk Committee on data base quotes	Completed
35	Paul Gwynn to provide Scheme specific information	In Progress
36	Wendy Browning Sampson and Paul Gwynn to find solution to be remind Members to keep their records up to date	-
37	Governance Administration Return to be added to TEAM site	-
38	Public Service Governance Survey to be sent off and added to the Audit and Risk Work Programme for 2020/21	In Progress
39	Training Documents to be added to TEAMS	WBS – 8 October 2019
40	Paul Gwynn to brief Scheme Manager on Pension Regulator	Complete
41	Paul Gwynn to report on the number of retained members	Verbal update to be provided at next meeting

42	Paul Gwynn to provide an update on the outcome of McCloud Case	Verbal update to be provided at next meeting
43	Activity Log to be updated	Julie Connor has updated



**Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee**

13 January 2020

At Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road,  
Birmingham B74HW

**Present:** Councillor Catherine Miks (Chair), Councillor Gill  
(Vice Chair), Councillors Barrie, Miller and Spence and  
Mr Ager

**Apologies:**

Richard Percival, Grant Thornton and  
Neil Chamberlain, Chair, Pension Board

01/20 **Declarations of Interest**

None received.

02/20 **Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 11 November 2020**

The minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 11 November 2020 were approved.

Cllr Miks thanked Cllr Gill for Chairing the previous meeting.

03/20 **Corporate Risk Report**

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the increase in Corporate Risk 6 – Business Continuity and Preparedness to “High”.

ACO Gary Taylor informed the Committee that there had been a significant change to the corporate risk environment.

The agreed reporting frequency for updates on the Corporate Risk Register was 6 monthly, however, Policy 22/07 Corporate Risk Management states “should there be any significant change to the corporate risk environment, Audit and Risk Committee will be informed of this at the next available Audit and Risk Committee meeting. In order to build and maintain Audit and Risk Committee members capability and to ensure their

continued engagement in corporate risk issues, timely and relevant reports on specific corporate risk topics will be presented by officers to Audit and Risk Committee”.

At the Audit and Risk Committee held on 2 September 2019, the risk was reported as medium. Corporate Risk is reviewed on an ongoing basis as part of normal business. In response to changes in the risk environment, officers reviewed the risk control measure for business continuity and more specifically the impact of industrial strike action, national security and the national landscape.

The control measures were considered inadequate and a report, ‘Business Continuity Arrangements’ outlining the issues had been prepared for Members to consider at the Fire Authority meeting on 30 September 2019.

The recommendations were deferred for pre-scrutiny. An alternative recommendation developed by the Scrutiny Committee that ‘the Fire Authority continues to utilise existing arrangements for business continuity during industrial action, through the use of volunteers drawn from existing staff numbers’ was approved by the Fire Authority at its meeting on the 18 November 2019.

As an outcome of the decision, the Risk Owner who has the overall responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the progress being made in managing the risk, considered that the control measure remain inadequate and had subsequently increased the risk level to ‘High’ (Likelihood 3, Impact 4, Overall Score 12) (RED)

Previously the Impact Level was 3 but in the opinion of the risk owner this had changed and more time was required to manage the risk and if Industrial Action was declared immediately Officer did not have confidence with the arrangements.

Cllr Spence stated that the additional option put forward by the Scrutiny Committee had been voted upon and agreed by Members of the Fire Authority at its meeting on 18 November 2019.

## 04/20 Internal Audit Progress Report

The Committee noted the Internal Audit Progress Report.

The report brings the Committee up to date with the progress made against the delivery of the 2019/20 Internal Audit Plan and will feed into and inform the overall opinion in the Internal Audit Annual Report at the year end.

The report summarises the audit work undertaken in a tabular format.

Where appropriate each report issued by the Internal Auditor during the year is given an overall opinion based on the following criteria.

Red = Limited Assurance

Amber = Satisfactory Assurance

Green = Substantial Assurance

Each recommendation is categorised in line with the following:

Fundamental action is imperative to ensure that the objectives for the area under review are met.

Significant requires action to avoid exposure to significant risk in achieving the objectives for the area under review.

Merits Attention action is advised to enhance risk mitigation, or control and operational efficiency.

A summary of work completed and in progress as at 2 December 2019 was provided.

Four audits had been completed and reported previously and all had received a Substantial Level of Assurance.

There had not been a long period since the last update, however, the Accounts Payable had been completed and had received a Substantial Level of Assurance score with no suggested action required. The review had focused on the controls designed to prevent overpayments, fraud and incorrect accounting. There were no issues of significant identified.

The audit of Accounts Receivable had been undertaken since the report had been published and had received a Substantial Level of Assurance.

The Audit of Payroll was in progress and would be reported to the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Three further Audits would be undertaken on:

- 1) Fixed Asset Accounts
- 2) Budgetary Control
- 3) Data Protection

It was anticipated that the Audits would be completed before the end of March and would be reported to the Committee at its meeting scheduled for 1 June 2020.

Other activities undertaken by the Auditor were:

Advice and Guidance

Ad-hoc Training

CIPFA Audit Committee Updates

Terms of Reference

Internal Audit Plan 2019/20

Internal Audit Annual Report 2018/19

Internal Audit Charter

Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report

In response to a question from the Independent Member regarding the significant action required following the Freedom of Information Audit, it was confirmed that the issue was that timescales had not been met. The recommendations of the Auditor had been accepted verbally and a response was awaited.

05/20 **Minutes of the Pension Board held on the 10 September 2019**

The Committee noted the minutes of the Pension Board held on 10 September 2019.

The Chair of the Pension Board had been unable to attend the meeting and Kal Shoker, Employer Representative, from the Pension Board informed the meeting of the outcome of the Pension Board meeting.

The minutes were presented for information to the Audit and Risk Committee in their role as Scheme Manager.

This was the first meeting where there was a full complement of three Employer Representatives had attended, the agenda included:

- Update from Payrolls and Pensions Manager
- Risk Register,
- Ill Health Retirements
- Government Surveys
- Scheme Manager Training from the LGA

The Committee were informed that the recent McCloud Judgment would have an impact on the organisation and this was being considered by the Payroll and Pensions Manager.

The Members of the Audit and Risk Committee were thanked for attending the Scheme Manager training on 16 December 2019.

#### 06/20 **Audit and Risk Committee Work Programme**

The Committee reviewed its Work Programme. The Internal Audit Charter Annual Review would take place at the meeting scheduled for the 23 March 2020.

#### 07/20 **Update on Topical Legal and Regulatory Issues**

Mike Griffiths, Treasurer, informed the Members of the Audit and Risk Committee that, in their role as Scheme Manager, they may be required to meet with representatives of The Pensions Regulator before the end of April. The representatives would also be meeting with the Pension & Payroll Manager and members of the Pension Board at their next scheduled meeting.

The meeting closed at 1320 hours.

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Strategic Hub  
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**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**  
**AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE**  
**WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20**

Date of Meeting	Item	Responsible Officer	Completed
<b>2019</b>			
29 July 2019	Terms of Reference of Audit and Risk Committee	Democratic Officer	
	Audit Findings 2018/19	Grant Thornton	
	Statement of Accounts 2018/19 (Approval)	Treasurer	
	Treasury Management Annual Report 2018/19	Treasurer	
	Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 3 June 2019	Democratic Officer	
	Minutes of the Pensions Board held on 4 March 2019	Pension Board Representative	
	Minutes of the Pensions Board held on 4 June 2019	Pension Board Representative	
	Pension Board Annual Report	Pension Board Representative	
	Training Requirements of Audit and Risk Members		

(Official – WMFS – Public)

	Audit and Risk Committee Draft Work Plan 2019/20	Democratic Officer Democratic Officer	
2 September	Corporate Risk Six Monthly Report	ACO Strategic Enabler (Process)	
	Annual Audit Letter 2018/19	Grant Thornton	
	Audit and Risk Committee Update	Grant Thornton	
	Request of Member to Discontinue Payment of Periodical Contributions – New Firefighters’ Pension Scheme (2006)	Treasurer	
	Pensionable Pay Decision	Treasurer	
	Residential Homes	Treasurer	
	Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 29 July 2019	Democratic Officer	
	CIPFA Audit Committee Update Issue 29	Auditor	
	Audit and Risk Committee Workplan 2019/20	Democratic Officer	
30 September [Authority]	Audit Findings 2018/19 Statement of Accounts 2018/19 (to note)	Grant Thornton Treasurer	

(Official – WMFS – Public)

<p>11 November</p>	<p>Presentation on Vacant Resident Properties</p> <p>Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 2 September 2019</p> <p>Treasury Management – Mid year review 2019/20</p> <p>Audit and Risk Committee Update</p> <p>Internal Audit Progress Report and Audit Overview</p> <p>Corporate Risk Update</p> <p>Audit Committee Work Plan</p> <p>Fraud Awareness Training</p>	<p>David Gardiner</p> <p>Democratic Officer</p> <p>Treasurer</p> <p>Grant Thornton</p> <p>Audit Manager</p> <p>Democratic Officer</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Phil Tromans John Matthews</p>	
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<p><b>2020</b></p>			
<p>13 January</p>	<p>Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 11 November 2019</p> <p>Internal Audit Progress Report</p>	<p>Democratic Officer</p> <p>Audit Manager</p>	

(Official – WMFS – Public)

	<p>Audit and Risk Committee Update</p> <p>Audit and Risk Committee Work Plan</p> <p>Minutes of the Pension Board held on 10 September 2019</p>	<p>Grant Thornton</p> <p>Democratic Officer</p> <p>Democratic Officer</p>	
23 March	<p>Audit and Risk Committee Terms of Reference</p> <p>Internal Audit Plan 2020/21</p> <p>Audit Plan 2019/10</p> <p>Corporate Risk Report Six Monthly Update</p> <p>Internal Audit Charter – Annual Review</p> <p>Informing the Audit Risk Assessment – West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority 2019/20</p> <p>Audit and Risk Committee Update</p> <p>Audit Fees and the Sustainability of the Local Audit Market</p> <p>Request from Dependant for the Reinstatement of a Widow’s Pension</p> <p>Review of Ill Health Pension Decision</p>	<p>Audit Manager</p> <p>Audit Manager</p> <p>Grant Thornton</p> <p>ACO Strategic Enabler (Process)</p> <p>Audit Manager</p> <p>Grant Thornton</p> <p>Grant Thornton</p> <p>Grant Thornton</p> <p>Treasurer</p> <p>Treasurer</p>	

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	<p>Pensionable Pay Decision</p> <p>CIPFA Audit Update</p> <p>Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 13 January 2020</p> <p>Minutes of the Pensions Board held on 16 December 2019</p> <p>Audit and Risk Committee Work Plan</p> <p><i>Committee Members' Private meeting with Internal Auditors (to follow Committee)</i></p>	<p>Treasurer</p> <p>Audit Manager</p> <p>Democratic Officer</p> <p>Democratic Officer</p> <p>Democratic Officer</p> <p><i>Audit Manager</i></p>	
1 June 2019	<p>Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20</p> <p>Governance Statement 2019/20</p> <p>Monitoring Policies and RIPA (Annual Whistleblowing Report)</p> <p>Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee 2019/20 for approval</p> <p>Audit and Risk Committee – Verbal Update</p>	<p>Audit Manager</p> <p>Treasurer</p> <p>Monitoring Officer/ ACO Strategic Enabler (Process)</p> <p>Chair</p> <p>Grant Thornton</p>	

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	<p>Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 23 March 2019</p> <p>Minutes of the Pensions Board held on 5 March 2019</p> <p>Annual Report of the Pension Board 2019/10</p> <p>Audit and Risk Committee Work Plan 2019/2020</p> <p><i>Committee Members' Private meeting with External Auditors</i></p> <p><i>Workshop for Members on Statement of Accounts 2019/20</i></p>	<p>Democratic Officer</p> <p>Democratic Officer</p> <p>Chair, Pensions Board</p> <p>Democratic Officer</p> <p><i>Grant Thornton</i></p> <p><i>Treasurer</i></p>	
<p>22 June 2020 [Authority]</p>	<p>Governance Statement 2019/2020</p> <p>Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 1 June 2019</p> <p>Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee 2019/20</p>	<p>Treasurer</p> <p>Democratic Officer</p> <p>Chair</p>	

<p>20 or 27 July 2020</p>	<p>Audit Findings 2019/20</p> <p>Statement of Accounts 2019/20 (Approval)</p>	<p>Grant Thornton</p> <p>Treasurer</p>
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<p>(Audit and Risk Committee 2020/21)</p>	<p>Treasury Management Annual Report 2019/20 Audit and Risk Committee Draft Work Plan 2020/21 Minutes of the Pension Board held 8 June 2020 Annual Report of the Pension Board</p>	<p>Treasurer Democratic Officer</p>
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