

Fire Local Pension Board

Minutes of meeting 20 July 2023

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board held on Thursday 20 July 2023 2023 at 10.00 am at Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service HQ, Carleton Avenue, Penrith, CA10 2FA

PRESENT:

Mr D Harrison (Chair)
Mr M Nicholson

Also in Attendance: -

Mr P McCall	-	Cumbria Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority
Mr M Johnson	-	Deputy Cumbria Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority
Steven Tickner	-	CCFRA Chief Finance Officer (s.151 Officer)
Mr B Steadman	-	Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Ms S Sedgwick	-	Senior Advisor Pensions
Ms K Ward	-	Business Partner
Ms S Benson	-	Senior Advisor
Emma Hebblethwaite	-	Client Relationship Manager (LPPA)

PART 1 – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

CFO Rick Ogden.

2. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference were noted, and no changes made. Membership of the board has changed due to changes to Governance.



3. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest made at this meeting.

4. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Discussion took place as to how we advertise the meetings going forward. KW stated that papers could be uploaded on the new Fire Service website.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the previous meetings held on 9 March 2023 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

6. SCHEDULE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- Future meetings of the Fire Local Pension Board will be arranged on a quarterly basis.
- SS to arrange future meetings. Next one to take place end of October/beginning of November.
- Meetings to be held at Fire HQ for the next few meetings.
- KW to place meetings in Weekly Update so that staff are aware they can attend.

7. CHANGE OF FIRE PENSION SCHEMES GOVERNANCE

Members considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer. The report advised Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board Members of the changes to the governance of the Cumbria Fire Pension Scheme, because of Local Government Reorganisation in Cumbria, from 1 April 2023.

RESOLVED, Board noted the change of fire pension schemes governance.

8. MONITORING REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31 MAY 2023

SS took the meeting through the monitoring report. Members considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer. The report advised Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board Members of any material risk management, policy or governance issues and national regulatory changes and any performance monitoring issues of the Scheme to 31 May 2023.

The report is the first under the new Governance arrangements for Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service. Good governance and risk management will aid the Cumbria Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (CCFRA) in their role as Scheme Manager in ensuring its regulatory responsibilities are met, a good service is provided to scheme members and costs are controlled. Cost control will have a direct impact on revenue budgets.

The following was discussed:

- Risk Register: there have been several changes since the last meeting in March and the risk register has been changed to reflect this. No new risks have been added.
- DH asked if we are comfortable, we have all the personnel required within the HR team

and specifically to support the Fire Pension work KW provided an update: in the current structure, we have most of the posts required within the wider HR team that are required, apart from some that are to be advertised. The risk with the pension support is due to the additional work required on the projects and the impact of the hosted service currently provided by W&F coming to an end. KW stated that this is reflected in the risk register. Currently working through disaggregation of all hosted services. KW updated the meeting around what will happen in respect of Pay and Reward which is due to be disaggregated from October. KW has starting to work out a plan of what is needed in the future.

PFCC stated the importance of needing personnel and asked if we have approved that. KW updated on the business cases which are still to come through and she will share with Principal Officers and ST. Possibility of using some of the grant funding. Recruitment so far has been successful.

- Data Return: MN raised that there have only one in the country and asked if we are putting people at more risk regarding pension scheme. KW stated that as long as we get all the information through to LPPA, we should be fine. This is part of the escalation of the risk.

PFCC queried why we are the last. KW updated. Pushed back as data was returned. Relying on HR systems team to monitor the data. CCC services that was the issue. LGR was the priority at the time. Back through escalation process and some of it has worked. There has been significant movement recently although CFRS were going to escalate to Cumberland Chief Executive if required.

SS stated that there are approx. 500 people to check 7 years' worth of data for each person. This is having to be done manually and it is a difficult process. To be put as a separate risk.

- Annual benefit statements – available April 2024: MN raised that this is not likely to be achieved and asked if we are working towards April 2025, if so, this could be a risk. SS stated that it should not be at risk as data needs to be done. LPPA capacity. Letter to be drafted and LPPA to send out.

PFCC queried having additional resource. KW stated that some of the day-to-day work that will have to continue. This is one of the business cases to be put forward. It will take 12 months for the work to be carried out. Also, the Matthews project is running parallel.

DH asked if KW was comfortable that the staffing and resourcing risk are covered under the definitions and asked if a piece of work has been done that captures all the risk. KW stated that the risk is more of the skills and expertise needed as opposed to people. KW also provided an update on the place for recruitment.

- Regulatory changes – remedies to Sargeant and Matthews: consultations on both and HMIC consultation have been submitted. Response to Sargeant, report has been published. LPPA also raised concerns regarding complexity in the consultation. Both exercises fall into the same period.
- Pension dashboards: DWP ministerial statement stating revised connection deadline.

Now moved to October 2026.

RESOLVED, report noted.

9. CUMBRIA FIRE PENSION SCHEME(S) ADMINISTRATION, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE STRATEGY

Members considered the Administration, Management and Governance Strategy. SB presented the strategy. All schemes have admin strategy and template was provided. Under new governance – things in place. Purpose of strategy – SB took the meeting through. Developing/consulted with LPPA/TUs/Commissioner's office and colleagues within various teams. Also links with delegation agreement through Lancs.

RESOLVED, ratified by meeting for publication.

10. LPPA UPDATE

Verbal update/presentation provided by EH:

- Project PACE.
- 2022/23 Performance.
- April and May 2023/24 Performance (CFRS).
- Helpdesk Performance.
- PensionPoint.
- Looking Ahead.
- Efficiency and Service Improvement Plan.
- McCloud and Matthews: resource plan; casework approaching in October. Member communications: how to manage expectations – waiting for LGA national guidelines on communication, this is expected in August and will then share with members.

11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting date of the Cumbria Fire Pension Board to be confirmed.

12. MONITORING REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31 MAY 2023 IDRP (PART2)

SS took the meeting through the report.

13. VERBAL UPDATE ON EMERGING ISSUES

No emerging issues.

The meeting ended at 11.55 am

