

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority

Local Pension Board Annual Report 2020-21

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this Annual Report is to provide information about the status of the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority Local Pension Board for Scheme Members (employees and pensioners) and for the Scheme Manager (the Authority) together with a summary of issues considered in the relevant period (1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021).
- 1.2. In accordance with Section 5 and s.30 (1) of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and Regulation 4A of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (Amendment) (Governance) Regulations 2015, the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority Local Pension Board was established in February 2015 to provide advice on the effective and efficient administration and management of the various firefighter pension schemes.
- 1.3. The Report includes commentary on the following:
 - A summary of the work undertaken by the Local Pension Board during 2020-21
 - Detail of areas investigated and how these areas were dealt with
 - Any conflicts of interest and how these were managed
 - Any identified risks and other areas of potential concern
 - Any expenses and costs incurred by the Board
 - Gifts and hospitality received by members of the Board
 - Training for Board members

2. Membership and meetings of the Local Pension Board

- 2.1. During 2020-21, the Local Pension Board comprised of eight members as follows:

Scheme Manager Representatives:

- Mike Pearson - Chair (Director of Governance and Digital Services)
- Amy Webb (Director of Finance)
- Councillor George Wheeler
- Satnam Singh Rai (Independent Co-opted Member)

Scheme Member Representatives:

- Andy Hallam

- Peter Redbourn
- James Leslie
- Ben Redwood

2.2. In addition to the above, the following officers supported the Board and regularly attend Board meetings:

- Steve Pope (HR Manager and Delegated Scheme Manager) until January 2021
- Caroline Gourlay (HR Reward & Benefits Manager and Delegated Scheme Manager)
- Steve Yates (Democratic Services Manager)
- Lisa Etchell (Executive Support Assistant)

2.3. In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the Board met on four occasions during 2020-21, meetings having taken place on:

- 24 Jun 2020;
- 16 Sep 2020;
- 09 Dec 2020; and
- 17 Mar 2021

3. Work undertaken by the Local Pension Board

3.1. During 2020-21 the following matters were undertaken/considered:

- Review of actions log
- Management of Risk Register and development LPB of Risk Management Procedure
- Management of Work Programme
- Development of Training records and annual Training Plan
- Reviewed and updated the Self-Assessment using the Pension Regulator Tool
- Individual training using the Pension Regulator e-learning modules
- KPI Performance Measures (data collection and reporting)
- Completed the Pension Regulator annual governance and administration survey
- Completed the Scheme Advisory Board Survey
- Received regular updates from the Scheme Manager, Scheme Administrator and the Scheme Advisory Board
- Reviewed arrangements for reporting potential breaches of the law

- Virtual attendance at the Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Pensions Annual Conference
- Monitoring arrangements for dealing with 'Immediate Detriment' cases arising from the age discrimination ruling in the McCloud/Sargeant judgement
- LPB Annual report 2019-20

4. **Identified risks and Board actions**

4.1. Risks and issues are categorised as follows:

	Action Status
	Not yet started
	In progress
	Complete

Date	Risk/Issue	Agreed Action	Status
15/02/19	Development of key performance indicators	KPI dashboard to be developed	
30/10/19	LPB Risk Register	Develop specific LPB risk assessment process Action completed 24/06/20	
18/03/20	Cyber Attack	Review Pensions Administrator's business continuity plan	
24/06/20	Appeal Court Rulings (McCloud/Sargeant & O'Brien/Matthews)	Determine powers to process Immediate Detriment cases and assess resource levels to implement remedy	
24/06/20	LPB Training Needs Analysis and Individual Training Plans	Process for TNA and training records to be developed. Action completed 13/04/21	
07/01/21	Injury Pension – Potential incorrect deduction of Retirement Allowance	Determine whether historic deductions were incorrect and if so remedy individual cases	

5. **Statutory Breaches**

5.1. No statutory breaches were reported to the Regulator during the period.

6. **Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Website**

- 6.1. [Further information regarding the Local Pension Board can be found here on the Service website.](#)

7. **Scheme Membership**

- 7.1. The scheme membership numbers are now included in the monthly reports from the Scheme Administrator. Membership numbers as at 31 March 2021, were:

Scheme	Active Members	Deferred			Leavers Options	
		Members	Pensioners	Beneficiaries	Preserved Refund	Pending
Devon and Somerset Fire (1992 Scheme)	52	59	919	157	1	0
Devon and Somerset Fire (2006 Scheme)	25	417	218	15	9	1
Devon and Somerset Fire (2006/RDS Scheme)	38	79	97	3	0	0
Devon and Somerset Fire (2015 Scheme)	1399	483	21	14	4	14
Devon and Somerset Fire (2015/RDS Scheme)	45	5	2	0	0	3
Grand Total	1559	1043	1257	189	14	18

- 7.2. The Delegated Scheme Manager has been asked to report at each Board meeting details of: membership numbers; opt out numbers; new starters; and retirements. This is expected to be in place during 2021.

8. **Conflicts of Interest**

- 8.1. Members of the Local Pension Board are required to declare any personal, prejudicial, or conflicts of interest. Board members are asked at each meeting to declare any conflicts that may have arisen.
- 8.2. There have been no declarations made by any Board members, advisor or attendee at any meeting of the Board during the relevant period.

9. **Expenses and Costs**

- 9.1. Members of the Board, together with the members of the Human Resource Department (as day-to-day scheme manager) attended the Local Government Association Fire Pensions Annual Conference in September 2020. There was no costs associated with this conference as attendance was virtual via Zoom.
- 9.2. Total Local Pension Board expenditure for 2020-21 was, therefore, limited to the "co-optees" allowance of £500 per annum paid to the Independent Employer Representative in accordance with Regulation 9 of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and the Authority's Approved Scheme of Members Allowances made under those Regulations.

10. **Gifts and Hospitality**

- 10.1. No declarations of gifts or hospitality were made by members of the Board during the relevant period.

11. Knowledge and Understanding

- 11.1. Board members have completed e-learning modules on the Pension Regulator's website. Details of each Board member's training is published on the Service website.
- 11.2. Monthly updates from the scheme administrator, the West Yorkshire Pension Fund, and the LGA's monthly Firefighters Pensions Schemes Bulletin are shared with Board members.
- 11.3. Completion of the Regulator's self-assessment toolkit during 2019/20 identified a need to develop a process for completion of individual training needs analysis for Board members and the creation of individual training plans/records. This work was completed during 2020/21 and individual training plans are in place. The individual training needs analysis records were used to identify common topics of interest, which is now included on each meeting of the Board. Additional training sessions on subjects similarly derived from the training needs analysis records are also provided.

12. Legislative and advisory updates

- 12.1. In accordance with statutory requirements, members of the Board have been provided with regular legislative updates together with updates from the Pension Regulator and the Scheme Advisory Board. The following have been provided during 2020-21:
 - TPR guidance on public service internal controls checklist;
 - Guidance on treatment of 'Immediate Detriment' cases arising from the age discrimination ruling in the McCloud/Sargeant judgement;
 - Firefighters Pensions Schemes Bulletins No. 31 to 43 inclusive, setting out updates and news on a range of issues relating to Firefighters Pensions Schemes