

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	DSFRA/22/18
MEETING	DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	26 SEPTEMBER 2022
SUBJECT OF REPORT	FIREFIGHTERS' PENSIONS SCHEMES DISCRETIONS POLICY
LEAD OFFICER	Director of Finance, People & Estates
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p><i>(a). That the Firefighters' Pensions Schemes Discretions Policy as attached at Appendix A to this report be approved; and</i></p> <p><i>(b). That, in relation to exercising these discretions:</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>(i). Those discretions of a more routine, Scheme administration type, be exercised by the Chief Fire Officer;</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>(ii). Those individualised, case-by-case discretions that could involve additional financial implications should be exercised either by the Chief Fire Officer, the People Committee or the full Authority depending on the quantum of the financial implications and alignment to financial thresholds as contained in the Authority's approved Financial Regulations.</i></p>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The Authority last considered discretions provided for by Firefighters' Pensions Schemes in 2015. There have been a number of changes since then, including the introduction of new Pensions Schemes.</p> <p>Consequently, it is timely to revisit and update as necessary the Pensions Discretion Policy.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	As indicated in the report.
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS	N/A.
APPENDICES	A. Firefighters' Pensions Schemes Discretions Policy
BACKGROUND PAPERS	Nil.

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Authority initially approved a discretions policy for Firefighters' Pensions Schemes at its meeting on 7 October 2013 (Minute DSFRA/26(c)(ii) refers).
- 1.2. Since that time, there have been a number of changes to each of the Schemes concerned and as such it is timely to update the discretions policy.

2. REVISED DISCRETIONS POLICY AND EXERCISE OF DISCRETIONS

- 2.1. A full review has been taken of each of the current Firefighters' Pensions Schemes, as follows:
 - The Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992
 - The Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2006 (also known as the NFPS)
 - The Firefighters' Compensation Scheme 2006
 - The Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015
- 2.2. Appendix A to this report identifies the discretions associated with each Scheme and the proposed policy to apply in relation to each of these discretions. The opportunity has been taken to clarify the policy to apply which will assist in consistency of approach moving forwards.
- 2.3. While the Schemes identify the discretions available to the authority (as scheme manager), they are silent as to who should exercise the discretions. Again, to ensure a consistency of approach and mitigate any risks associated with exercising discretionary matters, it is proposed that the discretions as identified in Appendix A be exercised as follows:
 - those discretions of a more routine, Scheme administration type be exercised by the Chief Fire Officer (or other officer so delegated by them);
 - those individualised, case-by-case discretions which could involve additional financial implications for the Authority should be exercised either by the Chief Fire Officer, the People Committee or the full Authority depending on the quantum of the financial implications and alignment to the thresholds in the Authority's approved Financial Regulations, currently:
 - for amounts up to £0.025m – Chief Fire Officer
 - for amounts exceeding £0.025m and up to £0.075m – the People Committee; and
 - for amounts exceeding £0.075m – the full Authority.

For clarity, it should be noted that the thresholds indicated refer either to a one-off payment or an annual cost (as the case may be).

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1. Firefighters' Pensions Schemes have been reviewed to identify discretions available to the Authority. These are set out in Appendix A to this report.

- 3.2. This discretions policy was considered by the Local Pensions Board at its meeting on 7 September 2022 and is now commended to the Authority.
- 3.3. The Authority is asked to approve Appendix A as the Authority's Discretions Policy and to approve the proposals as set out in paragraph 2.2 above for exercising these discretions.

SHAYNE SCOTT
Director of Finance, People & Estates