

# Scottish Firefighters' Pension Scheme Advisory Board

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## MINUTES

**Date:** 3 March 2022

**Location:** MS Teams

**Chair:** Iain Coltman (IC) (SPPA)

**Attendees :** Mark Rowe (MR), (Fire Brigades Union)  
Glyn Morgan (GM), (Fire Officers' Association)  
Brian Baverstock (BB), (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service)  
George Lindsay (GL), (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service)  
Nicola Hector (NH), (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service)

**Advisers:** Anne-Marie Pettie (AMP) (GAD)  
Rachael Henry (RH) (GAD)  
George Russell (GR) (GAD)

**Officials:** Alan Wilkinson (AW), (SPPA)  
Finn Mackenzie (FM), (SPPA)  
Karen Gilchrist (KG), (SPPA)  
Mhairi Kinnaird (MK), (SPPA)  
Derek Smith (DS), (SG SCD: Fire & Rescue Unit)

**Observers:** Claire Hey (CH), (Local Government Association), Claire Johnson (CJ), (Local Government Association)

**Apologies :** Ian Sim (Fire Brigades Union), Stuart MacArthur (SPPA), Lorna Smith (SG SCD: Fire & Rescue Unit)

**Secretariat :** Clare Campbell (SPPA)

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1.2 MR confirmed that both Chris McGlone and Gordon McQuade were no longer members of the SAB and replacement nominations would be put forward in due course. The Chair placed on record his thanks for the contribution both Chris and Gordon had made to the SAB during their tenures.

### 2. Conflicts of Interest

2.1 No new conflicts of interest declared.

### 3. Previous Minutes/Actions

3.1 The minutes from the meeting of 19 October 2021 were adopted without amendment.

3.2 Outstanding actions were reviewed and the following noted:

- **Action 35** - Review of member contribution structure – **Close action**
- **Action 55** - Information from changes made to Teachers' opt out form to be gathered and shared – **Close action**
- **Action 68** – FM confirmed some suggested FAQs have been communicated to SPPA and these are online – **Close action**
- **Action 69** - FM proposed that this was closed in favour of evaluating in line with the PDD on the same subject that will be available imminently through the collaboration with UK SABs – **Close action**
- **Action 70** – FM confirmed there was FAQ on website regarding this topic – **Close action**
- **Action 71** – On agenda for meeting today and paper was circulated to board members – **Close action**

#### **4. Remedy Update**

4.1 FM provided a summary of the 2015 Remedy Update paper. The Chair invited questions from the board, none were received.

4.2 The Chair invited CH to outline her thoughts on the proposed collaborative working group between the English and Scottish SABs on Remedy engagement and communication. CH confirmed that there is a definite appetite for working together, especially with regards to topics such as Immediate Detriment and PDDs.

4.3 The Chair indicated that it would be helpful to have board members involved in the working group. GL noted that discussions would have to take place at SFRS with regards to who was best placed to act as a representative from their organisation.

4.4 The Chair confirmed that terms of reference would be prepared in relation to the composition and responsibilities of the possible working group.

**Action: SPPA to draft terms of reference for proposed collaborative working group on Remedy engagement and communication and share with CH.**

#### **5. a) Cost Control Mechanism and 2016 Valuation**

5.1 The Chair invited AMP to present the papers issued to the Board ahead of the meeting.

5.2 AMP provided a summary of the Cost Control Mechanism and 2016 Valuation and invited questions.

5.3 GM asked if there was any update on whether member benefits would be affected in the future. AMP stated that there was no update at the current time as the HM Treasury Directions that would set the process for the 2020 valuations were not yet available. These would likely follow after final decisions on the revised cost control mechanism and SCAPE rate methodology.

#### **5. b) 2020 Valuation**

5.4 AMP provided a brief update of the 2020 Valuation to the Board. It was confirmed that GAD hope to be in a position to come to the SAB in September 2022 with draft assumptions. A provisional date of January 2023 was given for the results.

5.5 The Chair confirmed that SPPA and GAD will be looking to discuss the assumptions with the Board at a corresponding SAB meeting later in the year and refresher training can be provided to new and existing SAB members ahead of these discussions.

## **6. Commutation Paper**

6.1 KG provided a brief summary on the Commutation paper circulated to the Board ahead of the meeting. The paper covered changes to commutation in the FPS, removing the restriction on lump sum payments for firefighters retiring with less than thirty years' service. The Chair invited any questions, none were received.

## **7. Participation Rates Paper**

7.1 KG presented the latest Participation Rates paper which contained the figures for the period 2020/2021 and Quarters 1, 2 and 3 of 2021/2022.

7.2 The Chair noted that SPPA will be monitoring any developments and patterns in the scheme participation rate data due to the upcoming scheme changes.

**Action: SPPA to monitor participation rates to identify if there is any immediate impact from the scheme changes on 1 April 2022.**

7.3 MR noted a 4% fluctuation in the figures and enquired as to whether this was due to an increase in retirements. KG confirmed that she had liaised with the Admin team who confirmed that they had not noticed an increase in retirements. GL agreed and stated that SFRS were not concerned that there had not been an increase in unexpected retirements at this time.

7.4 CH enquired as to whether SPPA were expecting there to be an increase in scheme opt outs from April 2022. She advised that the LGA were compiling a short factsheet for their members to ensure they are fully informed. FM noted that this was a useful idea that he would raise at his upcoming meeting with the SPPA Communications lead.

**Action: FM to raise possibility of creating a member factsheet with SPPA Communications lead.**

7.5 GM agreed that it was important members have as much information as possible so they are fully informed before considering opting out of the scheme. GL then confirmed that SFRS will continue to direct members to the SPPA website for this information.

## **8. SAB Chair Arrangements**

8.1 The Chair led the discussion and provided some background on the paper issued to the Board ahead of the meeting. The Chair confirmed that he was seeking views on the current Chair arrangements and would welcome these in writing by 31 March 2022.

**Action: SAB Members to provide views and feedback on current SAB Chair arrangements to IC or Fire SAB Secretariat mailbox by 31 March 2022.**

8.2 BB enquired as to whether any of the other Scheme Advisory Boards had already fed back their views on this topic. The Chair confirmed that the chair arrangements only relate to the Fire

and Police SABs and the Police board members will be asked for their views at their upcoming SAB meeting.

8.3 BB asked if there has ever been an occasion where SPPA have encountered a conflict of interest as Chair. The Chair confirmed that this had not yet arisen and as any advice is written and agreed by the SAB before it goes to Ministers, this should negate a potential conflict of interest arising.

8.4 GM stated as a member of the SAB since its inception, he feels the Board works well and therefore sees no requirement to change the current arrangements.

The Chair thanked board members for their views and reiterated he would appreciate if these could be put in writing.

## 9. AOB

9.1 The Chair informed the Board that SPPA have been approached by the Home Office regarding the possibility of forming a joint policy working group on the Matthews case. A meeting with the Home Office has yet to be arranged but SPPA will report back to the Board at the next SAB meeting with any updates.

## 10. Dates of Future Meetings

10.1 The Chair confirmed that a doodle poll proposing dates for the remaining SAB meetings in 2022 had been issued to board members. Once dates for the meetings in June, September and December are provisionally agreed the Board will receive placeholder calendar invitations.

## Summary of New Actions

Action No	Para No	Action	Owner
72	4.4	SPPA to draft terms of reference for proposed collaborative working group on Remedy engagement and communication and share with CH.	SPPA
73	7.2	SPPA to monitor participation rates to identify if there is any immediate impact from the scheme changes on 1 April 2022.	SPPA
74	7.4	FM to raise possibility of creating a member factsheet with SPPA Communications lead.	FM
75	8.1	SAB Members to provide views and feedback on current SAB Chair arrangements to IC or Fire SAB Secretariat mailbox by 31 March 2022.	SAB Members