

Scottish Firefighters' Pension Scheme Advisory Board

MINUTES

Date: 13 June 2023

Location: MS Teams

Chair: Iain Coltman (IC) (SPPA)

Attendees: John McKenzie (JM) (Fire Brigades Union)
Glyn Morgan (GM) (Fire Officers' Association)
George Lindsay (GL) (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service)
Alan Duncan (AD) (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service)
Mark Rowe (MR) (Fire Brigades Union)
Brian Baverstock (BB) (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service)

Advisers: Anne-Marie Pettie (AMP) (GAD)
Rachael Henry (RH) (GAD)
Robert Fornear (RF) (GAD)

Officials: Finn Mackenzie (FM) (SPPA)
Alan Wilkinson (AW) (SPPA)
Karen Gilchrist (KG) (SPPA)

Observers: Elena Johnson (EJ) (Local Government Association), Tara Atkins (TA) (Local Government Association)

Apologies: Colin Brown (CB) (Fire Brigades Union), Derek Smith (DS) (SG SCD: Fire & Rescue Unit), Lorna Smith (LS) (SG SCD: Fire & Rescue Unit)

Secretariat: Clare Campbell (SPPA)

1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies

2. Conflicts of Interest

2.1 No new conflicts of interest declared.

3. Previous Minutes/Actions

3.1 The minutes from the meeting on 30 March 2023 were reviewed and adopted as accurate.

3.2 MR confirmed that he still intended to share the Matthews Exercise information with the board (noted in point 5.2 of the minutes of 30 March) as soon as this become available.

3.3. Outstanding actions were reviewed and the following noted:

- **Action 85** – SPPA to provide details of the number of members in priority group one of the immediate choice prioritisation process. **KG confirmed that there were 97 cases, of which 18 were dual assessed and 79 were still to be assessed. There are possible**

issues regarding the availability/shortage of IQMPs nationwide to complete reassessments. As such, SPPA and SFRS agreed to meet in order to discuss these 79 cases further - Close Action and create new action

- **Action 86** – SPPA to distribute remedy update slides to board members. **These were circulated to board members on 19 April 2023 – Close Action**
- **Action 87** – SPPA to circulate update to board after Retrospective Pensionable Allowances meeting on 31 March 2023. **To be covered under agenda item 6 – Close Action**
- **Action 88** – SPPA/GAD to distribute Valuation Training presentation slides to board members. **The slides were issued to board members on 20 April 2023 – Close Action**

Action: SPPA and SFRS to meet in order to discuss the 79 cases still requiring assessment in priority group one of the immediate choice prioritisation process

4. Remedy Update

a) Firefighters' Pension Scheme Retrospective Remedy Consultation

4.1 FM provided confirmation to the board that the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Retrospective Remedy Consultation had been published on 16 May 2023 and thanked the board for their patience as the publication date was slightly later than initially planned.

4.2 FM noted that the consultation document contained 16 questions and SPPA welcomed views from all those involved with the Firefighters' Pension Schemes.

4.3 FM enquired as to whether the board wished to submit a collective response to the consultation, noting that if so, SPPA would be unable to assist with the drafting of this in order to prevent a conflict of interest.

4.4 MR stated that he believed a response from the SAB was important and could mirror the response already submitted by the English SAB to the Home Office consultation. GM echoed Mark and noted he would be happy to support a collective response that was similar to the English one.

4.5 GL confirmed he would be happy to look over the English SAB response and if SFRS were content he would support submitting something collectively.

4.6 The Chair confirmed that SPPA would request a copy of the English SAB consultation response and circulate this to the board for their consideration.

Action: SPPA to request a copy of the English SAB consultation response and circulate to board members for their consideration

b) Administration update (including immediate detriment)

4.7 FM provided a short update on immediate detriment, confirming that ministers have agreed immediate detriment casework is to be completed as a matter of priority after 1 October 2023. SPPA plan to work to the immediate choice prioritisation timetable that was shared with the board at the SAB meeting on 30 March 2023.

4.8 JM enquired as to where SPPA currently stand with regards to timescales for resolving immediate detriment. FM noted that SPPA were at the preparation stage and were developing

operations guidance with a view to having the necessary procedures in place as close to 1 October 2023 as possible.

5. Matthews Second Options Exercise for Retained Firefighters (The 2023 Options Exercise)

5.1 KG provided a brief update on the Matthews Second Options Exercise. Scottish Ministers had now agreed to implement the changes in line with rest of the UK.

5.2 KG stated that she was currently drafting the consultation document and the necessary legal instructions for the amending regulations. An eight week consultation period is proposed over the summer months, after which the regulations will be laid in Parliament in October 2023. These will then come into force on 1 December 2023.

5.3 KG confirmed that after discussions with SFRS and the SPPA Fire Administration team, the aim is for the second options exercise to be administered between December 2023 and June 2025.

6. Firefighters Pensionable Allowances Exercise – Update

6.1 KG confirmed that work continues on this exercise, with regular engagement between SFRS and the SPPA Fire Administration team regarding progress and data issues. Further meetings are planned but some calculations are now taking place and SPPA have administrators looking at the data to try and find solutions to some of the issues that have arisen.

6.2 JM thanked KG for the information and requested this topic be a recurring item on the SAB agenda so that the board can continue to receive regular progress updates.

Action: SPPA to include the Firefighters Pensionable Allowances Exercise as a recurring agenda item and provide the SAB with progress updates as and when available

7. Initial Advice on Assumptions for 31 March 2020 Valuation

7.1 The Chair invited AMP, RH and RF to begin their presentation on the initial advice on assumptions for the 31 March 2020 valuation.

7.2 RH and RF provided the Board with detail on the types of assumptions required for the valuation, the assumption setting process and the analysis completed on the scheme-specific assumptions along with the recommendations for the 31 March 2020 valuation. GAD invited questions from Board members and discussions were had on the recommendations. SPPA asked SAB for their formal views on these recommendations over the coming weeks.

7.3 AMP stated that GAD would issue the draft, formal report detailing the advice on assumptions for the 31 March 2020 valuation to SPPA in the coming weeks for it to then be circulated to the Board.

7.4 MR thanked GAD for the presentation, noting it had been very useful and easy to understand. JM echoed this and also enquired if the presentation slides could be shared with the board. RF confirmed he would need to check with colleagues at HMT but did not foresee there being an issue with the slides being shared.

Action: GAD to issue the draft, formal report detailing the advice on assumptions for the 31 March 2020 valuation to SPPA for it to then be circulated to the Board along with the presentation slides presented at the meeting.

8. AOB

8.1 The Chair noted that the legal challenge brought by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and the British Medical Association (BMA) relating to the Government's decision to include the costs of the McCloud remedy within the 2016 scheme valuation had been rejected by the High Court but they had been granted the right of appeal. MR confirmed this was the case and would keep SPPA informed of any developments if and when they arise.

9. Dates of Future Meetings

9.1 The Chair confirmed that the next meeting has been arranged for 21 September 2023 and calendar invitations have already been issued.

Summary of New Actions

Action No	Para No	Action	Owner
89	3.3	SPPA and SFRS to meet in order to discuss the 79 cases still requiring assessment in priority group one of the immediate choice prioritisation process	SPPA/SFRS
90	4.6	SPPA to request a copy of the English SAB consultation response and circulate to board members for their consideration	SPPA
91	6.2	SPPA to include the Firefighters' Pensionable Allowances Exercise as a recurring agenda item and provide the SAB with progress updates as and when available	SPPA
92	7.3	GAD to issue the draft, formal report detailing the advice on assumptions for the 31 March 2020 valuation to SPPA for it to then be circulated to the Board with the presentation slides presented at the meeting	SPPA/GAD