

COUNTY COUNCIL

Meeting date: **To be confirmed**

From: **Cabinet Member for Customers,
Transformation and Fire and Rescue**

UPDATE REPORT OF THE CUMBRIA FIRE LOCAL PENSION BOARD – 2020/21

PART A - RECOMMENDATION OF CABINET MEMBER

This report presents the update of the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board for the half year ending 30th September 2020.

PART B – ADVICE OF CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 *The Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board (Cumbria FLPB or ‘the Board’) is required to report twice yearly on its activities to the Council.*
- 1.2 *This is the update report for the first half of 2020/21, with the Annual Report of the Cumbria FLPB 2020/21 due to be presented to Council later in 2021.*

2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 *The Council’s vision is to be “A Council that works with residents, businesses, communities and other organisations to deliver the best services possible within the available resources”. This report supports the priorities of the Council Plan, in particular ‘putting customers at the heart of everything we do’.*
- 2.2 *Good Governance and risk management will aid the Council in its 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.*
- 2.3 *There are no direct equality implications arising out of the recommendations in this report.*

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to:

- 3.1 Note the update of the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board for the half year ending 30th September 2020.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Cumbria FLPB is constituted under the Public Service Pension Act 2013 and the Fire Pension Scheme (Amendment) (Governance) Regulations 2014. The role of the Cumbria FLPB is to assist Cumbria County Council (as the Scheme Manager of the Cumbria Firefighters' Pension Scheme):

(a) To secure compliance with:

- (i) the regulations covering administration of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS);
- (ii) other legislation in relation to the governance and administration of the FPS; and
- (iii) the requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator in relation to the FPS.

and

(b) in ensuring the effective and efficient governance and administration of the FPS.

- 4.2 In its role in assisting the Scheme Manager the Cumbria FLPB is required to report twice yearly to Council on matters reviewed and suggestions for their consideration. Where the Cumbria FLPB is concerned that due consideration has not been given to matters of non-compliance, the Board may submit a report for consideration by the Audit and Assurance Committee as the body designated by the Scheme Manager with the capacity to investigate such matters on its behalf.
- 4.3 The Board has no such matters of non-compliance that are considered appropriate to raise with the Audit and Assurance Committee.
- 4.4 The terms of reference for the Cumbria FLPB state that "the Board will meet as a minimum twice a year", and ordinarily holds quarterly meetings. However, the Board meetings scheduled for May and July 2020 were cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4.5 Given the important governance role of the Board, Members were provided with a Scheme Update paper in July, which was circulated by e-mail and followed up by a group call to enable them to raise any queries and discuss matter further.

A summary of the main points is listed below: -

- **Membership:**
 - The current four-year tenure for the Employee Representative (Pensioner) on the Board expires in November 2020, and a recruitment process is underway.

- **Administration:**
 - A representative from Local Pensions Partnership (the administration service provider which operates as Your Pension Service (YPS) in Cumbria) participated in the group call updating the Board on their service, performance, upgrading of IT systems and staffing.
 - Throughout the pandemic, pensions have continued to be paid on time each month, and Annual Benefit Statements were issued well ahead of the August statutory deadline.
 - YPS have issued regular bulletins to members giving support and guidance, including a “frequently asked questions” section associated with the employer’s role.

- **Training:**
 - A Member of Cumbria FLPB attended an Annual Board training event hosted by the Local Government Association (LGA) in July 2020.
 - A representative from the LGA participated in the group call providing an update on the Sargeant case (a Supreme Court judgement regarding age discrimination identified within the transitional arrangements put in place to move from final salary to career average (CARE) methods of accruing pension) and other national news and also attended the October 2020 meeting of the Board to give further updates.

5.0 OPTIONS

- 5.1 Members may either note the progress of the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board in 2020/21 or request additional information relating to the activities of the Board.

6.0 RESOURCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Firefighters’ Pension Scheme is a national scheme with individual fire and rescue authorities being responsible for its administration.

- 6.2 The Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board is responsible for ensuring the effective governance of the scheme for the 1,389 scheme members.
- 6.3 The scheme is a defined benefit pension scheme and employer and employee contributions are set nationally.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS FROM LAST COUNCIL REPORT

7.1 Under its terms of reference as set out in the Constitution the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board reports twice yearly to Council.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 The Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board continued to progress its work to assist in the governance of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme during the six months to 30th September 2020.

Steve Healey
Chief Fire Officer

Date TBC

APPENDICES

None

Electoral Division(s):

	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
If a Key Decision, is the proposal published in the current Forward Plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A*
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
If exempt from call-in, has the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee been sought or obtained?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Has this matter been considered by Overview and Scrutiny? If so, give details below.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Has an environmental or sustainability impact assessment been undertaken?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Has an equality impact assessment been undertaken?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A

PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

None

CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Not considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers.

RESPONSIBLE CABINET MEMBER

Janet Willis

Cabinet Member for Customers, Transformation and Fire & Rescue.

REPORT AUTHOR

Contact:

Gill Welbourn, Technical Finance Officer – Pensions

Tel: 07765 22152

E-mail: gill.welbourn@cumbria.cov.uk