

FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION COMMITTEE (FPC)

NOTE ON THE 4TH MEETING OF THE FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION COMMITTEE HELD AT GREAT MINSTER HOUSE, HORSEFERRY ROAD ON 29TH JUNE 2005.

1. A list of attendees is attached.
- 2. Introduction**
 - 2.1 The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting.
- 3. Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the FPC**
 - 3.1 The minutes of the 3rd meeting were agreed.
- 4. Matters arising from the minutes of the 3rd FPC meeting - FPC(05)7**
 - 4.1 *Further amendments to the FPS:* There was discussion concerning the amendment to remove the compulsory retirement age (CRA) and the problems that the delay was apparently causing to FRAs. The Chairman explained that the draft amendment, which includes the removal of the CRA, was currently being drafted by ODPM's lawyers. Members were also advised that this should not be causing problems as Rule A13(3) of the FPS gives FRAs the discretion to retain the services of staff after the CRA and as FRAs know that the change is coming it was reasonable to assume that they would use this existing discretion.
 - 4.2 *Protection of Pensionable Pay:* Please refer to Section 5 below.
 - 4.3 *Firefighters' Compensation Scheme:* Members were informed that ODPM were in negotiations with HM Treasury regarding the proposals for the Firefighters' Compensation Scheme. When ministerial approval has been received the consultation paper will be published.
 - 4.4 *Actuarial Assumptions:* The Chairman advised members that GAD have agreed to give a presentation on their actuarial assumptions at the next FPC meeting. This was due to be held on 14th July but has been postponed until 10th August.
- 5. Protection of Pensionable Pay -FPC(05)8**
 - 5.1 At the 3rd FPC meeting Glyn Morgan (FOA) had requested that this issue be reconsidered amid concerns from their members about losing pension benefits as a result of the move from ranks to roles. He suggested that introducing such a provision would alleviate these concerns.
 - 5.2 Glyn Morgan also pointed out that Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Authority had carried out an assessment regarding the cost implications of providing

protection of pensionable pay and that first indications are that the costs would be minimal.

- 5.3 Members agreed that there should be an assessment of the cost implications of providing pensionable pay protection.

ACTION: Ian Hayton (CFOA) to contact colleagues from other FRAs to obtain the results of any similar exercises that may have been completed.

ACTION: Glyn Morgan (FOA) to provide the results from the Strathclyde study.

6. Outcome of the Consultation Exercise - Oral Update

- 6.1 The Chairman advised members that as a consequence of the May elections and with ODPM having a new team of ministers decisions on new pension arrangements and a response to the consultation had inevitably slowed. Response documents would be published in due course.
- 6.2 Reference was also made to the role of the Public Services Forum and its possible impact on the overall timetable.

7. Proposals for the handling of the New Pension Scheme - FPC(05)9

- 7.1 The Chairman introduced paper FPC(05)9 and invited members to comment on how the blocks of work have been grouped together.
- 7.2 Members were advised that once ministers have given their approval to the proposals, they would publish a framework document. At this stage ODPM would issue a blueprint detailing the proposals for the new scheme and detailed discussions with the FPC would begin.
- 7.3 It would be very unlikely that the blueprint for the new pension scheme would be available to be circulated for the meeting on the 14th July and therefore it was agreed that it should be cancelled. The next meeting would be on the 10th August.

8.0 Any Other Business

- 8.1 Chris Large from APFO referred to papers sent to ODPM by Des Prichard and said that APFO were suggesting that the FPS should include a provision that would allow members made redundant before the completion of 30 years service to “buy forward” additional service to make it possible for them to retire with maximum benefits.
- 8.2 The Chairman explained that there was currently no provision for this. Compensation for redundancy was not a pensions issue and that the ability to purchase additional service in these circumstances would require amendment of the scheme and would depend on the terms of any redundancy package. Reference was made to the example in Wales where FRAs had been amalgamated and a time limited Order had been made that

included compensatory provisions in the event of redundancy. It was possible that any future arrangements would follow the “Wales template”.

- 8.3 It was agreed that ODPM would look at the Welsh experience and would bring to the attention of those in ODPM responsible for amalgamations.

ACTION: ODPM to advise colleagues dealing with amalgamations of the impact on pensions.

9.0 Date of Next Meetings

- 9.1 The next meetings of the FPC are:

10th August 2005
12th September 2005
12th October 2005

ODPM
July 2005

4th Meeting of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme

Attendees

Martin Hill	ODPM
Andy Boorman	ODPM
Jean Archer	ODPM
Anthony Mooney (Secretary)	ODPM
Raymond Jennings	LGA
Fred Walker	LGA
Dennis Musgrave	LGA
Jim Preston	SPPA
Karen Bradley	Scottish Executive
Jason Pollard	Welsh Assembly
Ivan Walker	Thompson's Solicitors
Paul Woolstenholmes	FBU
Derek Chadbon	RFU
Ian Hayton	CFOA
Mr Glynn Morgan	FOA
Mr Chris Large	APFO

Apologies

Des Prichard	APFO
Ken Thompson	Cosla
Colin McMinn	DHSSPSNI
Eunice Heaney	Consultant
Terry McGonigal	NIFB