Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY **Item No. 4**

MEETING: HR COMMITTEE 21 OCTOBER 2025

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD 2025

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, ESTATES AND FACILITIES

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the committee with the Annual Report from the Local Pension Board (LPB) up to 30 September 2025.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Members are reminded that within the Terms of Reference of the LPB there is a provision for the LPB to produce an annual report "highlighting areas of concern and identifying good practice"

2.2 The purpose of the LPB is to assist Tyne and Wear Fire Authority (TWFRA) in its role as a scheme manager of the Fire Fighters' Pension Scheme. Its primary roles are to:

- Secure compliance with the Regulations, any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the Scheme, and requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator in relation to the Scheme; and

- Ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Scheme.

2.3 The LPB provides an oversight of these matters and as such the Board is not a decision-making body in relation to the management of the Scheme but merely makes recommendations to assist in such management.

2.4 The Board is made up of six members, three acting as employer and three as employee representatives.

3 MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

3.1 The terms of reference of the board state there should be at least two meetings each calendar year in line with legislation. However, the Pension Regulator believes that four meetings each year is more acceptable, and as such the Authority aims for four meetings each calendar year.

3.2 There have been four meetings in the last twelve-month period, covering the following items:

- 29 November 2024:
  - Review of the terms of reference
  - Risk Register
  - Breach reporting
- 28 February 2025:
  - Review of the terms of reference
  - Risk Register
  - Pension Fund reports
  - Action Plan
- 30 May 2025:
  - Review of the terms of reference
  - Risk Register
  - Pension Fund reports
  - Breaches
  - Action Plan
- 29 August 2025:
  - Cycle of meetings
  - LPB membership
  - Risk Register
  - Pension Fund reports
  - Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure

3.3 The key areas of work being undertaken by the Service and discussed during LPB meetings are as follows:

Terms of Reference: the Terms of Reference have been reviewed to provide clarity to members moving forward and to ensure that meetings remain quorate.

McCloud/Sargeant Remedy: the Remedy process is ongoing, with all TWFRS data being supplied to the pensions administrator (West Yorkshire Pension Fund, WYPF).

Remediable Service Statements (RSSs): WYPF did not provide membership with RSSs by legislative deadline (31/03/2025). This was reported as a breach at the earliest opportunity to the Pensions Regulator (TPR) by both the Service and WYPF.

Most active scheme members (c.220) received their RSS by the revised deadline of 30 June. However, a specific tranche of approximately 70 members, where the delay was outside of WYPF / TWFRS control (e.g. missing previous data, missing national guidance for previous transfer in, or previous divorce), the Scheme Manager elected to provide a six-month extension as permitted under legislation.

It should be noted that WYPF has failed to meet this revised deadline of 30 September 2025 and the Service will be reporting a further breach to TPR at the earliest opportunity.

This breach has also triggered 114 *Stage 1* internal dispute resolution procedures (IDRPs). At the time of writing, 111 cases have been resolved within the two-month deadline. The outstanding 3 cases are being dealt with within their respective deadlines. Two *Stage 2* appeals have been received and have been dealt with within their respective two-month deadlines.

As a result of active members receiving their RSSs, members previously in the Firefighters Pension Scheme 1992 (FPS 92) have been offered the opportunity to pay owed pension contributions back early. 24 elections of interest have been received to date, which will be processed in due course. Members who were previously in the New Firefighters Pension Scheme 2006 (NFPS 2006) can elect to take a refund of the excess contributions paid. 38 elections of interest have been received to date; these are currently being processed.

Matthews Retained Exercise: this is a pension remedy for retained (part-time) firefighters in the UK, allowing them to buy back pension service for earlier employment periods that were previously excluded. To be eligible, a retained firefighter must have served between 7 April 2000 and 30 June 2006.

It is believed that the Service has around 35 eligible members who must be provided with a statement of pension benefits available to purchase (by 31 March 2026). Whilst the numbers are relatively low, this is a very complex piece of work and is expected to be very labour intensive.

Governance: the Pensions Regulator introduced a new general code effective from 28 March 2024. It consolidates 10 previous codes and sets out governance standards for occupational pension schemes. Compliance with the code is mandatory, and the work required to ensure that the Service is fully compliant will be very significant.

4 RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 There are no risk management implications directly related to this report. There is a risk register which is monitored by the pension board.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

6 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no equality implications in this report.

7 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no health and safety implications in this report.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.