

PENSION BOARD OF BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
TERMS OF REFERENCE

Statement of purpose

1. The purpose of the Board is to assist Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority in its role as Scheme Manager of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme. Such assistance is to:
 - (a) 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;
 - (b) Ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Scheme.

Duties of the Board

2. The Board should at all times act in a reasonable manner in the conduct of its purpose. In support of this duty, Board members:
 - (a) Should act always in the interests of the scheme and not seek to promote the interests of any stakeholder group above another.
 - (b) Should be subject to and abide by Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority code of conduct for members.

Membership

The Board will comprise an equal number of employer and member representatives with a minimum requirement of no less than four in total.

Member representatives

3. Two member representatives shall be appointed to the Board.
4. Member representatives shall either be members of the scheme administered by Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority or have experience of representing pension scheme members in a similar capacity.
5. Member representatives should be able to demonstrate their capacity to attend and complete the necessary preparation for meetings and participate in training as required.

Employer representatives

6. Two employer representatives shall be appointed to the Board.
7. Employer representatives shall be office holders or senior employees of Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority or have experience of representing scheme employers in a similar capacity. Office holders or employees of Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority with delegated responsibility for discharging the scheme manager function of Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority may not serve as employer representatives.
8. Employer representatives should be able to demonstrate their capacity to attend and complete the necessary preparation for meetings and participate in training as required.
9. Employer representatives shall be appointed by Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority in a manner which it considers best promotes the purpose of the Board.

Other members

10. Other members may be appointed to the Board by Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority or the Board.
11. Any appointments of other members shall have regard to the best interests of the purpose of the Board.

Appointment of chair

12. The Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority shall appoint a chair.
13. The Chair's responsibility will include ensuring that the Board meets its purpose, that meetings are properly conducted, decision making clear and professional advice is followed. The Chair will also agree meeting agendas and approve the minutes of each meeting. The Chair will also be responsible for ensuring that Board members have the knowledge and understanding required and will review and report on the performance of the Board.

Notification of appointments

14. On appointment to the Board Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority shall publish the name of the appointees, the process followed in the appointment together with the way in which the appointments support the effective delivery of the purpose of the Board.

Conflicts of interest

15. All members of the Board must declare to Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority on appointment and at any such time as their circumstances change any potential conflict of interest arising as a result of their position on the Board.
16. On appointment to the Board and following any subsequent declaration of potential conflict Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority shall ensure that any potential conflict is effectively managed in line with both the internal procedures of Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority and the requirements of the Pensions Regulator codes of practice on conflict of interest for Board members.

Role of Advisors

17. Professional advisors, or other advisors to the Board may be required from time to time. The process for their appointment and agreeing their fees will be by the Board, in liaison with the Procurement Team of the Authority. In addition the Board may access existing advisors to the Scheme Manager, via the Scheme Manager. Senior pension officers from other Authorities may be also a route of advice.

Role of Officers

18. The Scheme Manager will provide secretariat services to the Board and will provide pension fund information as required.

Administration, Papers, Communication and Obtaining Information

19. Board meetings will be held at least three times a year. The notice of a meeting date should be at least one month prior to the meeting. The circulation of papers should be a week in advance of a meeting. Each meeting will have minutes taken to formally record agenda item discussions and decisions, with the minutes agreed at the following meeting. Decisions can be made via voting at the meetings. Meetings may be called at shorter notice should an urgent matter require this. Information will be published in an agreed method by the Board when considered appropriate.

Knowledge and understanding (including Training)

20. Knowledge and understanding must be considered in light of the role of the Board to assist Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority in line with the requirements outlined in Point 2 above. The Board should establish and maintain a policy and framework to address the knowledge and understanding requirements that apply to Board members. That policy and framework shall set out the degree of knowledge and understanding required as well as how knowledge and understanding is acquired, reviewed and updated.
21. Board members shall attend and participate in training arranged in order to meet and maintain the requirements set out in the Board's knowledge and understanding policy and framework.
22. Board members shall participate in such personal training needs analysis or other processes that are put in place to ensure that they maintain the required level of knowledge and understanding to carry out their role on the Board.

Term of office

23. Term of Office should be in accordance with the committee cycle in Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority.
24. Board membership may be terminated prior to the end of the term of office due to:
 - (a) A member representative appointed on the basis of their membership of the scheme no longer being a member of the scheme
 - (b) A member representative no longer being a member of the body on which their appointment relied
 - (c) An employer representative no longer holding the office of employment or being a member of the body on which their appointment relied
 - (d) The representative no longer being able to demonstrate their capacity to attend and prepare for meetings or to participate in required training.

Meetings

25. The Board shall as a minimum meet three times per year. Meetings shall normally take place at Service Headquarters between the hours of 0900 and 1700.
26. The chair of the Board with the consent of the Board membership may call additional meetings. Urgent business of the Board between meetings may, in exceptional circumstances, be conducted via communication between members of the Board including telephone conferencing and e-mails.

Quorum

27. The total number of members required to be present for a meeting to be quorate is three plus the chair.

Attendance Requirements

28. Board members should attend at least 75% of meetings. If a member fails to attend the required number of meetings or otherwise comply with the requirements of being a Board member, for example fails to attend the necessary knowledge and understanding training, the Chair will have lead responsibility for taking action. Support will be provided by the Scheme Manager.

Role of Substitutes

29. Substitutes for attendance will not be permitted due to the knowledge and understanding required for Board members.

Creation of Working Groups/Sub-Boards

30. Working groups may need to be set up. If so, terms of reference will be agreed as/when required. The working groups will report back to the Board at agreed intervals.

Allowances/Expenses

31. Local expenses will be paid and, where relevant, time off in lieu will be granted.

Budget

32. A budget has been approved and allocated for the Board. The signature for this is the Chair (currently Head of Finance/Treasurer). This budget will be for items such as seeking professional advice, training for members, accommodation costs or meeting the costs of any claim for expenses.

Reporting

33. Where the Board has material concerns, the communication of these will be agreed by the Board for immediate contact with the Scheme Manager. These will be formally recorded.

Data Protection

34. Board members should take account of and act in accordance with Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority's Data Protection policy.

Voting

35. Board members shall have equal voting rights.
36. The Chair shall determine when consensus has been reached.
37. Where consensus is not achieved this should be recorded by the Chair.
38. In support of its core functions the Board may make a request for information to the Scheme Manager with regard to any aspect of the scheme manager function. Any such a request should be reasonably complied with in both scope and timing.
39. In support of its core functions the Board may make recommendations to the Scheme Manager which should be considered and a response made to the Board on the outcome within a reasonable period of time.

Interpretation

40. In these terms 'the Scheme' means the Firefighters' Pension Scheme.
41. In these terms Regulations means the Firefighters ' Pension Scheme 1992, as amended, the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2006, as amended and the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014 as amended.
42. In these terms 'regulations' include the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992, as amended, the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2006, as amended, the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014 as amended, the Pension Regulators Codes of Practice as they apply to the scheme manager and pension board and any other relevant legislation applying to the Scheme.

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