

**ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT ON FIREFIGHTER PENSION SCHEMES
EMPLOYER DISCRETIONS USAGE**

Report of the Director of Resources

Author: Rachel Wilson, Senior HR Officer, Strategy, Policy & Reward
(Tel: 01992 588142)

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide an annual update on the use of the Firefighters Pension Scheme (FPS) employer discretions policies.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The County Council continues to operate the FPS employer discretion policies approved by Full Council. There is one discretion that has been used this year under the FPS discretions policy; election to purchase additional pension benefits in the 1992 scheme.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the Hertfordshire Fire Pension Board notes the content of the report.

4. FPS Discretions

- 4.1 As part of the 2015 changes, new pension discretions were developed. These were approved by Full Council on 23 February 2016.
- 4.2 The FPS Policy on Exercise of Employer Discretions can be found on the HFRS FPS website and the Intranet. The power to exercise and to take any decision in relation to the each of the discretions is delegated by Hertfordshire County Council to its Director of Resources who may sub-delegate the power to another Officer. A summary of the discretions exercised from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 is as follows;
- 4.3 **1992 Scheme Discretion 17- Election to Purchase Increased Benefits**
Firefighters are able to purchase increased benefits in the 1992 scheme and the Council will usually require the firefighter to undergo a medical at their own expense to check they are in good health before agreeing the request. The Council received 2 requests to purchase increased benefits; both cases were agreed without requesting a medical as the firefighters had a recent service medical assessment on file confirming their good health. These were agreed with the Deputy Assistant Chief Officer.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 A number of the discretions above will have an impact on the pension fund. Each decision is made on a case by case basis including an assessment of cost.

6. Equalities Implications

- 6.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.
- 6.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.
- 6.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 6.4 No EqIA was undertaken for this report because the report does not impact on equalities or affect any of the protected characteristics which would require an EqIA to be completed. There are no equality implications of the changes to the pension schemes. Each decision is made on a case by case basis as part of the individual assessment for the use of the discretion.