

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 9TH JUNE, 2021

Attending:

Councillor Ahmet Oyknor, Councillor Chris Dey, Pauline Kettless, Tracey Adnan, Tim O'Connor (Exchequer Manager Pensions), Bola Tobun (Finance Manager Pensions and Treasury), and Clare Bryant (Senior Governance Officer)

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed the members of the Board to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Paul Bishop.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Pauline Kettless declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of a Local Government Scheme.

Tracey Adnan declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of a Local Government Scheme.

Councillor Oyknor and Councillor Dey declared a non-pecuniary interest as a family member is a member of a Local Government Scheme.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2021 were agreed.

4. PENSION ADMINISTRATION PERFORMANCE, TEAM UPDATE AND LGPS UPDATE

Tim O'Connor, Exchequer Manager Pensions, provided the Board with an update on the pension administration performance and LGPS. The key points highlighted were as follows:

- There was still a large amount of work to do on the £95k exit cap. The HMCLT were due to come back with an analysis of what had been paid in previous years. Also waiting for new regulators.
- Deaths were now being reported quarterly and were currently in line with the national level.
- Some new guidelines had been issued for McCloud and the team were working on identifying those that would be affected. This would require extra staff and most areas were predicting a need for 20% extra.

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Research is being conducted on how to automate the process in the future.

- The Pension Ombudsman had released some new factsheets on their website which were proving useful.
- The Pensions Dashboard was going out to tender and due to go live in 2023.
- The changes to the state pension age had been dismissed from court with no right of appeal. The Board to be kept informed of any updates.
- The GMP changes had made administration easier. However, costs were higher.
- Monitoring academies to see how this may impact us.
- There were ongoing issues with Credential and the recent meeting had been cancelled at short notice. They issued a letter stating they were aware of the issues and had referred themselves to the pensions regulator

ACTION: A copy to be forwarded to the Board – Tim O'Connor.

- AVC wise had received good uptake and feedback. A Pension Savings Awareness Day would be taking place in September 2021. Members requested for this to be advertised fully to ensure uptake.
- The new annual newsletter had been circulated and it was highlighted that employers must include us in TUPE conversations.
- There had been excellent engagement with the online member self service. The next step was to send out to pensioners.
- The annual KPIs covered the main data which had been reported to the pension regulator.

5. PENSION ADMINISTRATION RISK REGISTER

Tim O'Connor, Exchequer Manager Pensions, provided the Board with an update on the Pension Administration Risk Register. The key points highlighted were as follows:

- The risk register had been updated in January 2021 to include Prudential and employers.
- Some additions to the Risk Register were required around staffing and moving offices.
- A questionnaire had been completed around security and outcomes would come to the next meeting.
- There had been issues with late report contributions which would be covered in a later item.
- Members requested the document to be sent as a separate spreadsheet for future meetings due to layout issues.

6. LOCAL PENSION BOARD GENERAL REMIT AND ENFIELD PENSION BOARD WORK PLAN FOR 2021/22

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Bola Tobun, Finance Manager, Pensions and Treasury, requested members to review pages 28-30 of the report for approval.

- An update had been added to Section 13 to ensure the same methodology was being used to assess funds.
- Further details would be brought to the next meeting.

Members approved the work plan.

7. LAPFF ENGAGEMENT AND VOTING UPDATE

Bola Tobun, Finance Manager, Pensions and Treasury, had provided a report for the attention of the Board which demonstrated responsible engagement and voting.

- There had been some Freedom of Information requests regarding investments and work was being completed with London CIV.
- It was agreed this was an important topic and would be a regular agenda item.

8. EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS REPORT

Bola Tobun, Finance Manager, Pensions and Treasury highlighted the following key points:

- Contributions were to be received by the 19th of the following month. There had been issues with late contributions from two employers however the issue causing this had now been resolved.
- Following up on name changes as some trade with multiple names. If this continued it would be reported.

ACTION: Bola to identify the employers.

9. REVIEW OF THE PENSIONS REGULATOR CODE OF PRACTICE

It was noted numerous areas of the report state Northumberland County Council. The Chair reinforced the need for reports to be proof read by the report author before circulation.

Bola Tobun, Finance Manager, Pensions and Treasury highlighted the following key points:

- Ongoing monitoring of compliance to the code and do not expect much to change.
- The checklist was an old version, awaiting new version and once received would come back to this Board.

10. MEMBER TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS AND PLAN

Bola Tobun, Finance Manager, requested the following to help plan ahead and avoid unnecessary costs:

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- All members of the Board to complete their training needs on pages 115-118 of the report.
- All members of the Board to also complete page 120 detailing training completed to date of the report.
- The Chair emphasised the importance of ongoing training.

11. LCIV QUARTERLY UPDATE

Bola Tobun, Finance Manager, reported that the information was received late, so

it was not possible to complete a timely report.

- Bola highlighted the key points and would email the report to members.
- LCIV now had officers in place to ensure responsible investment areas. Looking to invite to a future meeting.
- The Pensions Policy and Investment Committee were moving portfolios to help reduce carbon.
- LCIV had some new funds and following investigation an investment strategy would be developed and brought to the September 2021 meeting.

12. PENSION POLICY & INVESTMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

It was felt the AGM should go ahead, and it was hoped this would be in December 2021. Plans to be brought to the September 2021 meeting.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- There was a discussion about the benefits of online meetings which saves members having to commute and reduces the carbon footprint. It was proposed that at least one in-person meeting per year. A member requested for the meetings to be held in the evening due to work commitments.
ACTION: Clare Bryant would discuss this with Jeremy.
- It was questioned if the annual report had been signed off and it was advised we were still waiting for the BDO. Bola to email members once it is signed off and bring back to a future meeting.