

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Local Pension Board** held in Council Chamber - County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 14 June 2018 at 2.00 pm**

Present:

Scheme Employer Representatives:

Councillors A Hopgood and Fraser Tinsley

Scheme Member Representatives

Ian R Densham and Neville Hancock

Officers:

Nick Orton – Pensions Manager

Beverley White – Finance Manager – Pensions and Technical

1 Election of Chair

Nominations were sought for a scheme employer representative to chair the Board for the ensuing year.

AGREED that Councillor Amanda Hopgood be elected Chair of the Local Pension Board for the ensuing year.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Geoff Sykes, scheme member representative and Bryan Smith, Legal Manager – Litigation.

3 Declarations of Interest (if any)

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2017 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

5 Local Pension Board Recommendation - Meeting Arrangements

Board Members considered the Pension Fund Committee's response to the Board's recommendation in relation to meeting arrangements.

The suggestion was made that consideration be given to providing questions to the Managers in advance of each meeting which would further help the Committee to

maximise the time spent with Managers to discuss their performance. It was noted that arrangements would change with the implementation of pooling in that a Customer Relationship Manager would attend on behalf of the BCPP to discuss performance.

The Board **AGREED** to continue to monitor the current arrangements and review again following the implementation of pooling.

6 Observations from Pension Fund Committee held on 14 June 2018

Ian Densham, Neville Hancock and Councillor Hopgood (for part of the meeting) were in attendance at the Pension Fund Committee and provided observations.

Board Members were encouraged that the Committee was taking the opportunity to question the Managers, guided by suggested questions from the Independent Adviser based on the attending Managers' performance in the quarter. This had improved the Committee's challenge of the Managers.

AGREED that the information given be noted.

7 Training

Nick Orton advised that the Pension Fund Committee and the Local Pension Board had been asked to complete a training needs analysis, and the next step was to meet with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Pension Fund Committee to discuss the needs that had been identified by Members and proposed training.

With regard to specific training for the Local Pension Board, Members had completed the Pensions Regulator's on-line training module but the suggestion was made that Nick Orton approach colleagues in the pool to establish if their Local Pension Boards had received other specific training. Neville Hancock advised that the Shadow Scheme Advisory Board had undertaken research into training requirements, and he would find out what progress had been made with that research and report back to the Board.

AGREED that the information given be noted and further information on specific training for Local Pension Boards be awaited.

8 Work Plan

a Communications Review

The Board considered the report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided Board Members with details of how different stakeholder groups received communication from the Pension Fund, and explained current plans to develop the Communication Strategy (for copy see file of Minutes).

Board members referred to the provision of newsletters for all categories of member and discussed the feasibility of electronic communication, including the Annual Benefit Statement.

Members noted that current communication arrangements with scheme members and employers met legal requirements, and Nick Orton advised that Officers were exploring the provision of some on-line information for active members. The Authority also hoped to roll out employer access to the Fund's on-line system to update new scheme members and leavers.

Ian Densham asked if the information provided to scheme members was affected by the new requirements under GDPR. Nick Orton explained that the Authority had a legal obligation to provide and publicise information about the scheme to members, and a privacy notice had been produced to reflect this, using a notice which had been developed nationally. As part of GDPR a retention document had been produced which specified the retention period for holding scheme member information.

AGREED that the information given be noted and Officers explore the feasibility of electronic communication with members of the pension scheme in future.

b Internal Dispute Cases, and Pensions Ombudsman Cases

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided Board Members with a summary of the outcomes of internal dispute cases or Pensions Ombudsman cases the Pension Fund had been involved in since April 2015 (for copy see file of Minutes).

AGREED that the information given be noted.

9 Date of Next Meeting

AGREED that the next meeting be held on Thursday 6 September 2018 at 2.00pm following Pension Fund Committee.

10 Any Other Business

i) Scheme member/employer representation on the BCPP Joint Committee

Neville Hancock referred to the discussion at the Pension Fund Committee concerning the appointment of a scheme member and scheme employer to the BCPP Joint Committee, and that Trade Unions were lobbying for a scheme member position due to their capacity to represent members. The Shadow Scheme Advisory Board had recommended that in most circumstances it would expect a scheme member and scheme employer to be represented on the Joint Committee.

Board Members were in agreement that one scheme member and one scheme employer should be represented and noted that this had been supported by the Pension Fund Committee. Members also agreed that

consideration should be given to a suitable recruitment process, given the number of scheme members and employers.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** that a letter be sent to the Chairman of the Pension Fund Committee advising of the Board's support to the appointment of a scheme member and scheme employer on the Joint Committee, and that the pool consider a practical recruitment process.

ii) **Filling of Vacant Positions – Pension Fund Committee**

Board Members asked for an update in respect of the vacant positions on the Pension Fund Committee. Nick Orton advised of the recent appointment of Andy Broadbent, Further Education Colleges representative, and reported that interviews for two pensioner representatives were due to take place in the next few weeks.

AGREED that the information given be noted.