

Decisions of the General Functions Committee

23 March 2015

Members Present:-

Councillor Joan Scannell (Chairman)
Councillor Wendy Prentice (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Richard Cornelius Councillor Barry Rawlings
Councillor Kathy Levine Councillor Daniel Thomas
Councillor Alison Moore
(substituting for Councillor
Chalie O-Macauley)

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Charlie O-Macauley

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2015 be agreed as a correct record.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Charlie O-Macauley who was substituted for by Councillor Alison Moore.

3. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor Barry Rawlings declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to agenda item 7 (Establishment of a Local Pension Board) as he was a member of the UNISON union.

Councillors Richard Cornelius, Joan Scannell and Daniel Thomas declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 7 (Establishment of a Local Pension Board) as they were members of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None

5. PUBLIC QUESTION AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

None

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)

None

7. ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL PENSION BOARD

The Head of Governance introduced the report and highlighted the key features of the proposals.

The Human Resources Director reported comments received from UNISON and GMB union representatives in response to the proposed Local Pension Board structure options as set out in the report. It was noted that the trade union representatives were unable to attend the meeting owing to conflicting schedules, but had broadly expressed support for Option 2 with regard to the composition of the Board, provided the employee side included trade union representation.

Officers clarified that the Local Pension Board Members would receive the same allowance as co-opted and independent members of committees which was £127 per meeting.

Following debate, the Chairman moved the following amendment to the recommendation 3 set out in the report:

“That the Committee approve the Pension Board Code of Conduct, Conflicts of Interests Policy together with the Training Policy and that the process of selecting non-councillor board members be delegated to the monitoring officer, following consultation with the Chairman of the General Functions Committee”

The proposed amendment was duly seconded.

Votes were recorded as follows:

For	4
Against	0
Abstention	3

Following debate, the Chairman moved that the Committee support the adoption of Option 1 as detailed in the report. The proposed amendment was duly seconded.

Votes were recorded as follows:

For	4
Against	3
Abstention	0

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The Committee approve the establishment of a Pension Board with the terms of reference set out in Appendix 2 of the report composed in accordance with Option 1 (as detailed in Section 4.1 of Appendix 2);**
- 2. The Committee agree to the appointment of a councillor (not being a member of the Pension Fund Committee) as one of the council representatives on the Board;**

3. That the Committee approve the Pension Board Code of Conduct, Conflicts of Interests Policy together with the Training Policy and that the process of selecting non-councillor Board Members be delegated to the monitoring officer, following consultation with the Chairman of the General Functions Committee; and
4. That the Committee approve the draft work plan for the first year of the Pension Board as set out in Appendix 3 of the report.

8. MEMBERS' INFORMATION MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Head of Governance introduced the report and highlighted the key features of the proposed policy amendments.

The Committee considered the report and asked questions which were responded to by the Head of Governance and the Assistant Director of Finance.

The Assistant Director of Finance undertook to ascertain whether an obligation for Members and officers to use secure methods of communication when sending or receiving sensitive data was dealt with in another policy and if not, to amend the Members' Information Management Policy accordingly.

The Committee indicated its support for the Chairman's proposal to amend the report through the deletion of paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4 of the report of officers.

Following consideration, a motion was proposed and seconded to:

- Amend recommendation 2 to add at the end of the sentence "In consultation with the Chairman of the General Functions Committee";
- Amend the process for making an appeal against a decision not to disclose non-committee information (Section 7.1 ii) refers) of the proposed policy; and
- Approve the policy as amended.

Votes were recorded as follows:

For	4
Against	0
Abstention	3

RESOLVED that:

1. The Committee agree that Section 7.1 ii) of the Members Information Management Policy (Appeal against a decision to not disclose non-committee information) be amended as follows:
 - (i) Delete the words 'whose view will be final' from the third sentence so that it instead reads "The SIRO will decide whether the requested information can be provided to the member and whether any redactions should be made to enable more information to be provided."

(ii) Add the following paragraphs to the end of the section: “Should the SIRO form the opinion that the member concerned does not have a ‘need to know’ or ‘for some other reason’ then the SIRO must prepare a report for the CE who must investigate this further and notify the member of his findings.” and “Should the member concerned disagree with the findings of the CE then they shall have the right to have their request re-heard by the General Functions Committee who will make the final decision.”

2. That the existing Members’ Information Management Policy be withdrawn and the Members’ Information Management Policy (attached as Appendix 1 of the report and as amended above) be approved; and
3. That the Head of Information Management be requested to make and implement any minor amendments to the policy following consultation with the Chairman of the General Functions Committee.

9. VACANCIES ON SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Nominations for representatives on school governing bodies where vacancies had arisen had been circulated to the Committee.

A vote was taken in relation to one contested vacancy in respect of Oaklodge School. The Conservative Group nominated Mr Pranay Subedi. The Labour Group proposed Ms Sue O’Halloran. Votes in respect of the appointment of Mr Subedi were recorded as follows:

For	4
Against	2
Abstention	1

RESOLVED that:

1. The following appointments set out in the schedule were made:

	School	Appointment
1.	Blessed Dominic Catholic School	Councillor Ammar Naqvi
2.	Edgware Primary School	Dr Aruna Ajitsaria MBE
3.	Martin Primary School	Councillor Alon Or-Bach
4.	Moss Hall Infant School	Mr Pranay Subedi
5.	Pardes House School	Councillor Anthony Finn
6.	St John’s CE School	Mr Adam Rynhold
7.	Mapledown School	Mapledown School
8.	Oaklodge School	Mr Pranay Subedi
9.	St Mary’s High School	Mr Richard Martyn
10.	St Andrew’s CE School	Mr Matthew Knight

2. The following appointments set out in the schedule were deferred:

	School
1.	Moss Hall Junior School
2.	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
3.	St Paul's CE School
4.	St Theresa's Catholic School

10. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2015/16

To assist forward planning, the committee expressed a wish that future calendars extend to the end of the 2017/18 municipal year. The Head of Governance confirmed that once Council had approved the calendar of meetings draft calendars for the 2016/17 and 2017/18 municipal years would be drafted.

The Committee requested that officers investigate the feasibility of scheduling meeting dates in respect of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the Health and Well-being Board. It was suggested that the committee could meet in advance of the board meetings with a view to providing comments on items due to be considered by the Board.

The Committee proposed that the draft calendar of meetings be reported to the forthcoming Council meeting on 14 April 2015.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The Committee note the draft calendar of meetings 2015/16;**
- 2. The Head of Governance be requested to investigate the feasibility of realigning the scheduled meeting dates in respect of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the Health and Well-being Board and advise the General Functions Committee Chairman accordingly; and**
- 3. That the draft calendar of meetings 2015/16 be presented to Council for consideration at its meeting on 14 April 2015.**

11. ITEM(S) THE CHAIRMAN DEEMS URGENT

The Chairman accepted an urgent item from the Head of Governance concerning an appointment to an outside body.

The Head of Governance informed the Committee that the Jesus Hospital Charity had requested that Councillor Brian Salinger be re-appointed as a trustee to the charity. The appointment had expired on 7 March 2015. The charity was scheduled to take some significant decisions which necessitated the participation of a council representative. This decision-making was required before the next scheduled meeting of Council or the General Functions Committee.

The Head of Governance confirmed that he had informed political group secretaries of the vacancy and that no additional nominations had been received.

A motion to appoint Councillor Brian Salinger as a trustee to the Jesus Hospital Charity was proposed, seconded and carried.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Brian Salinger as a trustee to the Jesus Hospital Charity for period of four years from 23 March 2015 to 22 March 2019.

The meeting finished at 7.50 pm