

Decisions of the Local Pension Board

1 March 2023

Members Present:-

Geoffrey Alderman (Chair)

Hem Savla (Vice-Chair)

Stephen Ross

David Woodcock

Salar Rida

Councillor Humayune Khalick

Also in attendance

Alice Leach – Substitute Member Councillor

Councillor Anne Hutton, Chair of Pension Fund Committee

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2022 be agreed as a correct record

The Vice -Chair welcomed Councillor Anne Hutton to the meeting who was in attendance as an observer in her capacity at the Chair of Pension Fund Committee.

2. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None.

3. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

An Apology of absence was received from Professor Geoffrey Alderman. As a result of this it was noted that the Vice Chair would chair the meeting.

An apology of absence was received from Deepani De Silva.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

None.

5. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)

None.

7. EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

The Local Pension Board received an external audit update.

The Council's external auditor, Mr Michael Bediako was in attendance to provide and update. Members received an update on Local Pension Board on the 2020/21 audit, and on the plan for the 2021/22 audit.

Board Members had the opportunity to consider the report and ask questions. In doing so, the reasons for the delays were noted.

Specifically, Mr Bediako explained that a key contributor to the delay was a national issue relating to the accounting of Infrastructure Assets that impacted Barnet Council as well as internal issues within BDO relating to staff being on long-term leave.

The Head of Pension and Treasury stated that whilst the factors raised were relevant, in his view, there were also delays caused by significant staff turn-over within the audit team meaning that Barnet Pension Officers were required to duplicate work and provide information several time, which meant the process was also very inefficient. It was acknowledged that the transition of Pension Administration services from Capita to West Yorkshire Pension Fund had not been helpful in terms of being able to collect the required data.

The Head of Pensions and Treasury asked BDO to be recognise that there had been efficiency issues in conducting the audit and to reflect on this and plan for a better process for the 2021/22 audit.

Resolved

The Local Pension Board noted the report

8. PFC COMMITTEE DECISIONS

The Head of Pension and Treasury introduced the item.

Members noted the matters that had been discussed by the Pension Fund Committee and the decisions that had been made. The Local Pension Board had the opportunity to consider the report.

The Head of Pensions and Treasury highlighted three important areas of activity of the Pension Fund Committee over the last two meetings:

- Development of investment delegation protocols
- Completion of the valuation process and special treatment for Middlesex University
- Development of the Fund's Responsible Investment strategy

Board Members had the opportunity to consider the report and ask questions.

Specifically, one Board member asked whether the delegation protocols should be amended to include consultation with the Board Chair as well as the Pension Fund Committee Chair. The Head of Pensions and Treasury agreed to reflect on this and consult with the Pension Fund Committee.

Resolved:

The Local Pension Board noted the report

9. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REPORT

The Committee received the report.

Having considered the report the Pension Fund Committee:

Resolved:

The Pension Fund Committee noted the report.

10. KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

The Committee received the report. Members noted the role of the Local Pension Board is to contribute to the governance of the pension scheme by scrutinising the work of the Pension Fund Committee and making recommendations where appropriate. Members noted the importance that the Board has appropriate training opportunities for it to fulfil its duties.

Having considered the report the Pension Fund Committee:

Resolved:

The Pension Fund Committee noted the report.

11. ADMINISTRATION PERFORMANCE

The Committee received the report. Members noted that the report provided the Local Pension Board with the West Yorkshire Pension Fund pensions administration performance report for July 2022, along with an update on the completion of the 2022 Annual Benefit Statements and administration.

Having considered the report the Pension Fund Committee:

Resolved:

The Pension Fund Committee noted the report.

12. DATA IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND HISTORICAL LEAVERS REPORT

The Committee received the report. Members noted the progress on the correcting of the member data and the historical leaver exercise.

Having considered the report, the Pension Fund Committee:

Resolved:

The Pension Fund Committee noted the report.

13. PENSIONS SCHEME RISK REGISTER

The Committee received the report.

Board Members had the opportunity to consider the report and ask questions. In doing so it was suggested that any risk relating to the delay in concluding audited accounts be considered and added to the Risk Register as appropriate. It was noted that the risk register was being reviewed and the Chair noted that this matter be reviewed alongside the corporate risk register.

Having considered the report the Pension Fund Committee:

Resolved:

The Pension Fund Committee noted the report and the most recent risk registers

14. BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

Resolved:

That the Local Pension Board noted the work programme.

15. ANY OTHER ITEM(S) THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

None.

The meeting finished at 19:15