

Local Pension Board

MINUTES OF THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD MEETING HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2020 AT ONLINE MEETING.

Present:

Mike Pankiewicz, Paul Smith, Mark Spilsbury (Chair), Cllr Richard Britton, Ian Jones and Rod Lauder

Also Present:

Richard Bullen, Marlene Corbey, Andy Cunningham, Jennifer Devine and Ashleigh Salter

77 **Membership**

The following change in membership was noted:

- Marlene Corbey would be appointed as a new member of the Local Pension Board, replacing Barry Reed as a Scheme Member Union representative, following confirmation of the appointment at the next meeting of Full Council on 20 October 2020.

The Chairman welcomed Marlene to the Board, and noted that Board member, Paul Smith, had completed The Pensions Regulator (tPR) toolkit training.

78 **Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence received.

79 **Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 August 2020 were considered, and it was:

Resolved

The Part 1 (public) minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 August 2020 were approved as a true and correct record, and the Board's action log was noted.

80 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

81 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman reiterated the role of the Board as a non-decision-making body that seeks to support the Pension Fund in being compliant with legislation and regulations.

82 **Public Participation and Councillors Questions**

There were no statements or questions from the public or Councillors.

83 **Minutes and Key Decisions of the Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee and Investment Sub Committee**

The minutes of the Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee and Investment Sub-Committee held on 24 September 2020 and 10 September 2020 respectively were considered, and it was:

Resolved

The Part 1 (public) minutes of the Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee and Investment Sub-Committee held on 24 September 2020 and 10 September 2020 respectively were noted.

84 **Scheme, Legal, Regulatory and Fund Update**

Andy Cunningham, Head of Pension Administration and Relations, updated the Board on the various Scheme, Legal, Regulatory and Fund developments.

Reforms to public sector exit payments were highlighted as being particularly challenging in respect of the proposed changes to the primary legislation. This meant that the Fund could be legally required to follow two pieces of legislation that contradicted one another for a period of time, in regard to the payment of exit and pension packages in line with the LGPS regulations. It was noted that as this was a national issue, and not one that just affected the Wiltshire Pension Fund, advice was being sought from the Scheme Advisory Board, LGA and MHCLG with updates and further information provided on a regular basis. It was noted that further clarity was needed to enable Fund officers to understand how best to administer the issues correctly and form subsequent operational actions to minimise the impact on scheme members. However, these issues were commented upon as being short term until the solution was formed.

In response to a question, officers clarified that the changes were twofold, with the first stage having been approved by Parliament. It was confirmed that once the legislation had been signed off then the changes would take 21 days to be applied and this 21 day 'countdown' would signify the start of the contradictory legislative position.

Members of the Board questioned the national impact and what actions could be taken by the Board to support the concerns already discussed, to which

officers clarified that they were pursuing all options in regard to seeking advice from national pension bodies and putting appropriate policies in place. From an employer perspective it was noted that it was complicated for them to communicate with scheme members about the changes, and that timing in the short term was the biggest issue as organisations could be looking at redundancy exercises and this would cause a barrier to undertake such analysis due to the complexity of the legislative position. It was confirmed that officers were taking a cautious approach until more information was gleaned and were not providing any redundancy estimates to larger employers at present to mitigate the risk of providing incorrect figures.

After a question from the Chairman, Andy Cunningham confirmed that this topic would remain on this agenda item and would be brought forward to all future meetings until the issues were resolved. However, it was reiterated that once the reforms were fully in place and the transition phase settled, then business as usual would return in the long term.

Employer risk management was discussed, and it was noted that the Government had made changes that applied from 23 September 2020 and that the Fund needed to implement policy changes to reflect these (mainly to the Cessation Policy and Funding Strategy Statement). This had led to newly available options, notably employer contribution rates can change inter valuation as long as certain conditions were met, such as material changes in circumstances specific to an employer. These would be requested by an employer subject to the Fund's agreement, or the Fund could insist on a change in employer contribution rate.

The changes to the LGPS Regulations enabled the Fund to implement a more flexible approach. An example of which was the ability to allow employers leaving the Fund to enter into an agreement to spread any cessation debt across a specified period of time. Additionally, the possibility to allow employers to delay the crystallisation of the final calculation was discussed.

It was confirmed that draft changes to the Cessation Policy was being undertaken and any proposals would be brought forth to the next Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee (WPFC) meeting. Once these changes had been examined by the Actuary, any feedback would be collated, and a revised version would be brought forward to the Board and WPFC for approval.

The McCloud case was explored, and it was confirmed that further analysis was being undertaken to provide a targeted, proportional administrative approach to the issues faced. It was clarified that although the McCloud rulings would ultimately affect only a small number of members, these members needed to be identified to avoid unnecessary administrative work in relation to members which would not have been impacted. The cost impact was expected to be relatively small compared to the Fund as a whole, but it was reiterated that these were estimations due to the McCloud case's focus on the future circumstances of the members.

The Goodwin Case was introduced to the Board; it was noted that it was similar to McCloud in so much as it was a discrimination case but instead related to

sexual orientation, and was not legally as far advanced as the McCloud case. Although this would mean changes to the legislation the funding, administration and communicative costs were expected to be smaller than McCloud. It was confirmed that as soon as the case developed, and more information was available, updates would be circulated to the Board.

The Vice-Chairman questioned a figure presented in the McCloud analysis table on page 39 of the agenda pack; specifically, 45% of active members under the 'Rectified' column, and sought an explanation. Officers confirmed that this table was an estimate of how many members they believed would be affected and how many members' cases and records had been prepared for the McCloud changes. It was noted that for active members, the main task was ensuring that Fund officers have the relevant members' hours histories up to date on the system, as this process was stopped in 2014 due to the introduction of a new CARE system. It was explained that as employers were onboarded onto i-Connect, Fund officers were backtracking and updating these histories from 2015 as part of the new process which had been completed for 45% of active members. It was noted that once the legislations and systems were place and when the active members leave it would then be an automatically programmed system that would ease administration work for the long term.

The Chairman raised a question in relation to the Fund update concerning the employer ill health insurance policy review and asked when the proposed review would be completed and to confirm if it would also be brought forward to the Board as well as the WPFCA. In response, officers confirmed that work was being undertaken with the Actuary to provide firmer clarity on costs and approaches in order to limit the risk for employers but to provide similar cover that was more cost effective.

It was noted that the impact on the Fund's budget was neutral as the external insurers charged a large premium cost that was passed onto the employers themselves. The current administration was highlighted as being quite complex, particularly the financial aspects, but that this would be explained in more detail in the future paper brought forward to the Board. A further question as to if the current arrangement required certain categories of employers to have the insurance, officers clarified that it was optional, but it would be assumed that all the current insured employers would wish to continue to be covered by any replacement product. It was noted that the Fund's largest employers decided to not take part in the cover because they felt they could self-insure, which was commented upon as being common within larger employers in comparison to the smaller employers who had all bought it.

Resolved

The Board noted the noted the scheme, legal, regulatory and Fund update.

85 **Training Update**

Richard Bullen, Fund Governance and Performance Manager, updated the Board on a new training and online development portal offered by Hymans Robertson.

Members were reminded to complete a self-assessment review that had been circulated that allowed them to provide officers with details of any training needs and strategy for 2021-22. Appreciations were also given to those members who had completed and returned their questionnaire.

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions preventing members from attending conferences, seminars and other events to aid in maintaining their current knowledge and understanding across topical pensions issues, alternative training methods had been considered. The online training platform from Hymans Robertson was noted as containing a broad range of subjects, with modules lasting approximately 10-20 minutes, at a cost-effective price. Members were asked to provide feedback on the subject and whether this proposal should be extended to members of the WPFC and Investment Sub-Committee (ISC).

In response to a question from the Vice-Chairman, it was clarified that this portal would be as an addition to the existing member training assessments through the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework and tPR toolkit. It was also noted by officers that this portal contained a module concerning the MiFID II requirements and would aid training for members of the WPFC and ISC alongside any additional training workshops and sessions held within the meetings.

One member of the Board stated that the ability to have different and innovative training tools on demand to facilitate in maintaining the level of education and skills necessary to understand the extent of complex historical and current pensions related topics and issues would be beneficial. The length of modules was also cited as being advantageous in consideration of maintaining a sensible work-life balance.

It was raised that unlike tPR toolkits there would not be any certifications for completion of the modules on the Hymans platform as the training would have a rolling element due to the continued introduction of newer modules. However, it was stated that there was a monitoring process involved which would produce a report of who had undertaken/completed modules which officers noted would be beneficial when gathering information ahead of the construction of future Local Pension Board Annual Reports and the Fund's Annual Report and Accounts.

It was agreed by officers and members of the Board that in the event that the recommendations to the WPFC for all Committee members and substitutes to adopt the training platform was not approved, then members of the Board would still be signed up and would have access to the platform alongside certain Fund officers.

Resolved

- 1) The Board unanimously approved their own use of this training platform.**
- 2) The Board unanimously recommended that the Committee members & their substitutes also adopt the introduction of this training platform for the next two years.**

86 Administering Authority Discretions Policy

Andy Cunningham, Head of Pension Administration and Relations, introduced a report from officers that proposed amendments to four of the Fund's regulatory discretions.

It was noted that the last time the Policy was updated and approved was in December 2015. In parts of the LGPS Regulations, the Fund was afforded discretion over how the rules of the Scheme operate, thus a degree of localised decision making was possible.

An employer had approached the Fund and requested a change to the Policy which officers agreed to bring forth to Board and WPFC, along with the other proposed changes, as part of a wider review. It was stated that the requested change was to mitigate a large financial issue for the employer; officers noted the need for the Fund to balance the protection of employers and the rights of members. The four discretions proposed to be changed were: acceptance of only certain 'non-club' transfers in; death grants; child pensions; and medical certificate requirements for APCs. It was clarified that the acceptance of any 'non-club' transfers in would be subject to agreement between the Fund and the employers on a case by case situation dependant on the context which meant in practice this restriction would be likely to affect only a small group of members.

It was confirmed by officers that the completed review report would be brought to the Board for feedback before being submitted to the WPFC.

Resolved

The Board noted the recently approved amendments to the Administering Authority Discretions Policy and the plans to undertake a further review either later in 2020 or early 2021.

The Board requested that the next update be brought to the Board first for comments before submission to Committee for approval.

87 LPB Budget Monitoring

Jennifer Devine, Head of Pension Fund Investments, delivered a verbal update on the Local Pension Board year to date budget outturn.

It was highlighted that due to the move to virtual working, there had been a significant travel and training underspend projected. Additionally, there was an underspend noted for consultancy charges which had not been used during the past financial year. Officers noted that although the underspend was projected as being relatively high, if the online training platform discussed in Item 9 was approved, the underspend figure would be lower.

88 **Board Insurance**

Richard Bullen, Fund Governance and Performance Manager, delivered a verbal update on the Local Pension Board insurance cover.

It was noted that the Board's insurance arrangement was put in place to protect the Board against certain claims and that this was due for renewal on 9 October 2020. Officers confirmed that they were liaising with insurance providers on the insurable interest and premium amounts, which were £2,500 plus VAT but it was noted that this would increase to £2,850 plus VAT, including commission.

Officers highlighted that the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) was approached with regard to the need for insurance as the Local Government Association (LGA) had provided advice in the past and officers wanted to check that this legal advice had been updated with regard to Local Pension Board insurance requirements. It was noted that past advice stated insurance should be in place, but that this was during the inception of Local Pension Boards as there was uncertainty on how Boards would establish themselves. Officers had been informed by the SAB that the topic would be discussed in a meeting at the beginning of October 2020, with a subsequent survey intended to be circulated to all Boards for feedback. It was noted that officers were working alongside the Wiltshire Council insurance team and were exploring alternative providers to attain a more competitive insurance policy for the Board. Additionally, officers noted that the existing insurance provider had been approached to glean some more details surrounding their claims experience, but it could not be obtained as it was deemed commercially sensitive. Members were informed that the provider had offered an extension for the Board to allow for a decision to be made on how best to proceed.

The Chairman noted that the previous Chairman of the Board had felt insurance was needed to protect against the risk to members but that he felt that there was not an insurable risk due to the nature of the Board being a non-decision-making body. However, the Chairman noted his reluctance to terminate the cover as he felt it was inappropriate to do so unless all members of the Board agreed. It was noted that more information was needed before a final decision could be made. Officers noted that they had written to the Wiltshire Council Corporate Leadership Team and had asked for guidance on the matter and whether it was possible for a level of assurance to be provided to the Board to ensure that no action would be taken against them under any circumstances.

Members of the Board questioned an alternative route by contacting other Local Pension Boards to query if they had experienced similar issues. Officers noted that this had been done on an informal basis but that the majority of feedback

had confirmed that many other Boards did not have insurance in place. Members explored the idea of not renewing the insurance cover but also discussed the adoption of a more cautious approach to not withdraw the insurance without hearing a response back from Wiltshire Council as to some assurance surrounding the wider cover, if that would include the Board, and a statement affirming that no action would be taken against the Board.

The Chairman agreed with the cautious approach and suggested that if the assurance was not able to be obtained within the renewal extension period, then the Board should consider committing to insurance cover for one year to determine the level of risk, thus allowing for a more informed decision. Officers noted the length of time until the next meeting of the Board and suggested a conditional style recommendation that would enable to officers to communicate and take action before the next meeting. The Chairman agreed with the addition of the conditional recommendation and asked if any members of the Board did not support, to which one member of the Board expressed unease to go ahead with such if the explicit assurance desired was not provided. Said member suggested an amendment to the recommendation that stated that in the event that no assurance was forthcoming, the Board would again review the need for insurance. Officers stated that the assurance was likely to be obtained but that the cover under Wiltshire Council's existing insurance had been checked and confirmed that the Board would not be eligible for cover under the Council's wider insurance due to the limited inclusion of pension areas in general and the separation of the Board and the Council.

The Chairman stated that he did not want any of the discussions to lead Board members feeling that they were not content to continue on the Board without insurance. Therefore, it was:

Resolved

The Board recommended to extend the insurance cover for one year and to seek written assurances from Wiltshire Council and to await the updated SAB advice before deciding to withdraw or extend the insurance policy. In the event that no assurance was obtained, a further review on the need for insurance would be undertaken.

89 **Internal Audit 2020-21 (Part 1)**

Andy Cunningham, Head of Pension Administration and Relations, and Richard Bullen, Fund Governance and Performance Manager, presented a report on the findings of the final Internal Audit Report for 2020-21 prepared by the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP), in respect of the Wiltshire Pension Fund.

The audit covered the Fund's processes concerning its key financial controls, the Data Protection Act 2018/GDPR and MiFID II, and gave an opinion of "reasonable assurance". Five areas of review were also highlighted: three were low priority and two were medium priority. Officers noted that under the GDPR item, SWAP conducted a survey on Fund officers for breach reporting and data protection which resulted in positive comments and a good level of

understanding of the processes, roles and responsibilities. Members were informed that officers had requested that SWAP contact other Funds with regard to MiFID II and whether their approaches were similar to that of the WPF. It was confirmed that nine other Funds had been approached and the general feedback was varied but the underlying theme was that the WPF's good practice approach for MiFID II was very high and officers expressed satisfaction at the recognition for the high-quality management of the area.

Jennifer Devine, Head of Pension Fund Investments, spoke of the i-Connect contribution issues discussed within the report. It was confirmed that the issues weren't a risk in terms of the implementation of i-Connect, it was more the posting of the contributions data to the general ledger that caused issues within the accounting team. However, it was clarified that the problem had been identified and actions were being implemented to resolve those issues such as ensuring that employers were submitting simplified returns, and the development of spreadsheets that automatically uploaded the data onto the ledger system which would subsequently minimise the risk of errors. It was also noted that the accounting and investment team were developing a monitoring report that would be sent to the administration team to help the two teams work in tandem with more clarity.

Andy Cunningham followed on from this and highlighted one of the benefits of i-Connect; the ability to view data on a monthly basis instead of waiting for the end of year figures, thus allowing Fund officers to identify and solve any data issues at a faster rate. Officers noted that the short to medium term had produced complications and delays due to officers striving to simplify the process, but that the end result would put the Fund in a far better position for checking data with minimal errors. It was highlighted that this had been raised within the report, but that it was already being actioned by officers prior to the audit. Further improvements were cited as potential action points but that this was reliant on the software providers improving their reporting capabilities.

The recommendations were noted as having been accepted by officers, and actions were taking place, with a report to such being taken to the next meeting of the WPF in December 2020 if completed. The Chairman noted that he had felt there was a risk of delaying employers onto i-Connect as a result but that he felt reassured that this was not the case and that officers were actioning the recommendations.

One member of the Board raised that the covering paper stated that the report contained the management responses but that he could not find reference of such, therefore they felt that it was not clear whether each individual recommendation had been accepted or disputed by management. Said member also expressed disappointment that there were outstanding recommendations still attached from the 2018-19 audit. Officers clarified that management responses were under the title "Agreed Action" but acknowledged that it could have been emphasised more clearly. Officers additionally clarified that the recommendations that had been carried over had been agreed upon by officers but that the recommendations themselves were rather complex and difficult, therefore they were taking officers a long time to resolve. It was noted that the

specific issue concerning the reconciliation of administration and payroll databases had been referred to within the Fund update in Agenda Item 8. Officers were hopeful that an updated report would be brought forth to the December 2020 meeting of the WPFC.

Officers noted that the turnaround between the finalised audit report and this meeting of the Board had been tight which meant that they could not fulfil all subsequent suggestions such as including a process log on the implementation of recommendations but confirmed that this would be raised with SWAP to be included within future audit reports. Officers also confirmed that an update on any outstanding recommendations would be brought forth to the next meeting of the Board in February 2021 to reassure members that action was being taken.

Resolved

The Board noted the findings of the SWAP audit report and the management responses stated within the report.

90 **Internal Audit 2021-22 (Part 2)**

Richard Bullen, Fund Governance and Performance Manager, presented a report that outlined the scope of the recommended auditing proposals to the WPFC, for inclusion in the Fund's audit plan for 2021-22.

It was explained by officers that the established procedure was to put forward proposals that members could consider as WPFC recommendations for next year's commissioning of audits; internal, external and self-assessments, with the primary purpose intended to retain consistency but to also challenge the Fund with new or topical items such as MiFID II. The Chairman requested an update on the recommendations made to the WPFC at the last Board meeting on 6 August 2020 concerning the inclusion into the 2021-22 audits of a review into the Brunel cost savings. It was confirmed by officers that the request had been considered and agreed upon and would be recommended to the WPFC. Officer also confirmed that the goal was to challenge the Fund with regard to i-Connect, GDPR and access controls and so forth in order to provide a complete scope of audit challenges and changes.

The Vice-Chairman highlighted the last sentence of Section 4 of the report concerning the request by the Fund of SWAP audits from other service areas within Wiltshire Council, and asked whether these requests would be for information only. Officers responded and informed members that this would be for key audits pertinent to the Fund, such as Wiltshire Council's ICT systems audits following on from the cyber security item discussed at the last meeting of the Board. It was noted that any payroll audit reports could be beneficial for members to provide some oversight on how sizeable services that the Fund shares with the Council operate. Members noted that this could be advantageous for Fund officers in the event that the recommendations would adversely affect the Fund. After deliberations by members and subject to the respect for Council protocols, it was agreed that officers could request copies of the reports on behalf of the Fund.

The Chairman made a recommendation to the WPFC that Fund officers had sight of key financial systems reports for information, unless there were concerns, in which case the reports would be brought forth before the Board.

Cllr Richard Britton highlighted the update on Paragraph 6 of the report concerning the outstanding external audit of the 2018-19 Wiltshire Council accounts. It was noted that a lot of work had been undertaken but a satisfactory conclusion had not been found, and a decision had been taken between the Audit Committee (AC) and Deloitte to sign off the accounts at the AC November 2020 meeting leading to a qualification by the auditors. The Chairman noted the consideration written in the report by officers and proposed that the first recommendation be amended to include that if the AC does not approve the accounts at their November 2020 meeting then the Board would require a written explanation, but only if they are not signed off.

Newer members of the Board asked for a brief explanation of what the technical issues were in regard to the delayed sign off of the 2018-19 accounts to which Cllr Richard Britton and Jennifer Devine clarified that it was not related to the Pension Fund's accounts but solely with the main Council's accounts and that a separate audit could not be undertaken for the Fund's accounts. It was noted that the issue was as a result of the historical valuation of the Council's assets and the basis on which those valuations were completed. Officers noted that they had requested that a written explanation be included with the Annual Report & Accounts to clarify that the issue was not part of the Pension Fund's accounts.

The third recommendation concerning an officer self-assessment against tPR Code of Practice 14 was raised and members were asked if they wanted to proceed. The Chairman asked whether the report of the self-assessments would be brought forth to the Board and WPFC, to which officers confirmed that it would be. The Chairman then noted that if the self-assessment reports were to be brought forward then he felt that the third recommendation for approval did not seem appropriate. Therefore, it was agreed by members to remove this recommendation and to consider it once the self-assessment reports had been reviewed by the Board.

Resolved

- 1) The Board recommended that in the event that the Audit Committee approved the signing off of the qualified 2018-19 Annual Report & Accounts, no further action was required. However, if the sign off did not take place, then the Pension Fund Committee should request a written report outlining a resolution from the Audit Committee. This also included the 2019-20 accounts.**
- 2) The Board recommended that the Committee approved the scope of the internal SWAP audits in 2021-22, covering the Fund's Pension Transfer arrangements, its internal financial controls, data Protection Act 2018/GDPR compliance and Brunel cost savings.**

- 3) **The Board recommended that Fund officers request sight of SWAP Internal Audit reports from other key services areas, subject to the adherence of Wiltshire Council protocols. Such reports should be provided to the Board and Committee to fulfil their oversight functions.**

91 **The LPB's Register of Interests & Conflict of Interests Policy**

Richard Bullen, Fund Governance and Performance Manager, introduced a brief report on the Local Pension Board Code of Conduct, Register and Conflict of Interests Policy's.

It was noted that these were last reviewed in the Summer of 2018, and that the only material change highlighted within the past two years was the review of the Council's Constitution with regards to the approval of Protocol's 2A in respect of the WPFC, and 2B in respect of the Board. Changes to Protocol 2B effectively require the Board's Code of Practice to be aligned to the administering authority's Code of Practice, rather than operate as a standalone arrangement.

The Democratic Services Officer reminded all members that had not already to review their Register of Interests forms and to highlight any changes.

Resolved

- 1) **The Board approved the officer recommendations outlined in paragraph 5 of the report:**
 - a) **That any declaration made on their own Register of Interests form continues to be complete and accurate;**
 - b) **To consider extending the cycle of the current review period from two years to three, subject to c) below;**
 - c) **On receipt of any updated guidance from the Pension's Regulator in connection with tPR's anticipated new "Single Code of Practice", replacing the current Code of Practice 14, the policy is reviewed.**
- 2) **Officers agreed to update the Board's Code of Conduct, Register and Conflicts of Interests Policy to reflect Protocol 2B.**

92 **Risk Register Update**

Richard Bullen, Fund Governance and Performance Manager, presented an update to the Board in relation to changes made to the Fund's Risk Register.

It was explained that the register had been updated to reflect the internal audit findings in terms of GDPR and MiFID II compliance (PEN009 and PEN049), and it was noted that PEN012, over reliance on key officers, had been raised to an Amber status due to the bespoke and specialist role that was being recruited for within the Accounting and Investment team. It was additionally highlighted that officers had become aware of a requirement for the Fund to make

improvements to the website concerning accessibility for members who had additional needs such as impaired sight or hearing. Officers noted that they would be undertaking a project to ensure that the Fund was compliant and that it would be added to the Risk Register.

The Chairman noted his support at raising PEN012 to Amber and suggested that the topic be further explored within Agenda Item 22. The Vice-Chairman highlighted the use of the word “appear” within the Risk Register report in relation to PEN012 and asked for further clarification to which officers detailed the historic recruitment and logistical issues when approaching the search for a suitable appointment to the specific role.

Resolved

- 1) The Board noted the attached Risk Register.**
- 2) The Board recommended the changes/actions made by officers in points 5 to 8 to the Committee.**
- 3) The Board requested that the matter of Accessibility Regulations be added to the Risk Register.**

93 Administration Quarterly Key Performance Indicators

Andy Cunningham, Head of Pension Administration and Relations, presented a report on the Fund’s performance against its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in relation to the administration of pension benefits.

Attention was drawn to Appendix 2 (tPR Data Quality Scores) and it was noted that the Fund paid their software providers to undertake the required analysis annual due to the fees involved and the requirement for annual figures to be submitted to tPR. It was highlighted that the current figures were outdated, and it was confirmed that the Fund had already commissioned their software providers to update the figures which would be brought to the next meeting of the Board in February 2021.

The Chairman noted the positive nature of the report, particularly in relation to Appendix 1 and 2, and highlighted the fact that most Funds use the same provider for analysis which provided reliable benchmarking statistics for the WPF’s data quality results.

Resolved

The Board noted the current situation and the Fund’s plans for improvement.

94 Annual Benefit Statement Update

Andy Cunningham, Head of Pension Administration and Relations, presented a report that summarised the outcome of this year’s Annual Benefit Statements (ABS) exercise for the year ending 31 March 2020.

Officers explained that the legal deadline for statements to be distributed was 31 August each year, but that there was some flexibility on how to produce them in terms of posting to home addresses or onto an online portal where members were given the opportunity to sign in to receive it or to opt out and instead receive the paper copy. As the online portal would be linked to i-Connect it allowed members to view their financial position on a monthly basis which would be more up to date than the annual statement.

It was noted that some participating employers sent their end of year returns in late, which led to Fund officers having less time to send queries and undertake standard data checks. These delays were cited as part of the reason for the goal of 99% active ABS being produced not being met. It was confirmed that the Fund's production rate was instead 96.9% which although less than target was an improvement on last year's 95%. However, it was highlighted that work was continued on those remaining ABS throughout September, bringing the total percentage up to 97.8% by the end of the month. It was noted that the onboarding of employers onto i-Connect would naturally improve this figure as well as it enabled the Fund to receive more up to date records earlier in the year, spreading out the queries and make the work needed at the end of year minimal.

Resolved

The Board noted the current situation and the Fund's plans for next year.

95 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

96 **Date of Next Meeting and Forward Plan**

The next meeting of the Board would be held on 11 February 2021.

It was noted that the Board's Forward Work Plan was attached to the agenda pack for members' consideration.

97 **Exclusion of the Public**

Resolved

To agree that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in Item Numbers 22 - 25 because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

98 **Accounting Update Report**

Jennifer Devine, Head of Pension Fund Investments, in relation to the Fund's accounting to 30 June 2020.

Resolved

The Board noted the report.

99 **Minutes and Key Decisions of the Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee and Investment Sub-Committee**

The minutes of the Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee and Investment Sub-Committee held on 24 September 2020 and 10 September 2020 respectively were considered, and it was:

Resolved

The Part 2 (private) minutes of the Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee and Investment Sub-Committee held on 24 September 2020 and 10 September 2020 respectively were noted.

100 **Brunel Governance Review Update**

Jennifer Devine, Head of Pension Fund Investments, updated the Board on the Brunel Pension Partnership governance arrangements.

Resolved

The Board noted the report.

101 **Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 August 2020 were considered, and it was:

Resolved

The Part 2 (private) minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 August 2020 were approved as a true and correct record.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.05 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Ellen Ghey of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718259, e-mail ellen.ghey@wiltshire.gov.uk

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