

PENSION BOARD

MINUTES

8 JANUARY 2020

Chair: * Mr R Harbord

Board Members: * Councillor James Lee Harrow Council, Employer Representative
* Gerald Balabanoff (VC) Scheme Members' Representative - Pensioners

In attendance: (Officers) Iain Millar Treasury and Pensions Manager

* Denotes Member present

56. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members.

57. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2019, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

58. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions, petitions or deputations had been received.

RESOLVED ITEMS

59. Pension Fund Committee Meetings 18 December 2019

The Board received a report which summarised the matters considered by the Pension Fund Committee at the meeting on 18 December 2019. The Chair advised the Board of his attendance at the meeting.

The performance dashboard prepared by Aon for quarter 3 2019, which updated the value of the fund to November, was discussed. There was nothing to bring to the attention of the Board with regard to manager performance.

The PFC was generally comfortable with the direction of travel of the CIV. There were some aspects of concern, particularly with regard to the high turnover of key staff and the asset structure. The CIV Chief Investment Officer had been invited to present a training session prior to the next Committee meeting on 25 March 2020.

In response to a question it was noted that the Investment Strategy Review would include property as it was an asset class

The officer informed the Board to that a report would be submitted on the source of future performance measurement reports, ideally something comparable to PIRC

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

60. Pension Administration Performance Monitoring to 30th September 2019

The Board received a report on performance monitoring information for the quarter ending 30 September 2019.

An amendment to the reported figure for the calculation and notification of actual ill health benefits within 5 days was noted. The officer reported that all benefit statements had been published and distributed in August well before the 31 August deadline. All employer contributions had been paid on time in the year to date.

The Board was informed of the staffing make up of the pension administration team. An officer confirmed that staff retention was a risk to the service but the aim was to use flexible working and to give the opportunities to build a career in pension administration to recruit and retain staff.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) future performance monitoring reports include a line on complaints, both active and resolved.

61. Scheme Advisory Board Good Governance Review

The Board received a report which summarised the recommendations to date from the Scheme Advisory Board Review of the effectiveness of Local Government Pension Scheme Governance Arrangements.

Members of the Board discussed the Gap Analysis. It was noted that at present the Council was substantially compliant with the proposed governance requirements and would review current policies to ensure compliance with the guidance and best practice. It was not known what would be in the statutory guidance and any gaps would require more formalised training to show the Board was being developed. A Member stated that a training programme was important due to the changes in membership in recent years. Appointees from Party Groups would require significant training particularly for the Pension Fund Committee. Training was statutory for Board members but not Pension Fund Committee.

The Board referred to the triannual review and discussion took place on how this would be undertaken. It was noted that there would be an opportunity to review the MHCLG statutory guidance.

In response to a question it was noted that:

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- discussion would take place with the Director of Finance on the work plan regarding the new requirement to publish the administration strategy;
- the officer would check the timeline for the government response in Phase 3;
- the TPR report was separate and it took on board the views of the Board expressed at earlier meetings. The officer undertook to circulate a paper copy of the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

62. Pension Board Work Programme 2019-20

The Board received a report which reviewed the Pension Boards' actions to date and invited comment on a suggested work programme for 2019-20 and 2020-21.

The officer referred to the discussion at the last meeting of the review of Pension Board representation and terms of reference. The officer sought clarification that the Board wished to increase the membership by two in order to ensure that a quorum was in attendance and stated that he would prepare a report accordingly. In response to a question it was reported that the union had not put forward a replacement for the current vacancy.

The view was expressed that the increase in membership could bring in members with different views and expertise in areas that were not currently represented.

Board members discussed whether payment should be offered as an incentive. With regard to officers of the Council, It would depend on whether the meetings took place during office hours as had been the previous practice. The Board agreed that an honorarium, to cover expenses and a small sum, should be considered in order to attract Board members. The officer stated that a media campaign would be launched.

With regard to training, the Chair asked that the Chair of the Pension Fund Committee be requested to enable the Board to attend the presentation from CIV on 25 March as it would not be viable to request a separate session for the Board. Further suggestions were: two induction sessions prior to Board meetings, an update on benefits, investment management and current themes for new members.

63. Any Other Business

The next meeting was scheduled for 20 April 2020. The proposed dates for 2020/21 were: 2 July 2020, 17 September 2020, 2 December 2020 and 4 March 2021.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.45 pm, closed at 7.25 pm).

(Signed) RICHARD HARBORD
Chair