

# **Pension Board**

## **Minutes**

### **30 October 2023**

**Present:**

**Chair:** Mr R Harbord

<b>Board Members:</b>	Pritesh Patel	Employer representative – London Borough of Harrow
	Gerald Balabanoff (VC)	Scheme Members' Representative - Pensioners
	Dr Simon Radford	Employer Representative – Scheduled and Admitted Bodies

<b>In attendance: (Officers)</b>	Bola Tobun	Treasury and Pensions Manager
--------------------------------------	------------	----------------------------------

**57. Declarations of Interest**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no interests were declared.

**58. Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2023, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

**59. Public Questions**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions had been received.

**60. Petitions**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no petitions had been received.

## **61. Deputations**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no deputations had been received.

## **Resolved Items**

## **62. Pensions Administration performance Monitoring to 30/06/2023**

The Board received a report, outlining the Pension Administration Team's performance for the last quarter, ending 30 June 2023.

The following was highlighted:

- The Annual Benefits Statement had not been sent out to all staff, due to an error with the new system used. The Board stated that this was technically a breach and asked if this had been reported as this should be included on the Breach Register. The Treasury and Pensions Manager explained that it had not been reported as it had not affected all staff, but the Pension Team was due to report this as a breach.
- With regard to the Annual Benefits Statement the Board understood why the non-compliance occurred. The Treasury and Pensions Manager confirmed that all cases related to Harrow employees with more than one job within the Council.
- The Board asked when the Annual Benefits Statements would be issued and the Treasury and Pensions Manager explained that they were due to be issued by the 31 October 2023. However, this was not confirmed and the Pension Board would be advised when they had been issued.
- An insight into the Ill Health Retirement Case was sought by the Board, to which the Treasury and Pensions Manager explained that Medi Gold had been outsourced as the health provider for this case and that she would report back to the Board as to whether this case was closed and to confirm if the provider for Ill Health had changed.
- It was highlighted that the Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) had been completed by most Local Authorities and it was asked if this was the case for the London Borough of Harrow. The Treasury and Pensions Manager explained that when the auditors checked valuations, some calculations had not been done correctly, and these are going to be revisited with an independent body.
- The Board sought clarification over the cost implications when it came to activities surrounding the GMP and McCloud. It was asked when the cost would be known from this exercise. The Treasury and Pensions Manager acknowledged this and would check this with providers. In addition, checks would be carried out with other Boroughs to ensure the Council was achieving value for money. It was hoped that costs would be known by the end of January 2024.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

### **63. LGPS Quarterly Update and Latest Developments**

The Board received a report which provided an update on several general developments affecting the Local Government Pensions Scheme.

The Board highlighted the following:

- The London CIV had produced a report which created mixed reactions. The Treasury and Pensions Manager added that the Council had not responded to the report as it focused on expansion and not competitiveness. However, the Treasury and Pensions Manager offered to send the report to those interested. The Board asked the Report be circulated.
- A Member of the Board asked how the Pension Dashboard Programme might affect the Council. The Treasury and Pensions Manager advised that it had a positive impact but was not included within the performance report as a limited amount could be done due to resources. However, she advised that this would be reported back to the Board.
- An in-house payroll system called I-connect was being rolled out to all employers for payroll. For example, there were 30 Schools in Harrow which were not part of the Harrow Council payroll system. If I-Connect was successful, this system would be extended.
- The Board questioned whether a review of the staffing could be undertaken within the Pensions Team as workloads appeared to be increasing. In addition, knowledge of staffing levels at other Councils could be beneficial. The Treasury and Pensions Manager undertook to submit a report on this topic to a future meeting of the Board.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

### **64. London CIV and Investment Pooling Update**

The Board received a report which provided an update on the current position on Investment Pooling and the London Borough of Harrow Pension Fund's own pooling arrangements with the London Collective Investment Vehicle.

Having considered the confidential appendices, it was

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

### **65. Draft Pension Fund Annual Report for 2022/23**

The Board received a report which presented the draft Pension Fund Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The following matters were raised:

- Mazars had not yet submitted their “Audit Strategy Memorandum”, which would set out their plan for carrying out the audit of the Pension Fund Accounts.
- The League Table Performance highlighted that from one year to date the pension fund was below the benchmark set.
- The Treasury and Pensions Manager explained that two custodians were to be considered and that they could be utilised to undertake the performance monitoring for 2024/25. The Board suggested that the London Borough of Harrow could work alongside Barnet Council which could save on resources.
- The Board raised concern that Mazars were delayed with their audits. The Treasury and Pensions Manager explained that these audits were expected to be with the Council by deadline of 1 December.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

#### **66. LAPFF Engagements and Voting for Quarter Ending June 2023**

The Board received a report which summarised various Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) engagement and voting issues that the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF). The Fund was a member of LAPFF, a shareholder engagement group that regularly engaged with companies to encourage best practice and effect positive change.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

#### **67. Review of Pension Fund Committee Agenda Items**

The Board received a report which summarised the matters considered by the Pension Fund Committee (PFC) at its meeting on 19 September 2023.

Having considered the confidential appendices, it was

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

#### **68. Work Programme for the remainder of 2023-24**

Members received a report on the Pension Board Work Programme, which reviewed the Board’s work programme to date and invited the Board’s comment on the suggested work programme for the remainder of the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

The Board indicated that the Annual report should be added to the work programme.

**RESOLVED:** That the work programme be noted.

**69. Any Other Business**

Recruitment for the vacant position on the Pension Board was raised. The Treasury and Pensions Manager explained that an update would be provided at December's Board meeting.

**70. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**RESOLVED:** That in accordance with Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items for the reasons set out below:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Reason</u>
15	London CIV and Investment Pooling Update	Information under paragraph 3 (contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).
16	Review of Pension Fund Committee Agenda Items	Information under paragraph 3 (contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

**71. London CIV and Investment Pooling Update**

The Board received confidential appendices for the London CIV and investment Pooling update report.

**RESOLVED:** That the appendices be noted.

**72. Review of Pension Fund Committee Agenda Items**

The Board received confidential appendices which outlined items considered by the Pension Fund Committee at its meeting on 19 September 2023.

**RESOLVED:** That the appendices be noted.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.30 pm, closed at 7.57 pm).

(Signed) Richard Harbord  
Chair