



Pensions Committee

13 September 2024

10.00 a.m.

MINUTES OF THE PENSIONS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 JUNE 2024
10.00 AM - 12.25 PM

Responsible Officer: Sarah Townsend

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Present:

Members of the Committee:

Councillor Thomas Biggins (Chairman)

Councillors Roger Evans, Brian Williams and Chris Schofield (Substitute) (substitute for Simon Harris)

1 Election of Chairman

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Tom Biggins be elected Chairman of the Pensions Committee for the forthcoming municipal year.

2 Apologies and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Simon Harris and Councillor Chris Schofield was in attendance as his substitute, Councillor Carolyn Healy and Ms Jean Smith.

The Chairman informed the Committee that Councillor Nathan England (Co-opted Voting Member) had resigned as a Committee Member and a replacement representative was awaited from Telford and Wrekin Council. Helen Macmillan (Co-opted Employee Representative Non-Voting Member) had also resigned as a Committee Member due to a new job commitment.

3 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

The Chairman explained that he was proposing to defer this agenda item to the next meeting of the Pensions Committee due to Telford and Wrekin Council not appointing their representatives to the Pensions Committee until July and the Constitution stating that each authority holds either the position of Chairman or Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That the appointment of Vice-Chairman be deferred to the next meeting of the Pensions Committee meeting.

4 Disclosable Interests

None were declared.

5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

6 Public Questions

No questions had been received from members of the public.

7 Pensions Administration Monitoring

The Committee received the report of the Pensions Administration Manager which provided them with monitoring information on the performance of and issues affecting the Pensions Administration Team.

Concern was expressed regarding the impact of staff changes seen over the last eighteen months which had meant that the team's ability to manage the work coming in had reduced. In responding, the Pensions Administration Manager explained that since commencing in post in December 2023, she had been undertaking a review on the resources within the team, workload and project work being undertaken. A business case asking for additional resources to help with the workload was in the process of being finalised and once completed, would be reviewed by the Executive Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) and the Head of Pensions – LGPS Senior Officer.

Regarding McCloud, the Committee were informed that the deadline for completing any retrospective checks that needed to be undertaken for members that have left in the remedy period was August 2025. However, going forward, an ongoing workload would be generated from McCloud as checks would continually need to be made on members' benefits to make sure that the underpin is applied for anybody that has service in the 2014 to 2022 remedy period.

RESOLVED:

That the position as set out in the report of the Pensions Administration Manager be accepted.

8 Corporate Governance Monitoring

The Committee received the report of the Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager which informed them of Corporate Governance and socially responsible investment issues arising in the quarter period 1st January 2024 to 31st March 2024.

Although the Columbia Threadneedle Investments Responsible Engagement Overlay Activity Report (Appendix C) was labelled 'Client Confidential', they had confirmed that they were happy for the report to be in the public domain.

Regarding paragraph 8.2 of the report which stated, *'In addition to the public overview Columbia Threadneedle Investments also produce a confidential report on an ongoing engagement which can be shared with Committee members on request'*, Councillor Evans requested that this report be sent to him.

RESOLVED:

That the position as set out in the report of the Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager in respect of voting and engagement activity be accepted:

- Stewardship Update at Appendix A and Manager Voting Reports from LGPS Central at Appendix A1;
- Legal & General Investment Management (LGIM) at Appendix B;
- Columbia Threadneedle Investments Responsible Engagement Overlay Activity Report at Appendix C; and
- LAPFF Engagement Report at Appendix D.

9 Exclusion of Press and Public

A Member questioned why Agenda Item 15 (Ministerial Letter Update) was being considered in the exempt part of the meeting. The Chairman explained that the proposed response to the letter was exempt as it was still in draft format at this stage. The Head of Pensions – LGPS Senior Officer explained that the Fund was required to submit a final response before the deadline of 19 July 2024 and that this response would be brought back to the next meeting of the Pensions Committee on 13 September 2024 and would be included in the public part of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That under paragraph 10.2 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, the proceedings of the Committee in relation to Agenda Items 10 to 17, be not conducted in public on the grounds that they might involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the categories specified against them.

10 Exempt Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Exempted by Category 3)

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

11 T Rowe Price Performance Update (Exempted by Category 3)

Mr Quentin Fitzsimmons and Mr Andrew Skeat, T Rowe Price, were in attendance virtually and provided the Committee with a performance update presentation.

12 Investment Portfolio and Equity Protection Update (Exempted by Category 3)

The Committee received a presentation from Mr Louis-Paul Hill, Aon, which provided them with an investment portfolio and equity protection update.

13 Investment Strategy Implementation Update (Exempted by Category 3)

The Committee received the exempt report of the Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager which provided them with an Investment Strategy Implementation update.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations as set out in the exempt report of the Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager be approved.

14 Investment Monitoring - Quarter to 31 March 2024 (Exempted by Category 3)

The Committee received the exempt report of the Head of Pensions – LGPS Senior Officer which provided them with monitoring information on investment performance and managers for the quarter period to 31 March 2024 and reported on the technical meetings held with managers since the quarter end.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations as set out in the exempt report of the Head of Pensions – LGPS Senior Officer be approved.

15 Ministerial Letter Update (Exempted by Category 3)

The Committee received the exempt report of the Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager which provided the Fund with the background and the proposed draft response to the Local Government Minister on “Efficiencies in local government and management of Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) funds”.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations as set out in the exempt report of the Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager be approved.

16 Governance (Exempted by Category 3)

The Committee received the exempt report of the Pensions Administration Manager which provided them with an update on regulatory breaches arising for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, any stage one or stage two appeals that had been received under the internal dispute resolution procedure (IDRP) and any policy updates that had been completed since the last committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations as set out in the exempt report of the Pensions Administration Manager be approved.

17 New Employers (Exempted by Category 3)

The Committee received the exempt report of the Pensions Administration Manager which provided them with details regarding new employer admissions to the Fund under Schedule 2 Part 3 Regulation 1(d) (i) of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations as set out in the exempt report of the Pensions Administration Manager be approved.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: