

London Borough of Islington

Pensions Board - 21 September 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Pensions Board held at Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, London N1 2UD on 21 September 2016 at 6.00 pm.

Present: **Members:** Mike Calvert, Maggie Elliott, Thelma Harvey, Marion Oliver, Councillor David Poyser (Vice-Chair) and Vaughan West (Chair)

Also Present: **Councillor:** Richard Greening

Vaughan West in the Chair

17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item A1)

Received from David Bennett.

18 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (Item A2)

None.

19 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING TO (Item A3)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Board meeting held on 11 April 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

Matter arising:

Minute 12 – Abatement of pension during re-employment – It was noted that the Audit Committee (20 September 2016) had agreed to amend the current policy to cease abatement of pensions.

20 PENSION ADMINISTRATION PERFORMANCE (Item B1)

Patrick Fullerton, the Deputy Pensions Manager, introduced the report, noting that annual benefit statements had not been provided to scheme members by 31 August 2016 in accordance with Regulations. He attributed this to resource issues and pressures on the Pensions Team caused by numbers of Council staff recently made redundant requesting figures and the demands of the Actuarial review of the Fund this year. The Pension Regulator would be notified of the delay. The annual benefit statements would be issued by the end of October and, where possible, before the annual meeting on 17 October 2016, subject to agreement with the external printers.

Members of the Board discussed the performance indicators in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 of the report and whether it was timely for these to be reviewed, in order that the Board could measure those items which it considered most important. A suggestion was made that the

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customer satisfaction survey be issued to members of the Scheme in the near future to gauge members' satisfaction with the service they received from the Pensions Team.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the performance against key performance indicators for the period from 1 March 2016 to 31 August 2016, including statistics regarding the internal dispute resolution procedure, complaints and compliments, as detailed in the report of the Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Human Resources, be noted.
- b) That the delay in provision of annual benefit statements and the Deputy Pensions Manager's expectation that they would be issued no later than 31 October and hopefully before 17 October 2016 be noted.
- c) That it be noted that the Chair of the Board and the Chair of Pensions Sub-Committee would meet with the Pensions Manager and his Deputy to review the current suite of key performance indicators and to consider whether they needed revision to reflect the items which the Board might prefer to monitor eg how many scheme members had opted for the 50/50 option, telephone call answering by the Pensions Team and the re-introduction of a satisfaction survey.

21 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY POLICY (Item B2)

The pensioner representatives on the Board described some of the problems they had experienced in accessing pensions information from the Council's website, when pursuing enquiries on behalf of pensioners who did not have access to the Council's internal website. The Deputy Pensions Manager suggested that enquiries should be referred to him directly.

Members discussed the usefulness of paper newsletters to Fund members and the costs associated with their production. Suggestions were made about linking with other boroughs to consider how economies might be achieved by working together and whether it might be necessary to ask for extra staff resources to carry out the work of producing the newsletters.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Communication Policy detailed in Appendix 1 of the report of the Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Human Resources, be approved for distribution this year.
- (b) That the Board consider the format and content of next year's statement, including consideration of the inclusion of Frequently Asked Questions, how to encourage people to save more money in their pensions and figures on auto-enrolment, at their next meeting (13 March 2017).

22 TRAINING REGISTER (VERBAL REPORT) (Item B3)

Members of the Board were encouraged to update their training requirements and learning needs analysis.

23 KPMG AUDIT REPORT OF 15/16 ACCOUNTS - PRESENTATION (Item B4)

A representative from KPMG, external auditors, was present to provide some details on the audit of the Council's draft Statement of Accounts for 2015.2016, which included the Pension Fund accounts.

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Members of the Board were concerned that they had not received a copy of the draft Pension Fund accounts, especially as the Audit Committee, which had considered the full draft Statement of Accounts, had met as recently as 20 September 2016. The Director of Financial Management stated that the draft Pension Fund accounts would be submitted to the Board next year.

Members also discussed the staffing and cost resources needed to provide the pension function and agreed that they should give further consideration to this for the future.

The KPMG representative stated that some set procedures had yet to be completed, but he anticipated that an unqualified opinion on the Council's account for 2015/2016 would be issued by the external auditors. There had been no material amendments made to the draft accounts. The Pension Fund annual report had yet to be reviewed to ensure that it was consistent with the accounts.

RESOLVED:

That the Pension Fund accounts and any supporting information be circulated to Board members when finalised and agreed by the auditors (ie 30 September 2016).

24 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT (Item B5)

Copies of the summary Annual Report for 2015/16 were laid round. The summary would be circulated to the Annual General Meeting for pensioners scheduled for 17 October 2016 at 1.00pm. In response to a question, the Pensions Fund Manager confirmed that the draft of the Annual Report was still subject to review by the Council's Communications Team.

Members of the Board were asked to review the document and to feed back any comments or observations to Joana Marfoh as swiftly as they could.

The meeting ended at 6.55 pm

CHAIR