

London Borough of Islington

Pensions Board - 6 March 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Pensions Board held in Committee Room 1, Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 6 March 2023 at 6.00 pm.

Present: Alan Begg, Mike Calvert, Maggie Elliott (Vice-Chair)
and Councillor Dave Poyser (Chair)

Observer: Councillor Paul Convery

Councillor Dave Poyser in the Chair

61 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item A1)

Received from Valerie Easmon-George and George Sharkey.

62 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (Item A2)

None.

63 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Item A3)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2022 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

Matter arising:

In response to a question, the Pensions Manager confirmed that two new staff had joined the Pensions Team. An additional member of staff was being sought.

64 PENSION ADMINISTRATION PERFORMANCE (Item B1)

Members of the Board requested that information on benchmarking with other local authority Pension Boards be included in reports on performance of administration going forward.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the number of members auto-enrolled into the LGPS during the period 1 November 2022 to 31 January 2023 and the information in respect of the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure, compliments and complaints, all as detailed in the report of the Corporate Director of Resources, be noted.

(b) That the performance data for the administration activities of the Council's Pensions Office, again as detailed in the report, be noted.

(c) That it be noted that there were currently no Audit Investigations taking place in Pensions Administration.

(d) That the latest pension news roundup, detailed in paragraph 4 of the report, be noted.

(e) To note the "LGPS Current Issues", published by Mercer's in February 2023 and attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

(f) That information on benchmarking with other similar local authority Boards be included in all future reports.

65 LGPS - PENSIONS' RISK REGISTER (Item B2)

In response to comments made by the Pensions Manager relating to difficulties the Pensions Team had experienced in the provision of data from schools, a suggestion was made that direct contact should be made with the designated Finance Officer for each establishment.

A member of the Board suggested that the objectives set out in the Risk Register needed to be aligned to the Council's strategic objectives and it would be preferable if this was made explicit in the Register. It was also noted that cyber risk needed to be included in the Register.

Members agreed that, in order to fully scrutinise the Risk Register and performance of the Pensions Team generally, the Board should scrutinise the Risk Register on a quarterly basis. In addition, in view of time constraints at this meeting, the Board concurred with a view that they should meet for a minimum of two hours going forward and that an additional meeting should be arranged for the purposes of considering the outstanding business from this meeting which comprised:

- the Risk Register
- the draft Funding Strategy Statement (including timetable for consideration) and
- the Pension Fund Administration Cost – 3-year forecast and annual cashflow.

The Chair of the Board asked the Interim Director of Law and Governance to supply written guidance to the Board on governance and responsibilities of Board members, which might also be considered at the additional meeting.

RESOLVED:

That consideration of the report be postponed to an additional meeting of the Board.

66 2022 ACTUARIAL VALUATION - DRAFT FUNDING STRATEGY STATEMENT - CONSULTATION RESULTS (Item B3)

Members of the Board expressed some concern that not all employers had responded to the consultation, especially most educational establishments. The Head of Pension Fund and Treasury Management was asked to contact the employers again, including the designated Finance Officers for the Academies, to ascertain their responses to the consultation document.

In addition, the Board noted that Regulations required that the draft Funding Strategy Statement had to be approved by the Pensions Sub-Committee and was due for consideration at the Sub-Committee immediately after this meeting.

The Board decided that current arrangements, where the Board was scheduled to meet immediately before the Sub-Committee, were not satisfactory and, in order to meet their obligations, the Board should instead meet on separate dates to the Sub-Committee in order to allow sufficient scrutiny of documents before they were then considered by the Sub-Committee.

The Board asked the Interim Director of Law and Governance to address a review of the terms of reference of the Pensions Board, including frequency of meetings, as part of her review of governance.

RESOLVED:

That consideration of the report be postponed to an additional meeting of the Board.

67 PENSION FUND ADMINISTRATION COST 3-YEAR FORECAST AND ANNUAL CASHFLOW (Item B4)

RESOLVED:

That consideration of the report be postponed to an additional meeting of the Board.

68 PENSION BOARD FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME (Item B5)

Noted.

The meeting ended at 7.00 pm

CHAIR