

LOCAL PENSIONS BOARD

Tuesday, 13 October 2015

Present: J Raisin (Chair)

G Broadhead	D Ridland
M Hornby	P Wiggins
R Dawson	P Maloney
K Beirne	

Apologies P Goodwin

9 MINUTES

Resolved – That the accuracy of the Minutes of the Local Pensions Board held on 14 July, 2015 be approved as a correct record.

10 LGS UPDATE

Members of the Pension Board considered the LGPS update report that had been taken to September 2015 Pensions Committee and was attached as an appendix to the report. The report informed Members of a number of policies announced in the 2015 Summer Budget and the associated impact on the LGPS and its members. It also raised awareness that the Government had issued consultations on the potential reform of pension tax relief and a cap on public sector staff exit payments. The LGA response to HMT Consultation on the Proposed Exit Cap was attached as an Appendix to the report.

An extract from a recent Scheme Advisory Board meeting which provided further information on the Government's proposals for LGPS assets to be pooled was also considered.

A letter from Chris Megainey, Deputy Director, Workforce, Pay and Pensions, dated 7 October, 2015 sent to Jeff Houston, Head of Pensions, Local Government Association was circulated to Members. This had been copied to each Administrative authority in England and Wales and identified the Government's intention to work with administering authorities to bring together investments into up to six pools spread across the country, with the aim to create the conditions to enable significant cost savings and substantial investment in infrastructure in the regions. Peter Wallach, Head of Pensions informed the Board that work was being undertaken by having regular meetings with other LGPS funds and involvement in various work streams and responded to Members questions.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

11 **ANNUAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS**

The Pension Board considered a report that provided Members with the Annual Report of Merseyside Pension Fund for 2014/15.

Resolved – That;

- 1. the Annual Report of Merseyside Pension Fund be noted.**
- 2. the Pension Board offers its thanks to the staff at Merseyside Pension Fund for their work.**

12 **GIFTS & HOSPITALITY POLICY**

A report of the Head of Pension Fund set out a draft gifts and hospitality policy for the Board to consider with a view to implementing a policy for Pension Board members.

It was reported that Merseyside Pension Fund had a gifts and hospitality policy in place which had been approved by Pensions Committee in 2012. Pensions Committee had also agreed that it should be best practice guidance for those members of Committee who otherwise were not subject to personal conduct arrangements.

It was recognised that members of the Pensions Board were not decision makers in relation to the pension fund's business. Nonetheless, in view of the public office that they fulfil, it was recommended that an equivalent policy be adopted by Pension Board members.

The Fund's policy followed the Council's policy and was set out in the report. Peter Wallach, Head of the Pension Fund, informed the Board that a record of training/hospitality would be maintained and requested that Members make a monthly return. In response to questions from Members he indicated that a report would be published annually and would be made available in the public domain on the Funds website.

Resolved – That the gifts & hospitality policy be adopted for members of the Pension Board.

13 **WORK PLAN**

The Pension Board considered a report that provided Members with an outline of current and future legislative changes affecting MPF and the Pension Fund's key activities and projects in response to them.

The purpose of the Board was to assist the Administering Authority in its role as a scheme manager of the Scheme. Such assistance was to:

- a) secure compliance with the Regulations , any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the Scheme, and requirements imposed by the Pension Regulator in relation to the Scheme and;
- b) ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of Merseyside Pension Fund.
- c) provide the Scheme Manager with such information as it requires ensuring that any member of the Pension Board or person to be appointed to the Board does not have a conflict of interest.

To assist the Pension Board in directing its future activities MPF's key activities and projects were set out in the appendix to the report to enable Board members to identify and develop its work and training programme. Following a discussion with Members, the Head of Pensions undertook to bring a draft Pensions Administration performance overview to the next Board.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

14 TRAINING

A report of the Head of Pension Fund provided Members with an update on the proposed training programme to assist members in fulfilling requirements of the Knowledge and Understanding policy.

In a report on this subject brought to the July Board meeting members had been informed that, in accordance with the Pensions Act 2004, every member of the Wirral Pension Board must be conversant with key areas of knowledge and understanding of the law relating to pensions.

Pension Board members were expected to complete induction training within the first three months of their appointment. This consisted of an online training course provided in a Trustee Toolkit by the Pensions Regulator (TPR). Peter Wallach, Head of the Pension Fund, noted that members of the Board were making good progress in training.

It was reported that CIPFA had issued a publication in respect of local pension board knowledge and skills. The publication provided a useful overview of knowledge areas and was set out in appendix 1 of the report.

A number of these areas had been covered in the training organised by the LGA on 28 May 2015 and the additional bespoke training day arranged on 29 September 2015. Members of the Board offered their thanks to Peter Wallach for arranging the training on 29 September 2015 that they agreed had been very useful and informative. At the request of Board members it was agreed

that the course content could be circulated to members. It was proposed that training would be provided on all areas in the future.

The annual assessment of the performance of the Pension Board would include a detailed report on training events offered and attended by Board members. The Chair encouraged Members to inform the Fund of training successfully completed to enable personal records to be kept up-to-date. Several members expressed the concern that the majority of training opportunities were offered in London which was disadvantageous in terms of time and cost. Members discussed alternatives such as Webinars and Peter Wallach noted members' comments and informed the Committee that there would be some local training opportunities such as the forthcoming Annual Conference to be held at Aintree Racecourse.

Resolved – That:

- 1. the report be noted.**
- 2. Members undertake to report all personal learning and development activities to the Fund.**

15 IMWP MINUTES - 19 JUNE, 2015

Members considered the IMWP minutes that had been taken to the September Pensions Committee that were attached as an exempt appendix to this report.

The appendix to the report, the minutes of the IMWP on 19 June 2015, contained exempt information. This was by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, i.e. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Members raised the question of whether it would be appropriate for them to attend meetings of the IMWP and it was agreed that Members could attend – as observers only – and that it would be advisable if they contacted the Fund of their intention to attend to ensure that only 2 members maximum would be attending any meeting.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

16 GRWP MINUTES - 30 JUNE, 2015

Members considered the GRWP minutes that had been taken to the September Pensions Committee and were attached as an exempt appendix to the report.

The appendix to the report, the minutes of the GRWP on 30 June 2015, contained exempt information. This was by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, i.e. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Members questioned whether it would be feasible for the Board to receive further information on the tracking tool and to access the Risk Register. Peter Wallach, Head of the Pension Fund informed the Board that it would be possible for representative of Mercer or the officers to give Members a short presentation. At the request of the Chair it was also agreed that this item be included as an exempt standing item on the agenda of future meetings.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

17 EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Resolved – That in accordance with section 100 (A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business, on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The public interest test had been applied and favoured exclusion.

18 IMWP MINUTES - EXEMPT APPENDIX

The appendix to the report on IMWP Minutes was exempt by virtue of paragraph 3.

19 GRWP MINUTES - EXEMPT APPENDIX

The exempt appendix to the report on GRWP minutes was exempt by virtue of paragraph 3.