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PENSIONS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 19 March 2024

Present: Councillor J McManus (Chair)

Councillors A Ainsworth P Cleary
B Hall R Molyneux
B Kenny C Carubia
GJ Davies
T Cox
A Gardner
C Povall

In attendance: Councillors J Aston
P Lappin
J Rae

41 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone and read out the webcasting notice.

42 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Martin Bond.

43 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Usual declarations:

Councillor George Davies	Personal interest as his wife is a member of Merseyside Pension Fund.
Councillor Andrew Gardener	Pecuniary interest by virtue of being a Member of Merseyside Pension Fund.
Councillor Brian Kenny	Personal interest as his fiancée is a member of Merseyside Pension Fund.
Councillor Cherry Povall	Personal interest as daughter is a member of Merseyside Pension Fund.
Councillor Brenda Hall	Pecuniary interest by virtue of her and her husband being Members

	of Merseyside Pension Fund.
Councillor Julie McManus	Pecuniary interest by virtue of her son being a Member of Merseyside Pension Fund.
Councillor Paulette Lappin	Pecuniary interest by virtue of being a Member of Merseyside Pension Fund.
John Rae	Pecuniary interest by virtue of being a Member of Merseyside Pension Fund.

44 **MINUTES**

Members were advised that the Responsible Investment Working Party had met on the 19th February 2024 and considered a number of stewardship reports including an initial report on the defence industry. Sustainable investments levers of actions were considered to be either to engage, invest or exclude. There would be a second meeting of the Responsible Investment Working Party in the second quarter, and a work plan had been agreed which would include discussions on the Fund's investments in defence companies.

Resolved – That the minutes of the Pensions Committee meeting held on 11 December 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

45 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

45.1 **Public Questions**

No admissible questions were received.

45.2 **Statements and Petitions**

A statement was received from Tony Norbury which read as follows;

“When making the decision to invest our Merseyside pension money into arms companies or not who are supplying weapons to kill innocent civilians in an acts of genocide against United Nations laws and the findings of the Court Of Human rights organisations set up to prevent the acts of genocide and oppression that happen during and before the 2WW from ever happening again

will the councillors on the pension committee reflect on the reasons they attend the cenotaph every year alongside religious leaders who represent all denominations to remember the millions of soldiers who died fighting for a world where fascism is replaced by democracy and people of the world could

live in freedom whatever their religion, colour or political views , without fear of oppression.

Not only remembering the soldiers and civilians who died but the reasons they died and the reasons for their sacrifice which was freedom from fascist dictators who think it's ok to wipe out a whole section of humanity, their culture, history and existence.

I for one as a member of the Merseyside pensions committee give my vote to support those who have stood up against genocide and sacrifice so much to say not in my name.”

The Chair thanked Mr Norbury for his statement.

46 **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS**

47 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (LGPS) UPDATE**

The Head of Pensions Administration introduced the report of the Director of Pension to the Committee. The report provided an overview of changes affecting the future administration and governance of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

Resolved – That the Committee note the administration and governance changes to the LGPS, to ensure continued compliance with legislation, statutory guidance, and industry codes of practice.

48 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR 2024/25 AND ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022/23**

The Head of Pensions (Finance and Risk) introduced the report of the Director of Pension to the Committee. The purpose of the report was to request that Members approved the treasury management policy statement and the treasury management practices for Merseyside Pension Fund (MPF) for the year 2024/25.

Resolved – That the Committee approve the treasury management policy statement and the treasury management practices for Merseyside Pension Fund for the financial year 2024/25.

49 **MERSEYSIDE PENSION FUND BUDGET FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25**

The Head of Pensions (Finance and Risk) introduced the report of the Director of Pension to the Committee. The purpose of the report was to request that Members approved the budget for Merseyside Pension Fund (MPF) for the financial year 2024/25.

Resolved – That the Committee,

- (1) Approve the budget for 2024/25 subject to a review of charges from the administering authority for support services.**
- (2) A further report on the outturn for 2023/24 with finalised estimates, in particular for departmental & central support charges and any known changes in supplies and services for 2024/25, be presented to Members of Pensions Committee at a future meeting.**

50 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (LGPS) CONSULTATION OUTCOME: NEXT STEPS ON INVESTMENTS**

The Director of Pensions introduced the report to committee. The report provided the Committee with details of the response to a consultation by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) which sought views on the Local Government Pension Scheme's (LGPS) "next steps on investments".

Members noted the areas of good practice on which Merseyside Pension Fund were leading.

Members requested training regarding legislative changes takes place before the next Responsible Investments Working Party.

In response to member queries, officers advised that Northern LGPS had received some indication that the pooling structure implemented may not align with the governments preferred pooling method and that they were awaiting guidance from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Officers also advised that investments in the Merseyside region which fall under the levelling up category, have data on the economic, environmental and social benefits they bring but the pool was considering ways in which this could be enhanced.

Resolved - That the Committee consider the report.

51 **NORTHERN LGPS UPDATE**

The Director of Pensions introduced the report to committee. The report provided Members with an update on pooling arrangements in respect of Merseyside Pension Fund (MPF) and the Northern LGPS Investment Pool. Minutes of the previous Northern LGPS Joint Committee meeting were appended for noting.

Members requested a report regarding responsible investment parties to return to Committee.

Resolved - That the Committee note the report and the minutes of the Joint Committee meeting.

52 **WIRRAL LOCAL PENSION BOARD MINUTES**

The Director of Pensions introduced the report to committee. The report provided the Committee with the draft minutes of the previous meeting of the Wirral Local Pension Board.

Resolved - That the minutes of the Wirral Local Pension Board be noted.

53 **MINUTES OF WORKING PARTY MEETINGS**

The Director of Pensions introduced the report to committee. The purpose of the report was to provide Members with the minutes of meetings of Working Parties held since the previous Committee meeting.

Resolved - That the minutes of the Working Party be approved.

54 **PROPERTY PORTFOLIO RENT ARREARS AND WRITE OFFS**

The Head of Pensions (Finance and Risk) introduced the report of the Director of Pension to the Committee. The purpose of the report was to request that the Committee approve the write off of £28,000 of irrecoverable rent arrears from the Fund's property portfolio. For context, the annual property rental income for 2022/23 was £31.7 million.

Resolved - That the Committee approve the write off of uncollectable property rental income of £28,000.

55 **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

The following items contain exempt information.

Resolved - That, under section 100 (A) (4) 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 they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the relevant paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

56 **PROPERTY PORTFOLIO RENT ARREARS AND WRITE OFFS - EXEMPT APPENDIX**

57 **PROPERTY CONTRACT**

Resolved – That the Director of Pensions be authorised to finalise a contract on the terms set out in the report with CBRE Capital Advisors for the provision of property advisory services to Merseyside Pension Fund such a contract being awarded via the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) framework.

58 FACILITIES MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

Resolved - That the Director of Pensions be authorised to finalise a contract with Emcor on the terms set out in the report for the provision of facilities management services to Merseyside Pension Fund.