

North Yorkshire County Council

Pension Board

Minutes of the meeting of the Pension Board held on 30 July 2015 at County Hall, Northallerton commencing at 10.00 am.

Present:-

Members of the Board

David Portlock (Independent Chair)

Employer Representatives;

County Councillor Mike Jordan, Councillor Ian Cuthbertson (City of York) and Louise Branford-White (Hambleton District Council)

Scheme Members:-

Ben Drake, (Unison), Gordon Gresty, Stella Smethurst (Unison) and Mandy Swithenbank.

In attendance:-

County Council Officers: Catriona Lowin, Lachlan Brooksbank-Laing and Andrew Brudenell (NYCC Corporate Accountancy), Jo Wade and Anna Binks (NYCC Pensions) and Jane Wilkinson (NYCC Legal & Democratic Services).

1. Appointment of Chair

The Board was advised that David Portlock had been appointed by the Administering Authority as the independent member and Chairman of the Pension Board to hold office for four years.

2. Chairman's Introduction

Following introductions the Chairman welcomed members to the first meeting of the North Yorkshire Pension Board.

3. Administrative Matters

The Chairman emphasised to Members that the Pension Board was a formal committee of the County Council appointed under section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972. Therefore all meetings of the Board would be open to the public to attend although they could be excluded if an item contained confidential information. Minutes, agenda and reports would be available to the press and public at least five clear days before the meeting.

4. **Public Questions or Statements**

There were no questions or statements received from members of the public.

5. **Order of Business**

Resolved -

That the order of business is amended as follows:-

Item 7 – Pension Board Terms of Reference

Item 8 – Pension Board Conflicts of Interest Policy

Item 6 – Declaration of any Personal or Prejudicial Interests

6. **Pension Board Terms of Reference**

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) inviting the Board to adopt and/or recommend amendments to the Terms of Reference that had been approved by the County Council and were appended to the report.

Board Members made the following comments:-

- **Membership & Appointment Process** – That it remained the view of the Unions that the appointment of employee/member representatives should be determined by holding an election. It was acknowledged that this view had been voiced when the terms of reference were drawn up.
- **Remit of the Board** – that this should include an opportunity for members to consider and comment upon the agenda and performance of the Pension Committee. Board members accepted that whilst not able to challenge Pension Fund Committee decisions they should nevertheless be able to offer comment on them.

The Chairman said that the role of the Pension Board was to act as the critical friend of the Pension Fund Committee and that it should focus on the decision making processes as opposed to the actual decisions. He agreed however that proper channels of communication needed to be developed between the Board and the Pension Fund Committee. The Chairman pointed out that copies of Pension Fund Committee agenda papers and reports were available to the public.

The Chairman noted the comments made which he agreed to refer to the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal & Democratic Services) to action. The Chairman agreed to provide feedback on the outcome of the referrals at the next meeting.

Resolved -

- (a) That the Terms of Reference appended to the report to the report be adopted by the North Yorkshire Pension Board.
- (b) That the comments made by Members and recorded in the Minutes regarding changes to the Terms of Reference be referred to the Assistant Chief Executive Legal & Democratic Services for consideration by the County Council as set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report.

7. Pension Board Conflicts of Interest Policy

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) inviting the Board to adopt the Conflicts of Interest Policy appended to the report.

Board members unanimously endorsed the Conflicts of Interest Policy.

Resolved -

That the Conflicts of Interest Policy appended to the report is adopted by the North Yorkshire Pension Board.

8. Declaration of Interests

Guidance on disclosable pecuniary interests and copies of blank Interests forms were tabled at the meeting for the information of members.

The Chairman highlighted that it was a requirement for all members of the Board to complete the Interests Form. Any Member requiring assistance and or advice about how to complete the form was asked to contact Legal and Democratic Services.

During discussion it was agreed that as the Conflicts of Interest Policy specifically exempted a financial or other interest arising through virtue of a Board member being a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme there was no requirement for Board members to make such a declaration. It was also agreed that there was no requirement for those members sponsored by a trade union to make such a declaration.

Members noted the guidance on disclosable pecuniary interests no such interests were declared.

NOTED

9. Pension Fund Committee meeting held on 9 July 2015

The Chairman gave an oral summary of the business considered at the meeting of the Pension Fund Committee held on 9 July 2015.

The Chairman said that he had asked for a copy of the audited Statement of Final Accounts for 2014/15 to be referred to the next meeting of the Board.

The findings of the Independent Professional Observer were highlighted and the Chairman proposed that a copy of the 2014/15 Annual Report was also referred to the next meeting of the Board.

In respect of the Bond Strategy Review a member suggested that it would be helpful if a copy of the statement of investment principles could be circulated to Board Members. Officers agreed to send out the said statement immediately following the meeting. It was pointed out that unless Board Members were given access to individual investment documents it would difficult for the Board to provide the

Pension Fund Committee with any advice on alternative investments. The Chairman pointed out that as the Board did not have access to fund managers it should perhaps consider inviting the Independent Investment Adviser to attend a future meeting to explain to the Board the advice she had given to the Pension Fund Committee.

Board members endorsed the approach proposed by the Chairman.

Resolved –

That the information provided at the meeting be noted.

That the following reports are referred to the next meeting of the North Yorkshire Pension Board:-

- Statement of Final Account for 2014/15
- 2014/15 Annual Report

That the Independent Investment Adviser is invited to attend a future meeting of the Pension Board.

10. Pension Board Training Policy

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) on:-

- mandatory training to be undertaken by Pension Board members using the on-line training course provided by the Pensions Regulator in the Trustee Toolkit,
- a draft training policy to be adopted by the Pension Board
- training options available to Pension Board members.

Members noted the requirement to undertake mandatory on-line training and sought clarification of the arrangements regarding maintenance of individual training records. After a short discussion it was agreed that it was the responsibility of individual Board Members to keep a record of all the courses they had completed. It was pointed out that certificates were often provided on completion of on-line training and that these should be retained. The Chairman suggested that at the next Board meeting a report exploring the various options for recording training was considered.

The Chairman said he was aware that the Independent Professional Observer, Peter Scales had facilitated a training event with the Dorset Pension Board on the governance of local pension boards and that perhaps the Board may like to do something similar. Members supported this proposal.

The following Board members indicated they would like to attend the LGA Fundamentals Training Course:-

- County Councillor Mike Jordan, Mandy Swithenbank, Stella Smethurst, Councillor Ian Cuthbertson, Ben Drake and David Portlock.

Officers agreed to make the appropriate arrangements and to circulate details of the CIPFA training programme to all Board Members. It was also agreed that Officers would explore whether there was any overlap between the CIPFA training and that

being offered by Peter Scales. In the event of there being an overlap Board Members expressed a preference to attend training provided by Peter Scales as this was more likely to be locally based.

Resolved -

- (a) That the Training Policy in Appendix 1 of the report is adopted by the North Yorkshire Pension Board.
- (b) That NYCC officers make arrangements for Pension Board members to attend training events as recorded in the minutes above.
- (c) That a report on training records be referred to the meeting.

11. Pension Board Work Plan

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) inviting the Board to agree a detailed work plan. Appended to the report was LGPS Pension Board guidance on suggested items for inclusion in a Work Plan.

The Chairman referred Members to the list of examples in the appendix and asked Members to suggest the areas of work they would most like the Board to focus on. The Chairman proposed that in consultation with officers he would then develop a work plan that would be the subject of discussion at the next meeting.

Members supported this approach and suggested inclusion of the following from Appendix 1:- (d), (f), (j), (h) and (k). Board Members were requested to forward any further suggestions to Tom Morrison by the end of August.

It was agreed that any requirements arising from changes to Pension Board Regulations would be incorporated in the draft work-plan as would annual reports.

Resolved -

That a detailed Work Plan be referred to the next meeting for approval.

12. Dates of Future Pension Board Meetings

Resolved:

That the dates, times and venues of future Pension Board meetings are as follows:-

Date	Time	Venue
01 October 2015	10.00am	County Hall Northallerton
14 January 2016	10.00am	County Hall Northallerton
14 April 2016	10.00am	County Hall Northallerton
14 July 2016	10.00am	County Hall Northallerton
06 October 2016	10.00am	County Hall Northallerton

The meeting concluded at 11.20am
JW