

North Yorkshire County Council

Pension Board

Minutes of the meeting of the Pension Board held on Thursday 7 July 2022 commencing at 10am.

Present: -

Members of the Board

David Portlock (Independent Chairman).

Employer Representatives:

Councillor Ann Hook (City of York Council) and David Hawkins (York College).

Scheme Members:

David Houlgate (Unison), Simon Purcell (Unison), Gordon Gresty and Sam Thompson (Hambleton District Council)

In attendance as a Member of the Pension Fund Committee:

County Councillor George Jabbour

County Council Officers:

Ray Busby, Qingzi Bu, Phillippa Cockerill, Ian Morton, Tom Morrison and Jo Foster-Wade.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

1. Chairman's Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first formal in person meeting of the Pension Board for some time. Members and officers introduced themselves.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Emma Barbery (Askham Bryan College)

3. Minutes of Meeting held on 7th April 2022

Considered –

Minutes of the meeting of the pension board held on Thursday 7th of April 2022 via Microsoft Teams

Resolved -

That the Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 7th of April 2022 having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record

4. Progress on Issues Raised by the Board

Considered –

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services advising members of

- Progress on issues raised at previous meetings.
- Issues that have arisen relating to the work of the Board since the last meeting.

A response from Government was still awaited in relation to the Hymans Good Governance review. Optimism of an early resolution had receded.

In relation to Minute 265 relating to Pension Administration Breaches Log, this was now regarded as closed.

In relation to the reference to Cyber Security, it was understood that work pressures have delayed the presentation until the October meeting. It would however stay on the list for that reason.

The additional communication exercise planned for pensioners, referred to in Minute No 327 of the table, would undoubtedly place additional demands upon officers. Continuing to meet demand other than by online means – now the default position - was not sustainable under current capacity. IT was explained this is the reason the exercise has been deferred to a later date.

There was some discussion regarding the availability of information and communication particularly for those members who did not have digital access. Gordon Gresty asked that his concern around inclusivity be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Phillippa agreed to come back to the Board's October meeting with the scheduling programme for the additional communication to pensioners regarding registering for and using the online functionality.

In response to a question, the Board was advised that the triennial valuation process of the Fund undertaken by the Actuary this year would be the subject of consideration by the Board at a future meeting – date to be determined.

In response to a question regarding Broadacres, it was reported that the application from Broadacres pre-dated LGR and that there would be no financial impact on the NYPF from the proposal, as Hambleton DC were acting as guarantor. Further details on how this was progressing would be submitted in due course.

The other issues were included on the agenda and would be updated during consideration of those items.

Resolved -

That the report be noted and any further action highlighted be undertaken accordingly.

5. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

6. Public Questions or Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

7. Minutes of Pension Fund Committee held on 27th May 2022

Considered –

Minutes of the meeting of the Pension Fund Committee held on 27th May 2022

The Chairman noted that the Minutes from the meeting had been circulated with the papers for this meeting. Members of the Board did not raise any issues.

Resolved –

That the Minutes be noted.

8. Verbal summary of the Pension Fund Committee held on 1st July 2022

The Chairman explained that the nature of the Pension Fund Committee's considerations at its meeting held on 1 July 2022, comprised the Governance Arrangements papers included in the agenda papers for the Board.

9. Pension Board draft Annual Report 2021/22

Considered –

Draft report of the Pension Board Annual report for 2021/22.

The Chair had identified several typographical and accuracy issues in the report (recorded below). These would need to be taken on board before submission to the Pension Fund Committee, the County Council's Executive and then the full council.

Attendance at Meetings

- There were 4 remote Meetings of the Board during 2021/22 – 1 formal and 3 informal
- Attendance at meetings was as follows: -
- 8th April 2021 – Formal, virtual meeting - County Councillor Bob Baker and Councillor Anne Hook absent. All other Members in attendance.
- 8th July 2021 – Informal, virtual meeting. County Councillor Bob Baker, Emma Barbery and David Hawkins absent. All other Members in attendance.
- 7th October 2021 – Informal, virtual meeting –All Members in attendance.
- 13th January 2022 – Informal, virtual meeting – County Councillor Bob Baker absent. All other Members in attendance.

Data Quality

- In line with the requirement introduced by the Pensions Regulator, to include each Fund's data score in the annual return with effect from 2019, NYPF have submitted the following scores for 2021:
- Common Data: 97.52%
- Conditional Data: 94.95%

In response to a question of clarification relating to the Board's budget, it was explained that the sum allocated was not a cap as such, rather it was a guide as to the amount required for the Board to fulfil its functions effectively.

Resolved –

That the report be approved on that basis.

10. Pension Fund Administration

Considered –

The Head of Pensions Administration, Phillippa Cockerill, provided Members with a report updating on key initiatives undertaken by the Administration Team of the NYPF.

Feedback was welcomed on the documents enclosed relating to pension fund governance.

The NYPF draft accounts had not been finalised by the time of the meeting. They would be circulated to Board members once this has happened. Comments would be welcome. The Chair reminded Board members that the responsibility to approve the final audited accounts rests with the Audit Committee. The deadline for issuing the draft PF accounts is 31 July 2022. The deadline for Audit Committee approval of the audited accounts is 30 November 2022.

In response to a question in relation to cyber security, arrangements for the presentation to members was in hand.

Resolved –

That the contents of the report be noted.

11. Internal Audit Update

Considered

Ian Morton, the Assistant Director – Audit and Assurance, provided the Pension Board with an update on Internal Audit activity.

Two projects remained in progress as recorded in the report schedule; it was expected that both will be completed shortly with every prospect of being able to report the outcome to the next Board meeting.

The two outstanding items in relation to 2021 audits, required by April 2022, had actions completed.

For the future, it was intended to set out a summary of action to be undertaken in the narrative of the report submitted to the Board.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

12. Dispute Cases and Exercises of Discretion

Considered –

Report providing members with details of the cases received via the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure and those cases referred to the Pensions Ombudsman in the scheme year to 31 March 2022.

Resolved -

That the report be noted.

13. Training

Members considered the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) providing an update on Pension Board Member training.

Members were reminded of the availability and details of the Hymans Robertson online training package and that the aim was for Board meetings to provide an opportunity for Members to undertake appropriate training. The regulations require each Member of the Board to have undertaken the appropriate training. However, to recognise the current demands on Board Members' time the Chair suggested that providing each Board Member undertook some of the Hymans' Online Modules training and attended some of the other training offered by other providers, he would contend with the Administering Authority, or the Pensions Regulator, that collectively the Pensions Board had the required skills and knowledge to carry out its responsibilities..

When discussing the report, Members agreed that in addition to the online resources that were available, it would be timely and advantageous to have in-person training.

Resolved-

That the report, and issues raised, be noted.

14. Work Plan

Members considered the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) detailing the areas of planned work of the Pension Board for the coming year and providing meeting dates for the Pension Board until April 2023.

The Chairman reported that David Hawkins had given prior notice of his intention to raise the North Yorkshire Pension Fund's proposal to introduce a new Intermediate Funding Target for colleges and universities who can sufficiently demonstrate the strength of their covenant to the Fund. This is part of an overall review of the Intermediate Funding Target which was introduced at the 2019 valuation. He had

concerns about how the opportunity for Colleges and Universities to reduce their contributions if they can demonstrate a strong covenant, would be carried out.

The Chairman understood the concerns raised, but reminded Board members that employer contributions are considered as part of the Triennial Valuation and will include discussions between employers and the Fund, with input from the Actuary as appropriate. The Pension Board would not be involved in these discussions.

David Hawkins acknowledged the position.

Resolved –

That the Work Plan, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

The meeting concluded at 12.15pm.