



Democratic Services  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
One Angel Square  
Northampton  
NN1 1DE

## **Pension Committee Minutes: 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

### **Venue: Remote Participation - Zoom**

PRESENT (for all or part of the meeting):

Councillor Jonathan Ekins (Chairman)

Robert Austin	Other Employers Representative
Janet Blunden	Deferred and Pensioner Members Representative
Peter Borley-Cox	Active Members Representative
Andy Langford	Active Members Representative
Councillor Stephen Legg	Northamptonshire County Council
Councillor Bill Parker	Northamptonshire County Council
Councillor Bob Scott	Northamptonshire County Council
Councillor Malcolm Waters	Northamptonshire County Council

### Also in attendance: (for all or part of the meeting)

Cory Blöse	Employer Services and Systems Team Manager
David Crum	Independent Advisor
Sophia Nartey	Senior Lawyer and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Michelle Oakensen	Governance Officer
James Smith	Head of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer
Rajvir Sohal	Democracy Officer
Joanne Walton	Governance & Regulations Manager
Mark Whitby	Head of Pensions

### 01/21 Apologies for non-attendance

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Paul Tysoe and Councillor Richard Micklewright.

### 02/21 Notification of Requests from Members of the Public to Address the Meeting

None received.

### 03/21 Declaration of Members' Interests

There were none.

### 04/21 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting, and thanked them for their continued co-operation and patience in adjusting to the council's new ways of working during these unprecedented circumstances, as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He reminded members that the meeting was being webcast on YouTube and asked them to mute their microphones when not speaking.

The Chairman reiterated his preference for interactive, collaborative discussion during meetings that was informal where possible, with intervention from the Chairman only being used when necessary and to ensure that all members had the opportunity to speak and contribute during meetings.

The Chairman also thanked the members of the Committee, including the NCC officers and independent advisors, for their contributions and hard work in supporting the operations of the Pension Committee.

05/21 (a) Minutes of the Pension Committee Meeting held in public on 11 December 2020

**RESOLVED that: The Pension Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held in public on 11 December 2020.**

05/21 (b) Minutes of the Pension Committee held in private on 11 December 2020

**RESOLVED that: The Pension Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held in private on 11 December 2020.**

06/21 Action Log from the Pensions Committee Meeting Held on 16 October 2020

The Chair invited Joanne Walton (Governance and Regulations Manager) to introduce the action log from the meeting held on 16 October 2020, who highlighted that there were no actions on the report.

**RESOLVED that: The Committee noted the report.**

07/21 Administration Report

The Chair invited Joanne Walton (Governance and Regulations Manager) to introduce the report, who highlighted that:

- There was one red performance indicator in January for issuing letters within ten working days of receiving information, which was explained within the report.
- Receipt of employee and employer contributions averaged a return rate of 99.3%, over the previous 12 months, of employers paying contributions within the required time-frame.
- The breaches of the law referenced within the report would soon not be classified as breaches due to a pending change to legislation. Only one

internal dispute resolution case had been reported over this period. The monitoring officer did not uphold the appeal.

**RESOLVED that: The Committee noted the report.**

08/21 Business Plan Update

The Chair invited Mark Whitby (Head of Pensions) to introduce the report, who highlighted that:

- Concerning cybercrime, the officers of the Pension Fund undertook a questionnaire as a benchmark exercise, in collaboration with the Fund's governance advisor (AON). Subsequently, the officers were in the process of formulating an action plan, as well as carrying out work regarding risks arising from data asset transfers between third party suppliers of the Fund.
- Further information from Hymans Robertson, regarding multiple investment strategies, would be delivered in April; later than originally anticipated.

**RESOLVED that: The Committee noted the report.**

09/21 Business Plan and Medium Term Strategy 2021-2022

The Chair invited the Head of Pensions to introduce the report, who highlighted that:

- The Fund was in a "stand still" period regarding the procurement of the investment advisor as main investment consultant of the Fund, whilst concurrently also looking at the custodian and undertaking a procurement against the national framework. Both pieces of work would flow into the next financial year.
- The actuarial benefits and consultancy contracts were to be looked at, to determine whether these should be extended. The officer confirmed they were happy with the current suppliers.
- The Committee had previously agreed to an extension to the software provider contract with Heywood. A full procurement would be required a year and a half before the expiry of this contract.
- Transactional activity of the Fund would be increased with local government reorganisation.
- The business continuity plan would be assessed following local government reorganisation, with the establishment of West Northamptonshire Council.
- The triennial Valuation of the Fund would take place in 2022
- Unprocessed leavers would be reported in a different way in the upcoming financial year, as cases older than six months would be treated as backlog cases. Dedicated resources would be utilised to target these backlog cases.

**RESOLVED that: The Committee approved the Business Plan and Medium-Term Strategy.**

10/21 Governance and Compliance Report

The Chair invited the Governance and Regulations Manager to introduce the report, who highlighted that:

- The public sector exit cap was formally withdrawn from legislation on the 25th February.
- Fortunately for the Northamptonshire Pension Fund, no cases were processed during this time. Therefore, no rectification to members' benefits would be required.
- However, money and time was spent on implementing the exit cap, which ultimately, was not fit for purpose.
- Regarding future developments, the Pension Regulator's fifteen codes of practice, designed to help scheme administrators govern and manage pension schemes of all types, would now be reorganised into one code of practice.
- The scheme would have 6 months to make any necessary changes, to be compliant with the new code of practice.
- Work concerning the good governance review had been ongoing behind the scenes during the COVID-19 pandemic - the Scheme Advisory Board had now presented their final findings and recommended outcomes to MHCLG.

**RESOLVED that: The Committee noted the report.**

#### 11/21 Funding Strategy Statement

The Chair invited Cory Blose (Employer Services and Systems Team Manager) to introduce the report, who highlighted that:

- The particular regulatory changes that the agreement had been updated for concerned managing employer risk and exits from the Fund.
- The Fund was now formally able to enter into agreements to spread the cost of an employer exit, should the employer exit with a deficit, rather than having to pay a single lump sum.
- Policies had been updated accordingly.
- When using the new provisions the Fund would require security from the employer, unless the strength of covenant of the employer was considered strong enough to warrant not needing such security. This would protect the fund from employer insolvency problems.

**RESOLVED that: The Committee approved the amendments to the Funding Strategy Statement for consultation with employers.**

#### 12/21 Employers Admission and Cessations Report

The Chair invited the Employer Services and Systems Team Manager to introduce the report, who highlighted that:

**RESOLVED that: The Committee:**

- a) Noted the admission of the following admitted bodies to the Northamptonshire Pension Fund and approved the sealing of the admission agreements for;
- CleanTec Services x 2
  - Coombs Catering Partnership Ltd
  - Mitie Care and Custody Limited
- b) Noted the admission of the following designated body to the Northamptonshire Pension Fund;
- The Children's Trust
- c) Noted the exit of the following bodies from the Northamptonshire Pension Fund:
- Aspens
  - Compass Chartwells
  - Compass Contract Services

Under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that if the public were present it would be likely that exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act would be disclosed to them.

15/21 Urgent Business

There was none.

There being no further business the meeting ended.

**Chairman's Signature:**

**Date:**