



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Pensions Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Pensions Committee held at Jeffery Room, The Guildhall, Northampton, NN1 1DE on Monday 11 October 2021 at 4.00 pm.

Present	Councillor Malcolm Longley (Chair) Councillor Charles Morton (Vice-Chair) Councillor Phil Bignell Councillor Lloyd Bunday Councillor Jamie Lane Councillor Graham Lawman Peter Borley-Cox
Apologies for Absence:	Councillor Paul Joyce Councillor Peter Matten Councillor Cathrine Russell Robert Austin John Wignall
Officers	Mark Whitby, Head of Pensions James Smith, Assistant Director - Finance (Strategy) Joanne Kent, Governance and Regulations Manager Michelle Oakensen, Governance Officer Cory Blose, Employer Services Manager Ben Barlow, Fund Accounting Manager Maisie McInnes, Democratic Services Officer
Also Present:	Douglas Green FFA, Hymans Robertson Robbie McInroy FFA, Hymans Robertson

27. Declarations of Interest

Peter Borley-Cox and Councillor Lloyd Bunday declared disclosable pecuniary interests as members of LGPS. Councillor Graham Lawman and Councillor Phil Bignell disclosed personal interests as their wife is a deferred member of LGPS. Councillor Graham Lawman also disclosed a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 10 as a member of Wellingborough Town Council.

28. Minutes

The public minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 July 2021 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

29. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair requested that the Democratic Services Officer move the next two Investment Sub-Committee meeting dates from 29th November 2021 to 30th November 2021 and 21st February 2022 to 22nd February 2022.

The Chair requested that future meetings of the Pensions Committee and the Investment Sub-Committee take place in the Jeffery room at the Guildhall, Northampton.

30. **Action Log**

The Chair asked members to note the action log.

RESOLVED: That the Pension Committee noted the action log.

31. **Administration Performance Report**

At the Chair's invitation, the Governance and Regulations Manager presented the report and highlighted the key points contained in section 5 of the report. In terms of performance, appendix A demonstrated the performance of the Pensions Service in the delivery of key items of casework from the period 1 May to 31 July against a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The Governance and Regulations manager highlighted that there were two red ratings under payment of pension benefits from deferred membership status.

Section 5.2 of the report contained information on the receipt of employee and employer contributions and appendix B recorded that 100% of employers had paid contributions on time in the period from 1 March to 30 June 2021.

The next part of the report, breaches of the law, recorded that two non-material breaches had occurred for the period 1 May to 31 July 2021 as two employers had failed to submit their year-end submissions by the statutory deadline. The Governance and Regulations Manager explained that the employers had been reminded of their obligations and the breaches had been recorded in the internal breaches log. No further action was to be taken, and the Governance and Regulations Manager asked the Pensions Committee to note the breaches.

The Governance and Regulations Manager moved onto the final section of the report, internal dispute resolution procedure cases and highlighted the table in section 5.4.2 of the report. There was an ongoing case to find previous records which were currently being held off-site as the Pension Services required more information before responding to the case.

The Governance and Regulations Manager concluded the report and asked the Pensions Committee to note the contents of the report.

RESOLVED: The Pensions Committee noted the contents of the report.

32. **Business Plan Update**

At the Chair's invitation, the Head of Pensions presented the Business Plan update and highlighted the salient points:

- There had been a delay in the retender for strategy investment advisory services as signatures were required to complete the sealing process following the receipt of legal advice. An extension of the temporary contract has been put in place until the sealing has been completed and the new contract can begin.
- Considering the local government reorganisation with the new West Northamptonshire Council becoming the administering authority for the Northamptonshire Pension Fund, a repatriation of hosted services exercise was currently being undertaken and the Pension Fund was continuing to monitor any significant changes in workload.
- In terms of the review of the business continuity plan, a new WNC template had been secured in September 2021 and work on the plan would be resumed after the internal review on cyber resilience and asset mapping had concluded.
- As a result of the McCloud age discrimination case, the Pension Fund was currently working on rectification of pension records and a request would be sent to all scheme employers to collect data over the next financial year.
- The Head of Pensions reminded the Pensions Committee that a new version of the quarterly performance update from Mercer had been devised and would be presented to members at the next committee meeting for their consideration.

Members questioned whether there were any issues with the supplier for the retender process and the Head of Pensions confirmed there were no issues as the Fund were retendering with the same supplier. Members also asked if there were any issues with payroll following the move to Unitary in West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire. The Head of Pensions responded that the Fund was regularly updated by both organisations on its members. The Fund Accounting Manager assured the Pensions Committee that contributions were continued to be paid correctly following the move to Unitary.

RESOLVED: The Pension Committee is noted the Business Plan Update to 31 July 2021

33. **Governance and Compliance Report**

At the Chair's invitation, the Governance and Regulations Manager presented the key points from the report. The Governance and Regulations Manager explained that every year the Pensions Regulator conducted a Governance and Administration Survey on all public service pension schemes. The survey found that two thirds of LGPS administering authorities who responded had six key processes in place as detailed in section 5.1.2 of the report. The Northamptonshire Pension Fund

participated in the survey and already have the six key processes in place. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, governance had stood up to the challenges that given the climate-related risks and opportunities surrounding Covid-19 and cyber controls.

The Governance and Regulations Manager explained that section of the report 5.2 referred to the new code of practice due to be introduced by the Pensions Regulator as discussed at the previous Pensions Committee meeting. The code was expected to be in force from November 2021 but the implementation of the new code of practice had been delayed until Spring 2022. The Fund will still have six months to demonstrate compliance with the new code of practice. It was hoped that an online version of the code would be produced by the regulator to make it easier for users to navigate and find information. The next section of the report, 5.3 presented information on the Scheme Advisory Board 2020 Scheme Annual Report which had been launched last year. The key points from the report were detailed in 5.3.1 of the report.

The Governance and Regulations Manager concluded her report and reminded members to undertake the six CIPFA training modules hosted by Aon and note the conference dates as detailed in Appendix A of the report. Members are required to have completed these training modules by 31 December 2021.

RESOLVED: That the Pension Committee noted the contents of the Governance and Compliance report.

34. **Admission Bodies, Scheme Employers and Bulk Transfer Policy**

At the Chair's invitation, the Employer Services Manager presented the report and explained the purpose of the report was to seek approval for amendments to the Pension Fund's Admission Bodies, Scheme Employers and Bulk Transfer Policy. He explained the policy deals with how the Fund interacts with employers and had been updated in line with changes to the LGPS regulations and legislation and reflected corresponding changes to the Funding Strategy Statement, previously approved by the Committee. The Employer Services Manager concluded his report and explained that the Pension Committee had been provided with the original policy document and the revised copy with track changes so that members could clearly see how the policy was to be updated.

Members asked a question regarding ill health insurance and the Employer Services Manager responded that the decision was taken in 2017 to provide this internally. Members questioned why the paragraph in 4.1.14 and 4.2.11 was repeated and the Employer Services Manager confirmed that the Pension Fund had sought actuarial and legal advice with the wording of the policy and the wording was repeated in two different sections dealing with different types of employer.

RESOLVED: The Pension Committee approved the amendments to the Admission Bodies, Scheme Employers and Bulk Transfer Policy.

35. **Admissions and Cessations Report**

The Employer Services Manager introduced the report as a standing item on the Pensions Committee agenda. He explained that two admission bodies had been admitted into the Northamptonshire Pension Fund, Caterlink Limited and Cucina Restaurants Limited. The Employer Services Manager asked the Pensions Committee to note these admissions and approve the sealing of the admission agreements for these two bodies.

Furthermore, Wellingborough Town Council had been admitted as a new designating body following the reorganisation of local government in Northamptonshire. He explained that retrospective contributions had been received from 1 April 2021 for the Town Council.

In terms of cessations, there were three for the Pensions Committee to note: Compass Contract Services Limited (David Ross Education Trust); Collaborative Academies Trust (Kingsthorpe College); and Weldon Parish Council. Both the Compass Contract Services and Collaborative Academies Trust's assets and liabilities had been transferred and no exit fees were required as detailed in section 5.3 of the report. Weldon Parish Council was identified as £5,000 in funding deficit as a result of the cessation assessment and an invoice was issued to them in July 2021.

RESOLVED: That the Pension Committee:

- a) Noted the admission of the following admitted bodies to the Northamptonshire Pension Fund and approved the sealing of the following admission agreements;
 - Caterlink Limited
 - Cucina Restaurants Limited
- b) Noted the admission of the following designating body to the Northamptonshire Pension Fund;
 - Wellingborough Town Council
- c) Noted the exit of the following bodies from the Northamptonshire Pension Fund:
 - Compass Contract Services Limited
 - Collaborative Academies Trust
 - Weldon Parish Council

36. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

The Chair moved that the remainder of the meeting be held in private:

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraph(s) 3 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: Members agreed that the public and press were excluded from the remainder of the meeting and the Pensions Committee moved into private session.

The meeting closed at 5.40 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____