

Minutes of a meeting of the Local Pension Board held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 18 September 2017.

PRESENT

Mr. D. Jennings CC (in the Chair)

Cllr. D. Alfonso
Mr. P. Bedford CC
Ms. D. Haller

Ms. A. Severn - Morrell
Ms. D. Stobbs

15. Mr Kershaw.

The Chairman and Members of the Board expressed their sadness at the recent death of former County Councillor and member of the Board Mr Kershaw.

16. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2017 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

17. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 35.

18. Questions asked by members.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

19. Urgent Items.

There were no items for consideration.

20. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting. No declarations were made.

21. Pension Fund Administration Report - April to June 2017 Quarter.

The Board considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources regarding the performance of the Pension Section against its performance indicators. A copy of the report, marked '6', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussions the following was noted:

- Prioritising resources in order to meet the annual benefit statement deadline had resulted in a slight fall in the Section's response rates in other areas, most particularly death grant payments. The Director was confident that these would improve as workloads in other areas decreased;
- The Department for Communities and Local Government had indicated that expected changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme regulations, which included the age at which pre April 2014 preserved members could start to access their pension, would be put into statute before Britain left the European Union although this was still subject to change;
- Ahead of the implementation of the new European General Data Protection Regulations scheduled for May 2018, the Pension Section was reviewing its processes to ensure it complied with the changes which would still be a mandatory requirement despite Britain's exit from the EU. The Section intended to inform all Fund members of how their personal data was managed.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

22. Record Keeping - Data Improvements.

The Board considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources regarding the performance of the Pension Section against its performance indicators. A copy of the report, marked '7', is filed with these minutes.

The Director reported that all administering authorities of Local Government Pension Schemes were required to produce a data improvement plan which focused on how member data was managed. The Board noted that in terms of improvements to the Leicestershire Fund, it was intended that monthly payroll data postings would be introduced (rather than annually) to enable data queries to be identified and resolved more quickly alongside a new process to trace preserved members who were near retirement age to ensure the Section held their correct details ahead of the start of benefit payments.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

23. Risk Management and Internal Controls.

The Director of Corporate Resources presented a report, the purpose of which was to detail any concerns relating to the risk management and internal controls of the Fund. A copy of the report is filed with these minutes, marked '8'.

The Director reported that the Fund's risk management was managed as part of the authorities corporate risk register and since the Board's last meeting no additional risks had been identified.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

24. Children's Pensions and Payment of Death Grants.

The Board considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the Pensions Section's approach to managing the pension benefits for eligible children should their parents die whilst in service. A copy of the report marked '9' is filed with these minutes.

The Director reported that under Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations, the County Council (as the Pension Scheme Administrator) had absolute discretion when authorising a death grant payment to the deceased members nominee, personal representatives or any other person the Authority deemed to have been a relative or dependent of the member. He added that when the deceased member had nominated their child to receive the payment, the Authority had to take extra care to make sure the child's guardian correctly managed the benefit payment on their behalf.

The Board noted that with secure child trust funds no longer being available, there was potential for the nominated guardian to access the death grant payment without the child's knowledge and/or agreement. This apparent lack of security had caused issues in a small number of cases in which family members had questioned the suitability of the guardian entrusted to manage the death payment.

In order to help mitigate such issues, and to ensure the Pension Section was satisfied that the individual claiming to be a guardian was in fact properly and legally appointed, a formal process had been introduced by the Section. The process required the legal guardian to produce the necessary documents confirming their appointment and also required them to sign a declaration confirming the money would be used in the best interest of the child.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

25. Date of future meetings.

RESOLVED

- a) That future meetings of Local Pension Board be held at 9.30am on the following dates:-
 - Monday 4 December 2017 at 9.30am
 - Monday 12 March 2018 at 9.30am
 - Monday 18 June 2018 at 9.30am
 - Monday 17 September 2018 at 9.30am
 - Monday 3 December 2018 at 9.30am
- b) That the next Annual General Meeting of the Leicestershire Pension Fund will be held on Thursday 11 January at 6.00pm.