

Surrey Local Pension Board Member Representation at Pool Level 15 March 2017

Original correspondence sent to Local Board chairman for the relevant Borders to Coast pool funds: Bedfordshire Pension Fund, Cumbria Pension Fund, Durham Pension Fund, East Riding Pension Fund, Lincolnshire Pension Fund, North Yorkshire Pension Fund, Northumberland Pension Fund, South Yorkshire Pension Fund, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Pension Fund, Surrey Pension Fund, Teesside Pension Fund, Tyne and Wear Pension Fund, and Warwickshire Pension Fund

Dear Local Pension Board Chair,

I am writing to you in my capacity as the Chair of the Tyne and Wear Local Pension Board.

At our quarterly meeting on 21 December 2016, we learned that the Pensions Committee representatives of the funds comprising the Borders to Coast pool (The pool) have resolved not to allow any representation at pool level for scheme members. At our previous Board meeting, we unanimously advised the Tyne and Wear Pensions Committee that whilst we were happy that employer interests are adequately represented at pool level by elected members, there needs to be a person to represent the interests of scheme members at pool level.

We were not advising the Tyne and Wear Pensions Committee to give an employee representative any voting rights. We consider that it is a matter of good governance that a scheme member point of view is present and available at all pool meetings attended by Pensions Committee members. This view is shared by the Tyne and Wear Pensions Committee.

As a Board, we feel strongly that the absence of a voice representing scheme member interests at pool level is an omission, that we are not willing to merely accept.

My purpose in writing to you is to establish:

1. Whether your views as a Board were sought on whether there should be scheme member representation at pool level?
2. Whether you provided your pension scheme with any views on scheme member representation at pool level and if so, what were those views?
3. Do you agree that the absence of a scheme member voice at pool level represents an unsatisfactory omission and that you would like to see scheme member representation at pool level written in to the pool constitution?

If you share the Tyne and Wear Board's concerns, there may be merit in taking this issue up with your own Pensions Committee. If several Pension Boards within the pool raise this issue as a concern, hopefully, we can secure an improved governance structure at pool level to everyone's benefit.

I am grateful for the time you spend on this correspondence. More generally, I hope we will be able to establish lines of communication among the Boards within our pool, which will help us all to discharge our statutory duties more effectively.

Yours sincerely

Mike Harding

On behalf of Nicholas Wirz

Chair – Tyne and Wear Pension Fund Local Pension Board

Town Hall, Grange Road, Jarrow, Tyne and Wear NE32 3LE

Tyne and Wear : Mike Harding, emailed 15/02/17

Support Member representation at Pool Level, without voting rights. Observer status.

Lincolnshire : Roger Buttery, emailed 19/02/17

Does not support, (unless they are granted voting rights), considers that there is adequate scrutiny via Lincolnshire Pension Committee and Board

North Yorkshire : David Portlock, emailed 19/02/17 (3) and 23/02/17 (4)

Some strongly held views that there should be some method of representation of Member views at pool level. Pension Committee didn't want a substantial change to complex governance arrangements. Concluded that Member representatives could be an answer, being able to offer comments.

South Yorkshire : Glyn Boyington, emailed 19/02/17 (5)

South Yorkshire Pension Authority and South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Fund Authority declined to ratify governance without some reassurance on Trade Union involvement

Warwickshire : Keith Biny, emailed 19/02/17

Member engagement via Local Pension Board

Cumbria : Ian Stewart, emailed 21/02/17

Engagement at local level, no need for another category of Member. Considers that it will not add value.

Summary

Observer Status approved: Tyne and Wear, North Yorkshire and South Yorkshire

Observer status declined: Lincolnshire, Warwickshire and Cumbria