

MINUTES of the meeting of the **SURREY LOCAL PENSION BOARD** held at 10.00 am on 11 November 2021 at Woodhatch Place, 11 Cockshot Hill, Reigate RH2 8EF.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Friday, 18 February 2022.

(* present)

Elected Members:

- * Tim Evans (Chairman)
- * Siobhan Kennedy
David Lewis (Vice-Chairman)
- * William McKee
Fiona Skene
- * Jeremy Webster
- * Trevor Willington

In attendance

Nick Harrison, Chairman of Surrey Pension Fund Committee

42/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

There were apologies for absence from Fiona Skene and David Lewis. There was an apology from Jeremy Webster for lateness. Siobhan Kennedy joined the meeting remotely.

43/20 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING: [Item 2]

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

44/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were none.

45/20 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were none.

46/20 FORWARD PLAN AND ACTION TRACKER [Item 5]

Speakers:

Neil Mason, Strategic Finance Manager (Pensions)

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Board noted the Forward Plan and had no further comments on it.
2. The Board reports from officers that the tracker needed to be updated further and it was suggested that target dates should be included in the tracker.

Actions/further information to be provided:

That the tracker be updated and submitted at the next meeting.

Recommendations:

The Board noted the forward plan.

47/20 SUMMARY OF THE PENSION FUND COMMITTEE MEETING OF 10 SEPTEMBER 2021 [Item 6]

Speakers:

Nick Harrison, Chairman, Surrey Pension Fund Committee
Tim Evans, Chairman, Surrey Local Pension Board

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Chairman of the Board highlighted various elements of the work undertaken by Committee as stated in the submitted report. He informed the Chairman of the Committee, and wished it registered, that the Board were in support of the work being done by the Committee on investments.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Recommendations:

The Board noted the report.

48/20 TURNAROUND PROGRAMME UPDATE [Item 7]

Speakers:

Neil Mason, Strategic Finance Manager (Pensions)

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Strategic Finance Manager introduced the submitted report and highlighted:
 - Phase 1 – completed migration of fire service; other migrations were on track.
 - Phase 2 – establishment of integration of one pension team was on track. In process of recruiting to the Head roles.
 - A process review was being undertaken
 - the turnaround programme was on track and milestones were being reached with no risk or concerns.
 - Trade unions had been consulted throughout the consultation process.
2. In response to a Member query regarding marketing the Strategic Finance Manager explained that the new vision was being marketed and promoted to attract a diverse set of candidates to take on the new roles advertised in the new structure.
3. In response to a Member query regarding whether there was a Gant chart to show the planned, versus actioned activities, the Strategic Finance Manager stated that he would share the timeline with Members. He stated that a report was going to the Audit & Governance Committee that gave a bit more detail around the timelines and he would share this with the Board as well.
4. The Strategic Finance Manager paid tribute to the whole team of staff.

Actions/further information to be provided:

That the Strategic Finance Manager share the timeline, and report going to Audit & Governance Committee, with Members.

Recommendations:

The Board noted the report.

49/20 ADMINISTRATION PERFORMANCE REPORT AND UPDATE - 1 JULY TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2021 [Item 8]

Speakers:

Clare Chambers, Acting Head of Administration
Neil Mason, Strategic Finance Manager (Pensions)
Tom Lewis,

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Acting Head of Administration highlighted several areas of the report including:
 - Fewer cases had been received and more had been completed, therefore the backlog had reduced
 - There had been an improvement on death cases
 - There were no breaches to report
 - Annual Benefit Statements were all sent out on time
 - A new employer website had been developed and was now live
 - The legacy removal work with Mercer was now completed
 - GMP reconciliation had moved on and the communication to members had been put together by Mercer
 - The McCloud project – 74 responses from providers had been received and another 53 responses were awaited. Once all the data had been received they would look at how to take forward. If all providers do not respond then the Acting Head of Administration would look to national guidance on how to take this forward.
2. In response to a Member query on whether there were any trends to the complaints received the Acting Head of Administration reported that the complaints received covered a broad spectrum of areas but none markedly more than others. The Strategic Finance Manager (Pensions) offered to provide an explanation of how complaints were categorised and defined to the next meeting.
3. A Member asked that where a complaint was upheld it would be useful to know if there was any action needed to prevent it happening again. The Acting Head of Administration agreed and explained that complaints were regularly monitored and whether there was any need to changes systems or processes.
4. A Member asked about whether the helpdesk information included non-response to telephone calls as this had been a problem highlighted previously. He also asked what the percentage of responses was to email enquiries against the service level agreement of three days. The Acting Head of Administration explained that the service desk did not sit under the administration team but could request the information if needed. The Strategic Finance Manager (Pensions) stated that the Programme Team were considering helpdesk activities and whether they should remain as is or sit within the Pensions Team.
5. A Member stated that it was coming up to the time when pension increases would be coming through and sought assurance that the amount

of increase would be included in the letters sent out. The Acting Head of Administration gave that assurance.

6. The Board requested that regular reports from the helpdesk be included on future agendas. The Strategic Finance Manager (Pensions) stated that this would be part of the programme update report.

Actions/further information to be provided:

The Strategic Finance Manager (Pensions) to provide an explanation of how complaints were categorised and defined to the next meeting.

Recommendations:

The Board noted the report.

Jeremy Webster arrived at 10.30am at the start of the debate on this item.

At 11am the Committee held a two minute silence for Armistice Day.

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50/20 VALUATION 2022 [Item 9]

Speakers:

Tim Evans, Chairman

Neil Mason, Strategic Finance Manager (Pensions)

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Chairman introduced this report which he stated he was happy with.
2. A Member asked whether climate risk would be addressed as a risk, rather than as an add-on to the valuation. The Strategic Finance Manager (Pensions) explained the work of the Pension Fund Committee with regards to the Responsible Investment Policy and how this would fit in with discussions with the actuary around risk parameters.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Recommendations:

The Board noted the report.

51/20 COMPLIANCE WITH THE PENSION REGULATOR'S CODE OF PRACTICE NO. 14 [Item 10]

Speakers:

Neil Mason, Strategic Finance Manager (Pensions)

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Strategic Finance Manager (Pensions) introduced the report and stated that the Regulator was in the process of reviewing its Code, and whether there should be a combined Code was still under consultation.
2. There was much discussion around the difficulty of several Members attending training dates as there was no choice on many dates given.
3. The Strategic Finance Manager (Pensions) stated that he would update the Board on the Toolkit which was the required minimum for Members of the Board. He also urged the Board to attend the Investment Strategy training on 10 December and the Pension Fund Committee AGM on 19 November.

4. One Member stated that training sessions could be recorded if requested, as she had done in the past.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Recommendations:

The Board noted the report.

52/20 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT & STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS [Item 11]

Speakers:

Ayaz Malik, Senior Pensions Finance Specialist

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Senior Pensions Finance Specialist presented the draft Annual Report and accounts. He explained that the accounts were in the process of being audited and the auditing was expected to finish soon. The accounts were due to be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 29 November 2021.
2. The Board thanked the Senior Pensions Finance Specialist for the work put into this document.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Recommendations:

The Board noted the report.

53/20 RISK REGISTERS 2021/22 - QUARTER 2 [Item 12]

Speakers:

Neil Mason, Strategic Finance Manager (Pensions)
Ayaz Malik, Senior Pensions Finance Specialist

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Strategic Finance Manager (Pensions) presented a revised version of the cover report (revised report attached as Annex A) – paragraphs 13 and 14 of the revised report included the revisions. He highlighted the proposed changes to the risk register which was now in the ownership of the new integrated team.
2. The Senior Pensions Finance Specialist highlighted the tracked changes in the register and the new risks added as well as those removed.
3. Risk A24 should read 'failure to maintain' rather than 'failure to implement'.
4. A Member stated that the register was an improvement and there was still scope for modifying the risks in order to focus on what was important.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Recommendations:

The Board agreed the changes to the register and noted the report.

Annex 1

54/20 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 13]

The Board noted that the next meeting would be held on 18 February 2022.

Meeting ended at: 11.20 am

Chairman