

Notes of the Norfolk Pension Fund Pensions Oversight Board meeting held on Tuesday 7 November 2023

Present:

Employer Representatives

Sally Albrow	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Liz Marsham	Levying/precepting employers

Scheme Member Representatives

Frances Crum	Active / Deferred member
Peter Baker	Pensioner member

Also Present

Jo Quarterman	Head of Governance, Norfolk Pension Fund
Glenn Cossey	Director of the Norfolk Pension Fund
Charlotte Alexander	Fund Accountant
Eunice Walcott	Governance Manager
Elaine Otway	Business Support Officer

1. Welcome and Introduction

- 1.1 As Brian Wigg (Independent Chair) was unable to attend the meeting at short notice the Board agreed to meet on an informal basis. Glenn Cossey therefore facilitated the meeting and welcomed everyone to the annual in-person meeting.

2 Apologies for Absence

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Brian Wigg.

3. Minutes and matters arising

- 3.1 There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting; however, as this was an informal meeting the minutes of the 5 September will be formally agreed at the next Board meeting on 27 February 2024, together with the notes from this meeting.

4. Declarations of Interest

- 4.1 There were no declarations of interest.

5 Board Membership Update

- 5.1 The POB noted there are still two outstanding vacancies on the Board. Efforts continue to fill both the non-precepting employer and Union vacancy. A presentation was made at the last employer forum, two Academies expressed

some interest but did not result in anyone coming forward. Officers continue to engage with Employers and Unison to fill the vacancies as soon as possible.

- 5.2 The Board ratified Pensions Committee's appointment of Brian Wigg for a further 4-year term as Independent Chair of POB; as this is an informal meeting this will be formally confirmed at the next meeting.

6 Items of Urgent Business

- 6.1 There were no items of urgent business.

7 Pensions Committee

- 7.1 The POB noted that today's meeting would be the subject of a report to the Pensions Committee on 5 December 2023.

- 7.2 In addition to regular standing items, the Pensions Committee on 12 September 2023 had received a report on the draft annual report & accounts 2022 – 2023, the proposed extension of POB Independent Chair for a further 4 years, an update on the employer operational issues, a presentation and consideration of the Pooling consultation and conclusion of the enhanced yield portfolio review.

- 7.3 POB also noted that :

- Pensions Committee appointed William Richmond, as Vice Chair.
- the Liberal Democrat member has been changed, with Cllr Brian Watkins returning to Committee.
- Ben Farmer (Hymans Robertson) has replaced David Walker as Investment Consultant.

- 7.4 The December 2023 meeting of Pensions Committee would receive a progress report on risk management, a presentation from ClearGlass on pooling costs / savings and benchmarking and a presentation from Hymans on post valuation funding. Investment Managers J P Morgan will also attend virtually.

- 7.5 POB members were reminded that they can observe Pensions Committee in person should they wish to.

8 LGPS Reform

- 8.1 POB received an update on the ongoing national reform programme and other issues within the LGPS.

- 8.2 Trustee Training provided useful information on a number of these reforms.

- 8.3
- Pooling and levelling up: consultation – our response submitted and circulated to POB for information – possibly referenced in Autumn statement later this month.
 - Climate reporting (TCFD): guidance for reporting still outstanding
 - Good Governance: consultation – possible next year?
 - TPR revised code: implementation – expected soon.
 - McCloud: remedy in progress our administration teams are working through the implementation.
 - Pensions Dashboard: working towards revised implementation plan.

- 8.4 Trustee Training material has been circulated to POB members which will give more detailed updates.

9 **Norfolk Pension Fund Operational Update**

9.1 Operational update

- 9.2 POB received the latest Key Performance Indicators.

- 9.3 ACCESS update – a presentation was included in Trustee Training materials. Joint Committee (JC) meeting 4 September public and private papers were circulated to POB members and Pensions Committee – Cllr Oliver attends for Norfolk.

- Sale of Link to Waystone now complete. A full procurement is underway to ensure continuity of service provision when the current contract with Waystone comes to an end in March 2025.
- ACCESS submitted a response to the Pooling Consultation
- Officers are considering the options raised by Barnett Waddingham following the review of governance and the ASU, and recommendations will be taken to JC in the new year.
- Following the sale of MJ Hudson to Apex, work has recommenced on illiquid Alternative Assets.

9.4 Communications update

- Included in the forward Service Plan will be a review of current Communications Strategy, POB agreed to include this as part of their forward programme.
- In response to a question JQ explained the purpose of the Employer Forums, pensions clinics and other ways we engage with members and employers.
- POB noted Hyman's Robertson and other external speakers' involvement in events and in-person discussions add value.
- It may be appropriate to have more targeted employer forums to focus on relevant issues.

9.5 Employer operational issues

- Update on progress and successful conclusion of the backlog achieved.
- Risk register reduced from red to amber and anticipate will go green.
- Now establishing 'BAU' with monthly data submissions
- POB noted a fantastic achievement by NCC and Pensions admin staff.

9.6 Employer Forum

- Noted the next employer forum is at the end of November, which will be hybrid. The format, content etc will all be reviewed as part of comms strategy review

10 **Operational Update: Good Governance progress**

- 10.1 POB received a presentation from Eunice Walcott, Governance Manager, that included an overview of progress against compliance with the anticipated Good Governance recommendations; and an update on the new

service planning approach, building on the refreshed Norfolk Pension Fund mission statement and strategic objectives.

- 10.2 POB acknowledged the significant work done on the project by the Governance Team.

11 **Operational Update: Risk management**

- 11.1 POB also received a presentation from Eunice Walcott on risk management, including cyber and data security which included a definition of risk, monitoring and reporting, assessing, and understanding risk, training requirements and the sign-up to the Pensions Regulator's pledge.

- 11.2 Thanks were placed on record to Eunice Walcott for the presentations.

12 **Operational Update: Cost Transparency**

- 12.1 POB received a presentation on cost transparency by Charlotte Alexander, Pension Fund Accountant on the code, adoption timelines, examples of costs, annual report, and accounts 2022-2023 and benefits to NPF.

- 12.2 In response to questions Charlotte explained that custody fees are paid separately to transaction fees.

- 12.3 Thanks were placed on record to Charlotte Alexander for the presentation.

13 **Internal audit reports**

- 13.1 POB noted there were no new Internal Audit reports since the last meeting.

14 **Knowledge, Skills, and Training**

- 14.1 Members of POB attended Trustee 2-day training on 1 and 2 November alongside members of Pensions Committee and Officers. POB members found the training overall excellent. POB were invited to share feedback to help inform future planning,

- POB attendees noted there was a lot of engagement during the training and some subjects would have benefitted from more time.
- There was a lot of content to take in.
- Consider a fund introduction to different topics to contextualise sessions.
- POB would appreciate understanding in more detail how various organisations fit together.
- There had been a suggestion that there is benefit in visiting offices of different presenters, rather than basing the day in one office – POB could see some value in being more mobile perhaps but would need to be balanced with the time required for the sessions; and was keen to avoid 'sales pitches'.
- Try to agree dates as soon as possible for diary management

- 14.2 Thanks were placed on record to the organisers and presenters and the pension fund staff for all their hard work.

- 14.3 POB are reminded to let Elaine know for training records any training completed / attended (LOLA details are recorded in the system).

- 14.4 Officers will continue to advise Pensions Committee and POB of upcoming training events that may be of interest.

15 **Forward Work Programme for the Pensions Oversight Board**

- 15.1 The forward work programme was discussed. POB are invited to advise JQ of any other areas for consideration.

16 **Future Meeting dates**

- 16.1 The next meeting date is 27 February 2024 (this meeting will be virtual).
- 16.2 Future meeting dates will be arranged after checking with Democratic Services on future Pensions Committee dates and would be confirmed by email to members.

The meeting closed at 12.30