



## **Minutes of the Norfolk Pension Fund Pensions Oversight Board meeting held on Thursday 5 November 2020.**

### **Present:**

#### **Chairman**

Brian Wigg

#### **Employer Representatives**

Cllr Chris Walker  
Debbie Beck until 11.30am  
Howard Nelson

Poringland Parish Council  
Norfolk County Council  
DNEAT

#### **Scheme Member Representatives**

John Harries  
Rachel Farmer  
Peter Baker

Active / Deferred member  
Trade Union  
Pensioner Member

#### **Also Present**

Jo Quarterman

Glenn Cossey  
Debra Keeling  
Tim Shaw  
Elaine Otway  
Richard Ewles  
Christine Brennan

Business Development and Project  
Manager, Norfolk Pension Fund  
Director of the Norfolk Pension Fund  
Pensions Member Services Manager  
Committee Clerk  
Pension Fund Office Co-ordinator  
Communications and Engagement Officer  
Pension Fund Project Officer

### **1. Welcome and Introduction**

- 1.2** The Chairman welcomed all those present to what was the third “virtual” Teams meeting of the Pensions Oversight Board.
- 1.3** Jo Quarterman explained the virtual meeting protocols by which this meeting would operate. The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 set out the framework for Councils to hold Council meetings remotely.

- 1.4 Jo Quarterman welcomed Richard Ewles and Chris Brennan to the meeting to assist with presenting the Accessibility Guidelines and Retired Members engagement updates. Feedback from the Knowledge & Skills training session after last Pensions Committee was that Board and Committee members would welcome the opportunity to meet more Pension Fund staff.

## 2 **Apologies for Absence**

- 2 No apologies for absence received

## 3. **Minutes**

- 3.1 The POB agreed the minutes of the meeting held on the 10 September.

## 4. **Declarations of Interest**

- 4.1 There were no declarations of interest.

## 5 **Items of Urgent Business**

- 5.1 There were no items of urgent business.

## 6 **Feedback from the virtual Pensions Committee meeting on 1 October 2020 and items to be raised at the 1 December 2020 meeting**

- 6.1 The POB appreciated the feedback from Cllr Judy Oliver, Chairman of Pensions Committee, on how Board works and integrates with the Committee; POB members agreed that a good constructive working relationship has been established.

## 7. **Norfolk Pension Fund Operational Update**

- 7.1 The POB received a presentation led by Glenn Cossey on Norfolk Pension Fund operational issues, including strategic issues such as the impact of coronavirus (Covid 19).

The operational update included:

### Day to day operations:

- KPI's - a further update would be reported at the next POB meeting in February
- A number of employer issues have been created by the £95k cap regulations
- The Annual report and accounts were awaiting final sign off by the auditors before being published
- Jo Quarterman is providing support to the National LGPS Frameworks team as a result of illness in the team

### ACCESS update:

- Additional Joint Committee meetings would be held in November / January
- On boarding: global equity mandates in November
- Starting to consider options for when the initial operator contract comes to an end
- Looking at options for illiquids
- RI / ESG policy is being refreshed

### Organisational Review Programme

- Phase 1 of the Pensions Administration Software (procurement stage) workstream was near completion
- Employer Services workstream was progressing in parallel with the Pensions Administration Software workstream, with process workshops planned before the end of the year

### Accessibility guidelines and compliance

- The upgraded website would be compliant with the guidelines, and should be available early next year
- Document were being reviewed and updated; and the accessibility statement was up to date

### Retired members engagement

- A revised engagement programme with retired members had been developed with the support of POB members

### Smarter working

- POB received an update on the smarter working programme
- POB were pleased that the focus is on what is the right model for the Norfolk Pension Fund and its stakeholders

## **8 LGPS Reform**

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

**8.2** The presentation provided an update on the following regulatory reforms update and impact:

- £95k cap
- McCloud -. The remedy was expected to impact on approximately one quarter of scheme members. The remedy would, however, involve the Norfolk Pension Fund in 12-18 months of additional administrative and communication and engagement work. The software updates to assist in this process were not expected to be available from software providers before 2022.
- 2016 cost management process- This was being revisited after being put on hold until the McCloud case was resolved.
- Goodwin.-This related to past discriminatory issues. The remedy applied to only a small number of retired members.
- Valuation Cycle and employer flexibilities-This related to the

revisiting and recalculating contribution rates in an inter valuation period and the management of exist deficits for employers who left the scheme.

- Good Governance—This was a national initiative. It included an update on guidance about the knowledge, skills and training of members and officers
- TPR revised code-The NPF were pressing for the TPR revised code to acknowledge and include a greater understanding of the governance framework for the LGPS
- Pensions Dashboard- The aim was to provide a wide platform of interest to scheme members who wanted to take greater control of their overall pension planning. The dashboard was not expected to go live before 2023.

## **9 Internal Audit reports**

### **HEAT (Hymans Robertson Employer Asset Tracker) system**

- 9.1** The POB was informed about how the lockdown following the pandemic had impacted on the NPF internal audit work programme. The first virtual internal audit report for the NPF following lockdown was now complete. This was of the HEAT (Hymans Robertson Employer Asset Tracker) system (introduced shortly after the 2016 valuation) which allowed NPF to unitise and track changes in employer assets and liabilities, monthly contributions and other information in real time. The internal audit report had considered the processes that the NPF had put in place with the actuary for the operation of this system to be acceptable subject to two low priority findings where NPF procedures required updates over the next 6 months. Future planned audits (of accounting areas, governance and administration) were in hand and would be brought to the attention of POB at an appropriate time.

## **10 Risk Management**

### **To receive the latest risk update and HEAT map**

- 10.1** POB received the Norfolk Pension Fund heat map for October 2020 that provided a summary of the current risk register. The risk register was reviewed by the Senior Management Team every month with regular reports to the Pension Committee.
- 10.2** The Senior Management Team was due to meet shortly to update the risk register for November 2020 before it was presented to Pensions Committee in December 2020. The update would take account of recent spikes in some areas of risk that were due to the Covid-19 pandemic and changes in pensions regulations and guidance.

## **11 Knowledge, Skills and Training**

- 11.1** POB received an update about the Knowledge, Skills and Training

Assessment, considered at a joint training session with Pensions Committee on 1 October 2020. The results of this national training assessment showed Norfolk to be in a strong position.

- 11.2** The joint training session had resulted in a draft training strategy being prepared by officers and circulated to POB Members shortly before today's meeting. An update of this draft would be taken to Pensions Committee in December 2020. When complete the strategy amongst other things would provide for a central depository of information on pensions issues and the sharing of on-line links that Members found to be helpful. The responses from POB and Pensions Committee Members would be combined to help develop a picture of training needs looking ahead.
- 11.3** The Chair encouraged POB Members to continue to take part in on-line and (when possible) in-person training events and provide feedback to the Norfolk Pension Fund on their participation so that this information was entered on their training record.

## **12 Forward Work Programme**

- 12.1** It was agreed that the forward work programme should include:
- The shape of Employer Services (including suggestions as to how scheme administration may be simplified for employers with more than one branch office and details about the new Employer Services Team).
  - The implications of the new Pensions Administration Software for scheme members and employers.
  - Details about how HEAT (Hymans Robertson Employer Asset Tracker) system could assist employers.
- 12.2** The Chair referred to how POB had looked at the experiences of scheme members who were coming up to retirement and the experiences of a small employer and said that when attending the Pensions Committee he would continue to offer the possibility of POB taking part in similar work in the future.

## **13 Date of Next POB meeting**

➤ Thursday 4th February 2021

**Chair**