

LGPS Pooling of Investments

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Lead Officer:</i> | Jason Vaughan: Director of Finance |
| <i>Author:</i> | Anton Sweet: Funds and Investments Manager |
| <i>Contact Details:</i> | (01823) 359584 asweet@somerset.gov.uk |
| <i>Executive Portfolio Holder:</i> | Not applicable |
| <i>Division and Local Member:</i> | Not applicable |

1. Summary

- 1.1 Under guidance published by the Government on “LGPS: Investment Reform Criteria and Guidance” in November 2015 we are required to work towards the pooling of the Fund’s investment assets with other LGPS funds with pooling beginning in April 2018.
- 1.2 For the purposes of pooling SCC has aligned itself with 9 other funds in South West England and is working with those funds to create an FCA regulated investment Company, Brunel Pension Partnership Ltd. (BPP).

2. Issues for consideration

- 2.1 Elect a representative of the Somerset Pensions Committee to the Brunel Oversight Board.
- 2.2 The remainder of the report is for information only unless the committee deems that action is necessary having reviewed the report.

3. Progress in transition of assets to Brunel

- 3.1 £507.8m of passive equity assets were transferred from management by the internal team to Brunel (sub-managed by LGIM) on 11th July 2018.
- 3.2 £436.5m of active UK equity assets were transferred from management by Aberdeen Standard Investments to Brunel (sub-managed by Aberdeen Standard Investments, Baillie Gifford and Investec) on 21st November 2018.
- 3.3 £83.7m of emerging market equity were transferred from management by Amundi to Brunel (sub-managed by Genesis Investment Management, Wellington and Investec) on the 9th October 2019.
- 3.4 £268.7m of equity assets were transferred from a number of legacy mandates to the Brunel Global High Alpha fund. (sub-managed by Alliance Bernstein, Baillie Gifford, Fiera Capital, Harris Associates and Royal London Asset

Management) on the 18th November 2019.

- 3.5 The final equity portfolio we are due to invest in is the Global Small Cap equity portfolio. The transition for this fund is in the latter stages of planning and will go live during the autumn.
- 3.6 As agreed by Committee at the December 2019 meeting the Fund has committed £50m to the private equity cycle starting 1st April 2020.
- 3.7 Preparations for the move of our Property assets from LaSalle to Brunel are at an advanced stage and transfer is planned for the autumn.

4. Governance review

- 4.1 Brunel is now over three years old and it has become clear that some areas of the governance model set up at the outset of the pooling project are no longer meeting the needs of the partnership. A governance review is now underway. It is likely that this will result in a number of votes for shareholders on reserve matters.

5. Representation on Brunel Oversight Board

- 5.1 Part of the governance model of the partnership is the Brunel Oversight Board (BoB). This is a non-decision-making board with representatives from each of the Brunel partnership LGPS funds' Pension Committees. It acts in a similar way to a Council Scrutiny Committee and is a key part of Pension Committees gaining assurance over the activity of Brunel Pension Partnership Ltd., the company set up by the 10 partnership funds to manage the Pool's assets.
- 5.2 Somerset's current BoB representative has stood down from Pensions Committee so it is necessary for Committee to agree a new representative.
- 5.3 Typically BoB meets 4 times a year. These meetings are currently taking place via video conference, prior to the COVID-19 crisis the meetings took place at Brunel's offices in Bristol with a phone dial in option.

6. Consultations undertaken

- 6.1 Both the Pensions Committee and the Pensions Board have been consulted regularly as part of the project process of reaching this point. This now includes consultation with Committee and Board whenever SCC utilises its shareholder voting powers in relation to Brunel.
- 6.2 An overview briefing on the project was provided to the Fund's Employers meeting in September 2016.
- 6.3 The Full Somerset County Council meeting received a paper on the pooling at its meeting on 30th November 2016.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 It is anticipated that the Brunel Pensions Partnership will allow the fund to make significant saving over time with the Somerset County Council Pension Fund estimated to make savings of £27.8m in the period to 2036 after costs. A significant portion of the likely costs are front loaded and it is anticipated that the Somerset Fund will breakeven in 2024.
- 7.2 By definition these are forecasts and there are significant risk to their timing and delivery. They are based on a core set of assumptions and actual savings could be significantly greater or smaller over time.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 None

Note For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.