

SOMERSET PENSIONS ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Somerset Pensions Advisory Board held in the Virtual meeting held using MS Teams, on Friday 18 February 2022 at 10.00 am

Present: Anne Hills, Ellins, Mr R Bryant and Mr A White

Other Members present:

Apologies for absence: Cllr M Healey

1 **Declarations of Interest** - Agenda Item 2

Rachel Ellins, Rod Bryant, Antony White and Nigel Behan expressed an interest in the Local Government Pension scheme.

2 **Minutes of the Meeting Held on 14 November 2021** - Agenda Item 3

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2021 were accepted as being accurate and were signed by the Chair of the Board.

One correction was noted in that the expression on interest mentioned was for Mrs R Ellins and not Cllr A Hills.

3 **Public Question Time** - Agenda Item 4

Sigurd Reimers read out a statement regarding fossil fuel investments and climate change, to which Anton read out a response as per below:

The Board notes and shares your concerns regarding climate change. However, we feel that the steps included in the proposed new Investment Strategy Statement regarding climate change, together with our continuing support of the industry leading work of Brunel in reducing the carbon intensity of its portfolios, demonstrate that the Fund is taking climate change seriously.

4 **Review of Pensions Committee Papers** - Agenda Item 5

The Funds and Investments Manager gave a brief outline of the Pensions Committee papers explaining the investment process and Brunel. Cllr Hills asked if the Committee could make decisions virtually. Mr Sweet explained that the officers will make the decisions after voting has been taken, under the new rule agreed by Full Council until May 2022. The May elections will only affect Cllr Healey, depending on if he is elected, and if not, a new member will be appointed.

Mr Sweet mentioned there is likely to be a number of Committee members who are stand down, so new members will need to be found. Mrs Ellins raised the issue of further consideration of the pensions fund administration performance and how information could be provided and reported at future meetings. It was agreed that Mr D Harris, Cllr Hills, Mrs R Ellins and Mr Morton would meet to discuss a way forward to address this.

The Board noted the update.

5 **Review of Pension Fund Risk Register** - Agenda Item 6

The Board considered the report of the Funds and Investments Manager reviewing the Pension Fund's risk register. The register has not changed since the last meeting. The revision of the Funding Strategy Statement will take place possibly in late 2023, after consulting with employers. There was a mention for reassurance around cyber security which is always being looked at. The report will be compared to last year's and ask for more in-depth information from Brunel. Mr Harris gave an update from Peninsula's perspective and mentioned that they are mainly still working from home, are managing to keep on top of workloads and do regularly monitor their security to ensure things are secure.

The Board accepted and noted the report.

6 **Business Plan Update** - Agenda Item 7

The Board considered the report of the Funds and Investments Manager, and a suggestion was made that a training session should be held just before the next meeting to have a look at the risk of investment vs climate change and how Brunel is looking at reducing the carbon intensity of its portfolio, so that issues can be discussed and brought to the Board. We will look at the Investment Report at the June meeting, the administration performance piece at the April meeting, and the ESG piece at the July meeting.

The Board noted the update.

7 **Review of Pension Board Terms of Reference** - Agenda Item 8

The Board considered the report of the Funds and Investments Manager that set out the Terms of Reference which were opted into in 2015; however, with LGR all Terms of Reference will be looked at. Point 3.4 was raised by Mrs Ellins who asked if this was robust enough; Mr Sweet agreed to rewrite it to include the explicit wording discussed. Cllr Hills would like Members to be encouraged to be heard and have a voice but understands the logistics make it difficult. A

discussion took place, and it was agreed that Members would be made more aware of the Board and encourage them to have an interest in their pension when any communication is being sent by Peninsula. The Chair asked that any public questions are not limited to three minutes, and if this does become a problem, that it will be reviewed. The request that the Chair has to be present to make a meeting quorate is to be removed, meaning that the Board can meet if the correct number of members are present.

The Board accepted and noted the report.

8 Fees & Charges - Agenda Item 9

The Chair raised this item and Mr Harris explained that they are holding a number of staff vacancies and are continuing to monitor costs to ensure there is value for money, including staff working from home. Cllr Hills explained that reassurance is required that we are getting value for money which is why this item was raised.

The Board noted the update.

9 Any Other Business of Urgency - Agenda Item 10

The Chair, after ascertaining there were no other items of business, thanked all those present for attending and closed the meeting. The date of the next meeting is 8 April 2002 at 10 am, to be held virtually via Teams.

(The meeting ended at Time Not Specified)

CHAIRMAN