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**PENSIONS COMMITTEE, 13.07.15**

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**Present:** Anthony Deakin (Cartrefi Conwy), Cllr Aled Evans (Gwynedd Council), Victoria Hallaron (Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd), Osian Richards (Members' Representative), Huw Trainor (North Wales Police), Sharon Warnes (Members' Representative), Stephen Lee (Investec Asset Management)

Officers:- Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department), Caroline Roberts (Investment Manager), Nicholas Hopkins (Deputy Pensions Manager) Meirion Jones (Communication Officer - Pensions) and Lowri Haf Evans (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR 2015/2016**

RESOLVED to elect Sharon Warnes as chair of the Pension Board for 2015/16.

**2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR 2015/2016**

RESOLVED to elect Huw Trainor as vice-chairman of the Pension Board for 2015/16.

**3. APOLOGIES**

None to note

**4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present. In response to a question regarding links with employees in the Pensions Department and Members of the Pensions Committee, it was suggested to declare an interest should a relevant specific matter arise or be discussed.

**5. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Submitted - the Terms of Reference of the Gwynedd Pension Fund Local Pension Board. The document was prepared jointly between Officers from the Finance Department, Officers from the Legal Department and the relevant Cabinet Member. It was reported that the Terms of Reference had been approved at the Full Council on 5.03.15 and that the Board was required to adopt it. The Board's role in assisting the managers of the pension scheme was outlined, drawing attention to paragraph 2.2 of the report.

The Pension Board would ensure that it conformed effectively and efficiently to the code of practice on governing and administering the public service pension plans issued by the Pensions Regulator. The Pension Board would also assist in ensuring that the Gwynedd Pension Fund is effectively and efficiently managed and administered and that it conformed to the code of practice on governing and administering the public service pension plans issued by the Pensions Regulator.

It was confirmed that Gwynedd Council Finance Department would manage the Scheme, and the contact points for the Board would be Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department), Caroline Roberts (Head of Investment), Gareth Jones

(Pensions Manager), Nicholas Hopkins (Deputy Pensions Manager) and Meirion Jones (Communication Officer - Pensions).

The terms of reference was discussed per heading.

Matters arising from the discussion:

- As the Terms of Reference does not allow the presence of substitutes instead of Board members, it was confirmed that the officers would be willing to receive comments from a Member beforehand, should he/she be unable to attend.
- It was noted in the Terms of Reference that the Pension Board needed to hold at least two separate meetings each year, but that it would be possible to organise additional meetings should a matter require specific attention. The Pension Board has the decision regarding the frequency of meetings.
- The Board's role was to shadow the work and decisions of the Pensions Committee. Should a question / matter arise, usually the Board would refer considerations through the officers.
- Should the need arise to adapt the Terms of Reference, this would have to be undertaken by a seal of approval of a meeting of the full Council.

**It was noted that the Pensions Board was adopting the Terms of Reference, and would revisit the document if any matter arose.**

## **6. KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

Submitted - a document outlining training arrangements for Members of the Pension Board. It was highlighted that the Pension Fund was trying to use individuals with the relevant ability and experience. To assist Members with relevant / current information, the fund would provide training for Members to enable them to receive and maintain an appropriate level of expertise. The report outlined the initial training sessions and the resources to be provided.

It was noted that Members had received a preliminary session on 13 July 2015 (from Mr Stephen Lee of Investec) which focussed on the role and responsibilities of the Pension Board and the main fields of interest. In addition, it was noted that Members would have an opportunity to attend Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Trustee Fundamentals Training sessions. It was noted that these sessions provided a basic understanding of the LGPS and that Gwynedd Council would make arrangements. Following completing the Fundamentals Training (three days), a questionnaire would be issued to assess the Members' current level of understanding. Following the assessment, a training programme would be provided to get to grips with any gaps in the skills and knowledge of every individual. Also, reference was made to training opportunities on the Pensions Regulator website, which offered free modules.

**The information was noted and Members were requested to contact Caroline Roberts or Meirion Jones to register for the LGPS Trustee Fundamentals Training.**

## **7. Work Programme**

Submitted - the report of the Investment Manager which outlined the Pension Board's need to set a structure for its work. The need to agree on a programme of fields to audit was recommended, so that the information and reports could be

provided as needed. As well as the possible fields listed in the report, the following fields were proposed:

- Outcomes from the training
- Actuary discussions
- The content of the Gwynedd Pension Fund Annual Report - challenge the considerations and decisions
- Reports to the Pensions Committees - challenge the considerations and decisions
- The impact of the Westminster Government's recent budget - How would this be communicated?
- Relevant recommendations of the Wales Audit Office and Internal Audit - challenge the considerations and decisions
- Scrutinise the Plan's administering methods - what was the role and performance of the Administration Unit?
- Scrutinise and understand a variety of investment methods - what was the fund's investment portfolio?
- What was the Pensions Committee's remit?

In response, it was noted that the Wales Audit Office and Internal Audit's recommendations would be submitted to the Audit Committee, but that it would be possible to prepare a summary of those recommendations for the Pension Board.

It was noted that additional meetings had not been arranged for the year, but that it was possible to consider meeting in December (following the training series) and in March. For the meeting in December, it was decided to present:

- A summary of the Audit Committee's recommendations
- The Role of the Administration Unit
- The Investment Portfolio

The above fields were agreed upon as content for the 2015/2016 work programme.

## **8. Dates for the Future**

A document was presented which notified members of relevant events together with the dates of the basic training for Trustees. A request was made for Members to present themselves to the annual meeting of the Pension Fund which would be held on 8 September 2015. The dates of the meetings of the Pensions Committee 2015/2016 were also listed and it was noted that members could shadow these Committees as they were public meetings.

The information was accepted.

## **9. Any other business**

None to note

The meeting commenced at 3:10pm and concluded at 4:20pm