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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD MS Teams 15 July 2025 (4.01 - 6.01 pm)

Present:

Jonathan Bunt (Independent) (Chairman), Andrew Frater (Scheme Employer Representative), Clea Holmes (Scheme Employer Representative), Mark Holder (Scheme Member Representative), Yasmin Ramjohn (Scheme Member Representative) and Dionne Corrodus-Weekes (Scheme Member Representative)

242 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reminded Members of the action to be taken if they were to disconnect from the call.

243 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Joanne Sladden

244 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interests.

245 MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 April 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

246 TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK FROM RECENT MEETINGS OF THE PENSIONS COMMITTEE

The Board received a summary of the Pensions Committee meeting held on 24 June 2025 and noted the below key points:

- The fund's value stood at over £1 billion, with a slight decrease in the last quarter.
- The committee received a presentation from Russell, the currency hedging manager.
- Updates were provided on the London CIV, including increased holdings and the launch of the Pensions Advisory and Support Service (PASS).
- The committee approved a reduction in Havering's secondary contribution rate by £2 million for 2025/26.
- The committee noted the annual accounts and the annual report on its work.
- The committee agreed the pension's administration budget.

Concerns were raised by board members about the fund's consistent underperformance against benchmarks. It was explained that while performance was below benchmark, it was not considered alarming by the Fund's advisors. The Board discussed the need for clearer assurance and challenge mechanisms, especially as more responsibilities shift to the London CIV.

247 PENSIONS ADMIN UPDATE Q4 2024-25

The Board received the Pensions Administration Update.

Officers presented the Q4 report from LPPA, highlighting a 99% SLA compliance rate. Improvements were noted in retirement processing times, with active retirements having increased from 98.3% to 98.7%, deferred retirements reaching 100%, and death cases improving to 96.8%. Satisfaction survey responses remained low but showed a slight positive trend. Call centre performance remained strong, with average wait times under the four-minute target. LPPA had established a complaints board to analyse trends and improve responses. Officers updated Members on key projects, including the valuation data submission, which was on track for 1 August, the pension's dashboard, and McCloud implementation. While slightly behind schedule, LPPA remained confident in meeting the 31 August deadline for benefit statements.

The Board discussed the ESIP (Efficiency, Service Improvement Programme), which focused on automating the member retirement journey. It was explained that there had been improvements in quote generation, online forms, and payment automation. Online forms had reduced average return times from 33 to 6 working days.

Board members raised questions about cost savings, business continuity, and data quality. It was explained that automation was not reducing staff but reallocating them to more complex tasks. They also discussed training, staff retention, and the importance of monthly returns for data accuracy. It was confirmed that auto-populating employer forms was being tested. Concerns were raised about the difficulty in identifying errors on the employer portal which was noted by officers who outlined improvements being piloted, and any training that was available.

The Board questions why there had been an increase in outstanding cases, which had risen to 2,064. Officers explained the difference between SLA-compliant cases and total casework, noting that not all cases are SLA-trackable. Many older cases were awaiting external input (e.g., probate or member responses) and were not of concern. The Board requested further clarity and regular updates on case age and volume.

LPPA's readiness for McCloud was raised with officers expressing confidence in meeting deadlines, noting that while 100% compliance was

unlikely, high percentages were expected. It was confirmed that breaches would be assessed against the fund's policy and reported if material.

A brief update on the LGPS regulations consultation was given. The fund was awaiting a draft response from Hymans Robertson and would likely submit a response based on both Hymans and LPPA's input.

The Board noted the report.

248 PENSIONS ADMIN STRATEGY MONITORING Q1 2025-26

The Board received the Pension Administration Strategy for Quarter 1 2025-26.

Members noted this was the first quarterly monitoring report under the new PAS, which had become effective from April 2025. Officers outlined the escalation process for underperforming employers and the Board noted that only one employer had reached Level 1 escalation. The Board were pleased that most issues were minor and expected to be resolved. The Board discussed the usefulness of the traffic light system and requested follow-up on employer engagement and data quality.

The Board noted the report.

Chairman

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