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CommitteeName MeetingDate

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PENSIONS AND INVESTMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT BY ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2024

PRESENT County Councillors

C Kenyon-Wade

D A Thomas

D H Williams

P E Lewis

Trish Fretten (Employer Representative)

Dafydd Edwards (Independent Chair, Powys Pension Board)

Chris Hurst (Pension Fund Manager, Secretary to the Board)

Jane Thomas (Director of Corporate Services)

Dan Paley (Financial Reporting & Policy Accountant)

1. APOLOGIES

To receive apologies for absence. Cllr A Kennerley and A E Jones.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

C Kenyon-Wade, D H Williams, and P E Lewis declared interests as members of the Local Government Pensions Scheme.

These are personal interests, not prejudicial interests in accordance with Paragraph 12(b) (iv) of the Members Code of Conduct 2016.

3. MINUTES

The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the Pensions and Investment Committee meeting held on 22 October 2024 as a correct record.

4. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair informed the Committee he met with the Scheme Advisory Board Chair on 26 November 2024 regarding the speech given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves at Mansion House on the 14 November 2024, around reforming the pensions industry in the UK, which included the Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS), which requires assets to be pooled in to Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) regulated companies and under pool management by 31 March 2026.

A consultation, set to close on 16 January 2025, was launched, to which the Pension Fund planned to respond.

A strong focus was on local investment and the ongoing Good Governance Review.

5. PENSION FUND ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee received the Pension Fund Annual Report 2023-2024. The Pension Fund Manager and Financial Reporting & Policy Accountant explained that the report followed new guidance from the Scheme Advisory Board, with added headings for consistency across all pension funds. The guidance included 'must' 'should have' and 'may have' set of criteria and for this year, best efforts were accepted and noted that expectations will be met in future years as methods of data collection would be tailored to specific requirements.

It was noted that the Committee received a draft copy of the report on 07 October 2024, and that the Governance and Audit Committee approved and signed the audited accounts on 20 November 2024. The Governance and Audit Committee were supportive of ensuring all financial teams including the Pension Team were adequately resourced to fulfil statutory responsibilities.

Audit Wales have audited the accounts and were happy to issue an unqualified opinion. The Section 151 Officer added that positive feedback had been received.

Pending the outcome of the meeting the audited accounts and report would be presented to Audit Wales for the Auditor Generals signature on the 28 November 2024.

The Powys Pension Board had approved the Pension Board Chairs Reports on the 18 November 2024 which was contained within the report pack and the Pension Board Chair recommended approval of the Pension Fund Annual Report.

The Pension Fund Manager answered questions around resource levels within the Pensions Team that were discussed and addressed in depth at the last meeting on the 22 October 2024. The Committee approved additional resource, and progress was ongoing to prepare job descriptions to strengthen areas within the structure. Updates would be provided to the Committee shortly.

When asked about comparative data from other pension funds on the staff-to-scheme member ratio, the Pension Fund Manager stated that direct comparisons would be available once the reports were published, as each fund must provide that information, and the main challenges were identified in workflow and governance areas of the pension fund workload.

Clarification was sought on the relevance of the scheduled bodies listed in the report. The Pension Fund Manager stated that, although the list included historic employers, they still had existing pensioners and deferred members with in the scheme.

The Pension Fund Manager replied to a question and explained that the total cost per member was Fund specific and might increase with additional resources for the Pension Team due to the lack of economies of scale in such a small fund. It was stressed that regardless of size, the fund must manage employers, governance requirements, financial reporting, and investment reporting and was unavoidable.

All officers were thanked for producing comprehensive reports and if approved by the Committee would be published by 01 December 2024.

It was moved and duly seconded to approve the report.

Resolved: That the Pension Fund Annual Report 2023-24 be approved and published by 01 December 2024 to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

County Councillor P E Lewis (Chair)

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