

From: Chairman Superannuation Fund Committee
Corporate Director of Finance

To: Superannuation Fund Committee – 30 March 2022

Subject: ACCESS update

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

This update provides a summary of the activities of the ACCESS pool

Recommendation:

The Superannuation Fund Committee is recommended to note this report

FOR INFORMATION

1. Introduction

1.1 This report is to update the Committee on the work being undertaken by the ACCESS pool.

2. Joint Committee

2.1 The Joint Committee (JC) has met twice since the last update, on 6 December 2021 and on 7 March 2022. Copies of the agendas and unrestricted papers for the two meetings are available at: [ACCESS Joint Committee 6 December 2021](#) [ACCESS Joint Committee 7 March 2022](#). Minutes of the meeting on 6 December 2021 are at appendix 1.

2.2 At their meetings the Joint Committee noted the updated business plan reflecting progress on the following issues:

- Communications
- Responsible Investment
- Implementation Adviser appointment
- BAU evaluation next steps
- Sub-fund performance and implementation
- Contract Management

2.4 On 7 March the JC noted the publication of the Government's white paper on their levelling up ambitions including the request that LGPS funds increase their local investment i.e., investment in the UK, including setting a target of up to 5% of assets invested in projects which support local areas. A further DLUHC consultation is expected in summer 2022.

2.5 The Committee also noted progress on ACCESS costs and a forecast underspend against the budget for 2021-22 of £215k, (£20k per authority) was reported to the Committee on 7 March 2022. The underspend reflects savings on staff costs due to the delayed recruitment of additional ASU staff, reduced charges from Essex County Council who act as host authority for ACCESS, and lower than anticipated strategic and legal fees.

3. Recent Activity

3.1 Since the last report to the Committee the Officer Working Group (OWG) as well as other working groups with Kent being represented on each group, have continued to meet on a periodic basis. Progress continues to be made on the set up of new sub-funds as well as on the establishment of suitable platforms for pooling non listed assets.

3.2 Since 2016 Alison Mings has represented the Kent Fund on the Officer Working Group however Alison has now stepped back from this involvement and Nick Buckland, Head of Pensions and Treasury, will take over this role going forward. Sangeeta Surana and Katherine Gray will continue to represent Kent on the officer sub-groups responsible for progressing the pooling arrangements for the Fund's investments, ESG issues and reporting requirements.

4. Local Pension Board observation of Joint Committee meetings

4.1 The previously agreed position has been to limit membership of the Joint Committee to the chairs of the eleven ACCESS pension fund committees. However, in August 2021 UNISON representatives on the ACCESS pension boards and committees re-presented their request for scheme membership representation on the JC.

4.2 At its meeting on 7 March the Joint Committee agreed a proposal from officers for scheme member representation and a press release was issued confirming the new arrangements as follows:

'ACCESS Joint Committee agrees observer proposals

- *Each ACCESS Authority's Local Pension Board will be invited to send observers, on a rotational basis, to Joint Committee meetings.*

At its meeting on Monday 7 March 2022, the ACCESS Joint Committee (JC) agreed proposals enabling each ACCESS Authority's Local Pension Board (LPB) to send two observers, on a rotational basis, to Joint Committee meetings. In practice, observers from three ACCESS Authority LPBs at a time will attend JC meetings in person, allowing each LPB to be represented at least once a year.

The observers can be drawn from scheme member representatives, employer representatives or independent LPB members. Whilst it will be for each LPB to agree the two observers, it is desirable that at least one of the observers from each LPB is a scheme member representative. This arrangement will be reviewed after its first full year.

Commenting, Cllr Kemp-Gee, Chairman of the ACCESS Joint Committee, said, “I warmly welcome the Joint Committee’s decision enabling observers from Local Pension Boards to observe our meetings, which will further enhance our Pool’s transparency”

Alison Mings, Pension Fund and Treasury Investments Manager

T: 03000 416488

E: Alison.mings@kent.gov.uk

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