



ACCESS JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the ACCESS Joint Committee held at Committee Room 1 - Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, London N1 2UD on Monday, 9th September, 2019.

PRESENT: Cllr Andrew Reid - Chairman (Suffolk CC), Cllr Paul Brading – substitute (Isle of Wight), Cllr Jonathan Ekins (Northamptonshire CC), Cllr Gerard Fox (East Sussex CC), Cllr Jeremy Hunt (West Sussex CC), Cllr Terry Rogers (Cambridgeshire CC), Cllr Judy Oliver (Norfolk), Cllr Mark Platt – substitute (Essex CC), Cllr Tom Thacker - substitute (Hampshire CC), Cllr Adam Mitchell - substitute (Hertfordshire CC) and Mr Charlie Simpkins – (Kent CC).

ALSO PRESENT: Nicole Wood, Executive Director for Finance and Technology (Essex County Council), representing Section 151 Officers, Clifford Sims (Squire Patton Boggs) and Cllr Ian Gardener (Cambridgeshire CC).

OFFICERS: Nicola Mark (Norfolk), Kevin McDonald (ASU), Jody Evans (Essex) Alison Mings (Kent), Ola Owolabi (East Sussex), Andrew Lowe (Hampshire), Paul Finbow (Suffolk), Mark Paget (ASU) Jo Thistlewood (Isle of Wight), Paul Tysoe (LGSS Pensions), Patrick Towey (Hertfordshire) and Denise Fitch (Kent - Clerk).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

147. Apologies/Substitutes.

(Item. 1)

Apologies and substitutes were noted as follows:

Cllr Barker (Essex) – Cllr Platt substitute
Cllr Kemp-Gee (Hampshire) – Cllr Thacker substitute
Cllr Axford (Isle of Wight) – Cllr Brading substitute
Cllr Sangster (Hertfordshire) – Cllr Mitchell substitute

148. Declaration of interests in items on the agenda.

(Item. 2)

No declarations were made.

149. Election of Chairman.

(Item. 3)

(1) Cllr Simpkins nominated Cllr Reid, seconded by Cllr Hunt. There were no further nominations.

(2) RESOLVED that Cllr Reid be elected Chairman of the Joint Committee.

150. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2019.
(Item. 4)

(1) Cllr Rogers stated that he had not attended the previous meeting but had been listed as present in the minutes.

(2) RESOLVED that, subject to removing Cllr Rogers name from the list of Members present, the minutes from the meeting held on 11 June 2019 be signed as a true and accurate record.

151. ACCESS Support Unit update.
(Item. 5)

(1) Jo Thistlewood (Isle of Wight) introduced a report which provided an update on developments regarding recruitment to the ACCESS Support Unit (ASU).

(2) Kevin McDonald (ASU) undertook to look at how the reporting structure chart (para 4.1 of the report) could be clarified in line with the points raised by Members.

(3) RESOLVED that the appointment of Kevin McDonald as the interim Director of the ACCESS Support Unit be noted.

152. Scheme Member representation.
(Item. 6)

(1) Kevin McDonald introduced a report on Scheme Member representation which set out the relevant background, UNISON's correspondence, the current local governance and transparency arrangements for each ACCESS fund Section 101 Committee/Local Pension Board and various draft guidance. He commended the work carried out by Mark Whitby (LGSS) on this matter.

(2) The report contained the outcome of consideration by ACCESS Section 151 Officers of a report on Scheme Membership. It was confirmed that the Section 151 Officers were of the view that existing Authority representation on the Joint Committee (via Elected Members) was appropriate and that scheme member and employer involvement in Authorities' discharging their fiduciary duty (including asset pooling) was a matter for each Authority to determine locally. The Section 151 Officers recommended no change be made to the current Joint Committee Scheme arrangements.

(3) The Committee considered the advice from the Section 151 Officers and discussed whether it would be appropriate to make any changes to Scheme Membership in advance of any statutory guidance on this matter.

(4) RESOLVED that the report be noted and no change be made to the current Joint Committee Membership arrangements.

153. Governance update.

(Item. 7)

(1) In introducing the report Nicola Mark (Norfolk) highlighted the extension to the timetable and referred to the recent webinar between ACCESS Monitoring Officers. She stated that there were no significant amendments proposed.

(2) Clifford Sims (Squire Patton Boggs) emphasised the need for all 11 authority Monitoring Officers to be satisfied with the updated IAA prior to it being approved by each authority. The original Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) did not deal with future procurement of other services, such as procured assets and illiquid assets, therefore the new IAA needed to address these issues. He expressed the view that the current timetable was achievable and it was hoped that the governance sub-group would be able to sign off the draft IAA in mid September, dependant upon the Kent and Essex Monitoring officers being satisfied with the draft.

(3) Nicola explained that the governance working group intended to hold a governance training session for the Joint Committee on 9 December 2019 following the Committee meeting. This training could then form the basis of training information for section 101 Committees and Pension Boards.

(4) RESOLVED that-

a) the updated IAA be shared with Joint Committee Members after it has been reviewed by all Monitoring Officers,

b) if Members have any issues with the shared IAA, they should raise these with their Local Authority's Monitoring Officer and make the Chairman aware.

c) If the Chairman considers any issues raised by Members to be substantial he will require the updated IAA to be submitted to the Joint Committee for approval prior to formal adoption by the constituent authorities

d) if there are no unresolved substantial issues raised by Members, the updated IAA be formally adopted by each of the constituent authorities and reported to the Joint Committee for information.

154. 2019/2020 Business Plan and Budget update.

(Item. 8)

(1) Kevin McDonald introduced a report which updated the Committee on progress with the 2019/20 Business Plan along with the workstreams being undertaken by the ASU. He explained that the forecast spend was currently lower than the original budget which reflected the migration of third party work into the ASU.

(2) RESOLVED that the updated business plan, the ASU workstream progress report and the revised outturn 2019/20 be noted.

155. Motion to Exclude the Press and Public.

(Item. 9)

RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 & 5 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

156. Risk Register.

(Item. 10)

(1) Kevin McDonald referred the Committee to the Risk Register and highlighted proposed changes to the risks set out in the report. Officers answered questions and gave an explanation of regulatory and contractual insurance requirements.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and the revisions to the Risk Register as set out in the report be approved.

157. MHCLG meeting update.

(Item. 11)

(1) Kevin McDonald introduced a report which highlighted the positive meeting between ACCESS and civil servants from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) which had taken place on 4 July 2019. The report included feedback on ACCESS progress to date and the status of the pending government consultation on revised investment pooling guidance.

(2) RESOLVED that the report and the ongoing dialogue on the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's reporting template be noted.

158. ACS Implementation update.

(Item. 12)

(1) The Committee received an update report on the progress with launching the Authorised Contractual Scheme (ACS), the sub-funds that would be created within it and the options for pooling illiquid investments.

(2) RESOLVED that;

a) the progress in launching the ACS investment sub-funds and progress in identifying options for pooling illiquid investments be noted;

b) the appointment of investment managers be noted and the resultant additional sub-fund for global equities value strategies be approved.

159. Contract Management update.

(Item. 13)

(1) The Committee considered a report on the Operator contract which included details of current issues upon which the ASU and the Officer Working Group were

engaging with Link. The report also included details of contract and supplier relationship management arrangements and activity.

(2) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

160. LiNK presentation.

(Item. 14)

(1) Karl Midl, Duncan Lowman and James Zealander from Link Fund Solutions gave a presentation. The presentation highlighted progress on onboarding sub funds to date and plans for future launches along with the forthcoming inaugural investor day.

(2) The slides presented by LINK would be circulated to the Committee and a note provided to Members explaining insurance arrangements.

(3) RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

161. Items for information or advice from the Committee.

(Item. 15)

(1) The Joint Committee discussed the need for ongoing support from Hymans. Members were of the view that Hymans continued support would be welcomed, particularly in light of future pooling guidance. The Committee were of the view that this should be on a “pay as you go” basis.

(2) The Chairman announced that this would be Ola Owolabi’s (East Sussex) last meeting and thanked him for his support to the Joint Committee since its inception.

162. Date of next meeting - 9 December 2019.

(Item. 16)

It was noted that the next meeting of the Joint Committee would be held on 9 December 2019, at 11am in Islington Town Hall.

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