

PENSIONS BOARD – 15 DECEMBER 2023

Report of the Chair of the Pensions Board

APPOINTMENT OF PENSIONS BOARD MEMBERS & STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL PENSIONS BOARD CONSTITUTION

Recommendation

1. That the Pensions Board approves the appointment of Becky Smeathers to the Board, as a Scheme Member Representative, to represent the Employers of the Staffordshire Pension Fund.
2. That the Pension Board notes the changes made to the Pension Board Constitution and Appointment Process as approved by the Pensions Committee at their meeting on 15 December 2023.

Recruitment and Appointment Process

3. In November 2023, nominations were sought by the Staffordshire Chief Finance Officers Group (SCFOG) for a Scheme Employer representative and one such nomination was received.
 - Becky Smeathers - Executive Director of Finance and S151 Officer at Tamworth Borough Council.
4. Becky was invited to meet with the Scheme Manager and Chair of the Board, so that the role and responsibilities of a Board Member could be discussed, together with Becky's relevant skills and experience. As a previous member of another local LGPS Pensions Board, Becky had a clear understanding of the Board remit and had also undertaken training in line with the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework requirement.
5. Following this meeting, Becky was offered the position on the Board for a four-year term until 2027 and has accepted (subject to the Board's approval).
6. A copy of the updated membership list can be found at Appendix 1 of the report.

For information - Amendment to the Pension Board Constitution

7. The Staffordshire Local Pensions Board currently has six membership positions available - three representing scheme employers, and three representing scheme employees. The Board Constitution states that

one of the scheme employer representatives must be an Elected Local Authority Member and one scheme employee representative must be a Trade Union representative.

8. The Board will be aware of the difficulties experienced throughout 2022 and 2023, in finding suitable nominations to appoint Board Member representatives. For some time now, the Scheme Manager has attempted to appoint both an Elected Member and a Trade Union representative to the Local Pensions Board, without success.
9. Following a discussion at the September Board meeting, it was proposed that the Scheme Manager consider reducing the number of members on the Local Pensions Board from six to four and in doing so remove the specific stipulation from the Local Pensions Board Constitution that the Local Pensions Board membership must specifically include an Elected Local Authority Member and a Trade Union representative.
10. To be clear this does not mean that Elected Local Authority Members or Trade Union representatives cannot become members of the Local Pensions Board, it simply removes the stipulation that there must be two such representatives. This will allow for more flexibility moving forward.
11. Trade Unions were informed of the proposal on Wednesday 18 October 2023 and asked for any comments by Thursday 30 November 2023. One response, from Unison, stated an appreciation of the issue and given they had no suitable candidate to put forward, confirmed that as a result, there was no objection to the proposal. This, together with the lack of a response from the other Unions, further strengthens the argument that amendments to the make-up of the Board are needed.
12. Whilst this process was carried out the opportunity was also taken to make some amendments to the "Member Appointment Process" included within the Pensions Board Constitution, to ensure it remains consistent with current appointment practices.
13. The appointment process included in the current constitution focusses on the selection process undertaken when the Pensions Board was originally established. Whilst it also includes additional steps that concentrate on the recruitment of replacement Board members, the process no longer needs to consider the appointment of an original Board, and the proposed amendments means the process focusses on the appointment of replacement Board members only.

14. The current appointment process also includes the involvement of the Pensions Forum as a nominating body. The Pensions Forum no longer exists in its original guise and is therefore no longer able to carry out this function.
15. The proposed appointment process is tried and tested as it follows the same appointment procedure that is implemented when co-opted members are recruited to the Pensions Committee.
16. An opportunity was also taken to bring the document in line with current Pension Fund logo and brand guidelines.
17. The request to amend the make-up of the Pensions Board and subsequent amendment to the Pensions Board Constitution was submitted to the Pensions Committee at its meeting held on Friday 15 December 2023 for approval.
18. An updated copy of the Constitution can be found at Appendix 2 to the report.

Rob Birch
Chair of the Staffordshire Pensions Board

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Equalities implications: There are no direct equality implications arising from this report.

Legal implications: The legal implications are covered in the body of the report.

Resource and Value for money implications: There are no direct resource and value for money implications arising from this report.

Risk implications: There are no risk implications arising from this report.

Climate Change implications: There are no direct climate change implications arising from this report.

Health Impact Assessment screening – There are no health impact assessment implications arising from this report.

Appendix 1

Schedule of Board Members for 2023/24

Name	Date Appointed	Status	Term end	Appointment process
John Mayhew	September 2021	Scheme Member Representative (Active member)	2025	Appointed by the Administering Authority following discussions with Staffordshire Chief Finance Officers Group (SCFOG)
Robert Birch (Chair)	September 2019 Extended to 2024	Scheme Member Representative (Active member)	2024	Appointed by the Administering Authority following public advert seeking expressions of interest. Term extended for one year by Scheme Manager
Corrina Bradley (Vice Chair)	March 2021	Employer Representative Officer of a Scheme Employer	2025	Appointed by the Administering Authority following a proposal from SCFOG
Becky Smeathers	November 2023	Employer Representative Officer of a Scheme Employer	2027	Appointed by the Administering Authority following a proposal from SCFOG