

OWG: 12 August 2021

Email from Andrew Coburn

From: Andrew Coburn <acoburn@blueyonder.co.uk>

Sent: 04 August 2021 11:04

To: mark.kemp-gee@hants.gov.uk; Cllr Susan Barker - Member CC <cldr.Susan.Barker@essex.gov.uk>

Cc: Kevin McDonald - ACCESS Programme Director <kevin.mcdonald@accesspool.co.uk>

Subject: ACCESS Joint Committee - scheme member representation

CAUTION: This is an external email.

Dear Councillors Kemp-Gee and Barker,

We are writing to the incumbent officers of the ACCESS Joint Committee, as UNISON representatives and members on the Pension Fund Boards and Committees within the ACCESS Pool.

You will recall that we wrote to the Access Joint Committee (AJC) in 2019 to request that there should be scheme member representation on the AJC. At that time the request was declined.

We understand that ACCESS is now the only Pool which has not agreed to arrange for scheme member representatives to sit on its governing committee so we are writing to re-present our request. We are suggesting two seats on the Access Joint Committee.

When we wrote before, we referred to the then recent advice from the Scheme Advisory Board, and the MHCLG draft guidance issued for consultation in 2019. We have also noted The Pensions Regulator's expectations of transparency for fund members in the draft code of practice. We reiterate our hope that the Committee will consider our request in the spirit this advice. We believe that there can only be benefit to have member representatives from fund boards linked to the Pool.

At the AJC meeting in 2019 where our request was considered, a number of points were made in opposition to the request. We respond to those now.

1. A Member said that investment responsibility lies at Fund level and therefore scheme member involvement should remain there. However as ACCESS takes on board responsibility for increasing percentages (and asset types) from the Funds, the detail is being discussed at the AJC. Scheme members should be able to participate at the earliest stage of those discussions.
2. It was also said that 'the grind is done' in setting up the Pool and the AJC. However work is continuing on governance, maintenance and risk issues etc and one would hope that this work will be under regular review – which is something in which Scheme member reps should have an interest as well as knowledge and experience to contribute.
3. A point was made about UNISON's level of membership and that other trade unions might also request seats. We never sought seats only for UNISON nominees. We

always said 'scheme member representatives' and these could be members of UNISON, of other trade unions, or members of none.

4. The question of how such representatives might be appointed/ elected was raised. Other Pools have different ways of electing the scheme member reps and consultation with them over this would no doubt be helpful. One possibility is that the electorate are the scheme members on the Fund local Pension Boards with some weighting to take account of the different sizes of the boards.
5. AJC members asked how the members on the AJC would be accountable. We agree that anyone elected must be able to report back and indeed gather views from local fund scheme member reps. This can only help the Pool's transparency and openness. One answer might be the ASU could help circulate reports. Alternatively a separate mailing list for local Pension Board members reps could be established.

We continue to believe that having member representation on the committee will dispel any notion that the Pool is not considering the interests of scheme members. We also believe that the scheme member reps on the Pool's fund boards have demonstrated their commitment to ensuring that the LGPS works for all its employers and scheme members. Members will know that there is a legal obligation for local Pension Board members to be trained and maintain their knowledge levels. Therefore anyone who joins the AJC will have a background of general knowledge about the LGPS and the wider pension field, as well as their background in a particular ACCESS fund.

We would be happy to nominate one or more representatives to attend the meeting of the AJC where this is to be considered and take questions and / or discuss the issues then.

This email is copied to Kevin McDonald as the Director of the ACCESS Support Unit

Yours Sincerely

Andrew Coburn - Essex Pension Advisory Board Scheme member representative (UNISON nominee)

Sandra Child - Essex Pension Strategy Board UNISON nominated observer.

Andrew Langford - Northamptonshire Committee member (employee representative)

Peter Borley-Cox Northamptonshire Committee member (employee representative)

Kevin Standishday -Northamptonshire Local Pension Board (Scheme member representative)

Judith Taylor - West Sussex Pension Committee member representative

Barbara Milton - Isle of Wight Pension Board scheme member representative

Steve Milford - Isle of Wight Pensions Committee UNISON nominee

John Walker - Cambridgeshire Pension Fund Committee. Pensioner scheme member

Barry O'Sullivan - Cambridgeshire Pensions Board Scheme Member Representative

Matthew Pink - Cambridgeshire Pension Fund Committee Unison active scheme member representative

Lynda Walker - East Sussex Pension Board scheme member representative

Kevin O'Daly – Hertfordshire Pension Board scheme member representative

Joe Parsons - Kent Superannuation Fund Committee and Local Pensions Board

Steve Aspin – Norfolk Pensions Committee Staff representative (UNISON nominee)

John Harries, Norfolk Pensions Oversight Board Representative for Active and Deferred Members

Pauline Bacon - Suffolk Pension Board scheme member rep