

## Annual Consultative Meeting

### Report of the Director of Finance and Public Value

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Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

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#### **1) Recommendation**

That the Committee be asked to approve a change of date for the Annual Consultative Meeting to the September of each year, including changing the date for the 2025 Annual Consultative Meeting from 28<sup>th</sup> February to coincide with the September meeting of the Investment and Pension Fund Committee.

#### **2) Introduction**

- 2.1 The Investment and Pension Fund Committee holds a consultative meeting for pension fund members on an annual basis. The meeting includes presentations on the Devon Pension Fund's benefits administration performance and its investment performance and strategy. The meeting provides pension fund members with the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on how the Fund is being managed. This report reviews the timing of the meeting and proposes that the date of future meetings should be moved to later in the year.

#### **3) Date of Annual Consultative Meeting**

- 3.1 The Annual Consultative Meeting has been held for over 20 years in late February or early March to coincide with the date of the first quarterly meeting of the Investment and Pension Fund Committee in the calendar year. The date is well advertised and in recent years it has been possible for fund members to watch the meeting on line as well as attend in person.
- 3.2 While the date has the benefit of having an established slot in the calendar, there are some potential benefits to moving the meeting to a date later in the year. The Pension Fund operates a financial year from 1 April to 31 March, and is required by regulation to publish an annual report to cover that period. The Annual Report is required to be published by the 1 December following the year end, but in recent years has been taken to the September meeting of the Investment and Pension Fund Committee for approval. This enables the Fund to submit the Annual Report to the Financial Reporting Council for accreditation against the UK Stewardship Code by their October deadline.

- 3.3 Therefore, the reporting of performance over the financial year to the Annual Consultative Meeting in late February / early March means that the information is not being reported back until 11 months after the end of the financial year to which it relates. While more recent quarterly information is available for the Annual Consultative Meeting, it would be more practical and be more in the best interests of keeping fund members informed to report back on performance over the Fund's financial year closer to the year end date, but allowing time for the information to be compiled.
- 3.4 The Fund's approach to climate change is often a particular focus for questions and comments from pension fund members. An annual calculation of the Fund's carbon footprint and other climate related metrics is provided by the Brunel Pension Partnership as at 31 December each year. However, the data takes a long time to extract and process and is generally not available until late April or early May. This means that for the Annual Consultative Meeting, we are generally reporting the metrics some 14 months after the date that they relate to, i.e. at the 2024 Consultative Meeting we were reporting on the data from 31 December 2022, as the December 2023 was not available at that time. Therefore a change of date would enable us to report a more up to date position.
- 3.5 Another advantage to moving the date might be that the likelihood of bad weather preventing in-person attendance is probably higher in late February / early March, although this has not been a particular issue in the past. Whether there is a greater likelihood of more people being unable to attend during the Summer holiday period is another consideration, but it would not be intended to hold the meeting in the main Summer months of July and August.

## **4) Conclusion**

- 4.1 Taking into account the above considerations, it is proposed to move the Annual Consultative Meeting to later in the year. The meeting could be moved to coincide with either the June or the September meeting of the Investment and Pension Fund Committee, both of which are generally around the middle of the month. Most of the information related to the year ended on 31<sup>st</sup> March should be available by the June meeting, which would make it more timely than for the current February/March date. The advantage of the September date would be that it would then coincide with the Committee meeting at which the Fund Annual Report is approved.
- 4.2 The Pension Board considered this report at their meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> July, and their recommendation was to move the Annual Consultative Meeting to September, to tie in with the approval of the Annual Report. It is therefore recommended that the Annual Consultative Meeting for 2025 is moved from the 28<sup>th</sup> February to coincide with the date of the September 2025 meeting of the Investment and Pension Fund Committee, and to then take place in each September in subsequent years.

**Angie Sinclair**

Director of Finance and Public Value

**Electoral Divisions:** All

**Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers**

Nil

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