



# Tyne and Wear Pension Fund

Administered by South Tyneside Council

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All Trade Unions

**Contact:** Nicola Robason

**Tel:** 0191 424 7186

**Date:** 9 March 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

## **Tyne and Wear Pension Fund Nominations to the Pensions Committee and the Local Pension Board**

South Tyneside Council is the Administering Authority for the Tyne and Wear Pension Fund ("the Fund") and thereby administers the Local Government Pension Scheme for the Tyne and Wear area.

The legal requirements for the administration of the Fund are contained in acts and statutory instruments made by central government.

The Administering Authority is seeking nominations for member representatives on its Pensions Committee and its Local Pension Board ("the Board").

### **Member Representation on Pensions Committee**

The Administering Authority has delegated the majority of its pension functions to its Pensions Committee, which thereby deals with almost all matters arising from the functions and responsibilities of the Administering Authority in respect of the Fund.

There has been trade union representation on the Pensions Committee for a long period.

There are three places on the Pensions Committee for suitably qualified representatives of members to sit in an advisory, i.e. non-voting, capacity.

These places are offered to ensure that the views of members can be expressed at Pensions Committee meetings.

Advisory status means that such Pensions Committee members have a right to speak on any matter on the agenda and to receive reports, including "exempt" (confidential) reports. The Pensions Committee has an obligation to take into

account the comments of advisory members, although it does not necessarily have to agree with or act upon such comments.

A member representative on Pensions Committee must be able to represent the interests of all members of the Fund. Therefore, nominations can only be accepted from trade unions that have confirmed that they represent all areas of Fund membership, irrespective of union membership, and whether or not members are active, deferred or pensioner members.

Member representatives must have the time to commit to attend meetings, undertake training and effectively represent members.

In common with all other Members of Pensions Committee, the member representatives are appointed for one year terms. In practice, representatives often serve for longer which is beneficial in respect of the depth and breadth of knowledge required.

The existing member representatives, who sit to May 2015, are

- Mr. W Flynn – UCATT
- Mrs. S Foster – Unison
- Mr. M Abuzahra – Unison.

The programme of meetings to be attended is:

- a regular quarterly meeting at which the Committee considers investment and administration matters;
- a special meeting is held each February to consider and approve the budget and service plan;
- there is an annual meeting with the trades unions each November;
- additional meetings are called, if required;
- the training requirement can take up a further six to eight days each year.

The first quarterly meeting in the 2015/2016 year will take place on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

All Pensions Committee members must observe and protect the confidentiality of information they receive. This issue is managed with respect to the councillors by them signing their council's code of conduct. In order to address this issue with regard to non-elected members, the member representatives must agree;

- to observe the confidential nature of exempt reports;
- not to receive any reports of a particularly sensitive nature, this to be decided at the absolute discretion of the Administering Authority.

## **Member Representation on the Local Pension Board**

New requirements imposed by the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 require the Administering Authority to establish a Local Pension Board (“the Board”).

A Board has been established and nominations are sought for the 2015/2016 year onwards.

There are four places on the Board for suitably qualified representatives.

As is the case with the Committee, a member representative on the Board must be able to represent the interests of all members of the Fund. Therefore, nominations can only be accepted from trade unions that have confirmed that they represent all areas of Fund membership, irrespective of union membership, and whether or not members are active, deferred or pensioner members.

In the light of the statutory requirement for knowledge and understanding, the Administering Authority has decided that nominations will be sought for three year terms.

Member representatives must have the time to commit to attend meetings, undertake training and effectively represent members’ interests.

The programme of meetings to be attended is:

- A regular quarterly meeting;
- An annual meeting with the trades unions each November;
- Additional meetings are called, if required;
- The training requirement can take up about six to eight days each year.

The first quarterly meeting in the 2015/16 year will take place on or around 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015. However, earlier induction meetings may be held at the Board’s request.

The regulations specify that a Board member should not have a conflict of interest. For the purposes of a member of the Board, a conflict of interest is defined as a financial or other interest which is likely to prejudice a person’s exercise of functions as a member of the Board. This does not include a financial or other interest arising merely by virtue of that person being a member of the Scheme and / or the Fund.

On appointment, all Board members will need to provide confirmation to Pensions Committee, in the form of a written undertaking, that they understand the requirements of the role and to commit to those requirements, for example by:

- Disclosing all interests and responsibilities which have the potential to become conflicts of interest;
- Committing to attend meetings;

- Committing to undertake and attend the necessary knowledge and understanding training; and
- Undertaking to act in accordance with the Board's Governance Statement and associated policies and documents.

All Board members must observe and protect the confidentiality of information they receive. In order to address this issue, member representatives must agree;

- to observe the confidential nature of exempt reports
- not to receive any reports of a particularly sensitive nature, this to be decided at the absolute discretion of the Pensions Committee.

The Board will be required to elect its own Chair and Vice Chair. This will be on a rotating basis with the term of office shared between an Employer and a Member representative on an equal and opposite basis. The appointment of the Chair shall be made by ascension from the previous Vice Chair position.

I attach for your information the Governance Statement adopted for the Board together with a list of core functions.

If you are interested in representation on either the Committee or the Board, I would be grateful if you could advise me in writing by no later than 17<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

The nominations will be considered by the Administering Authority and the representatives will be selected with the aim of achieving an appropriate balance of representation, knowledge and experience on the Board and on the Committee.

The appointments will be ratified by the Administering Authority at a meeting of full Council on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

Appointments are at the absolute discretion of the Administering Authority.

Please contact me if you have any queries on this matter.

Yours faithfully

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