



To: Members of the Pension Fund Committee

## ***Notice of a Meeting of the Pension Fund Committee***

**Thursday, 7 May 2020 at 10.00 am**

**Virtual**

***Due to guidelines imposed on social distancing by the Government  
this meeting will be held virtually***

*Due to the current guidelines regarding social distancing this meeting of the Pension Fund will be held virtually. Normally requests to speak at a public meeting are requested by 9 am on the preceding day to the published date of a meeting. However, during the current situation and to facilitate these new arrangements we are asking that requests to speak are submitted by 9am four working days before the meeting i.e. 9 am on Friday 1st May together with a transcript of your presentation emailed to [deborah.miller@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:deborah.miller@oxfordshire.gov.uk)*

***If you wish to view proceedings please click on this [live stream link](#).  
However, that will not allow you to participate in the meeting.***

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Yvonne Rees'.

Yvonne Rees  
Chief Executive

April 2020

Committee Officer: **Deborah Miller**  
Tel: 07920 084239; E-Mail: [deborah.miller@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:deborah.miller@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

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### **Membership**

Chairman – Councillor Kevin Bulmer  
Deputy Chairman - Councillor Nicholas Field-Johnson

#### *County Councillors*

Ian Corkin

John Sanders

Alan Thompson

Mark Lygo  
Charles Mathew

Roz Smith  
Lawrie Stratford

*District Councillors (Co-optees - Voting)*

Alaa Al-Yousuf

Jo Robb

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## Declarations of Interest

### The duty to declare.....

Under the Localism Act 2011 it is a criminal offence to

- (a) fail to register a disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election or co-option (or re-election or re-appointment), or
- (b) provide false or misleading information on registration, or
- (c) participate in discussion or voting in a meeting on a matter in which the member or co-opted member has a disclosable pecuniary interest.

### Whose Interests must be included?

The Act provides that the interests which must be notified are those of a member or co-opted member of the authority, **or**

- those of a spouse or civil partner of the member or co-opted member;
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as husband/wife
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as if they were civil partners.

(in each case where the member or co-opted member is aware that the other person has the interest).

### What if I remember that I have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the Meeting?.

The Code requires that, at a meeting, where a member or co-opted member has a disclosable interest (of which they are aware) in any matter being considered, they disclose that interest to the meeting. The Council will continue to include an appropriate item on agendas for all meetings, to facilitate this.

Although not explicitly required by the legislation or by the code, it is recommended that in the interests of transparency and for the benefit of all in attendance at the meeting (including members of the public) the nature as well as the existence of the interest is disclosed.

A member or co-opted member who has disclosed a pecuniary interest at a meeting must not participate (or participate further) in any discussion of the matter; and must not participate in any vote or further vote taken; and must withdraw from the room.

Members are asked to continue to pay regard to the following provisions in the code that *“You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself”* or *“You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned.....”*.

Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting should you have any doubt about your approach.

### List of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

**Employment** (includes *“any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain”*.), **Sponsorship, Contracts, Land, Licences, Corporate Tenancies, Securities.**

For a full list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and further Guidance on this matter please see the Guide to the New Code of Conduct and Register of Interests at Members’ conduct guidelines.

<http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Elected+members/> or contact Glenn Watson on **07776 997946** or [glenn.watson@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:glenn.watson@oxfordshire.gov.uk) for a hard copy of the document.

**If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, but please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.**

# AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
2. **Declarations of Interest - see guidance note**
3. **Petitions and Public Address**

*Normally requests to speak at a public meeting are requested by 9 am on the preceding day to the published date of a meeting. However, during the current situation and to facilitate these new arrangements we are asking that requests to speak are submitted by 9am **four** working days before the meeting i.e. 9 am on Friday 1st May together with a transcript of your presentation emailed to [deborah.miller@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:deborah.miller@oxfordshire.gov.uk)*

## 4. **Administration Report (Pages 1 - 2)**

At its meeting in March, the Committee had received a report, asking them to determine how payment of a death grant should be split.

When administrators came to make the payment, it was found that incorrect information had been provided to officers and given to members in the report, therefore this updated report is seeking member's view on whether they would wish to review their decision in light of the new information set out in the report.

***The Committee is RECOMMENDED to consider whether they wish to amend their decision to share the payment of the death grant between the brother and sister to sharing the death grant between brother, sister and granddaughter, of the deceased member.***

Division(s): N/A
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## **PENSION FUND COMMITTEE – 07 MAY 2020**

### **ADMINISTRATION REPORT**

**Report by the Director of Finance**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**The Committee is RECOMMENDED to consider whether they wish to amend their decision to share the payment of the death grant between the brother and sister to sharing the death grant between brother, sister and granddaughter, of the deceased member.**

#### **Introduction**

1. At the March committee meeting members received a report, shown at paragraphs 7 – 13, asking them to determine how payment of a death grant should be split.
2. When administrators came to make payment, it was found that incorrect information had been given to members in the report, therefore this updated report is seeking member's view on whether they wish to review their decision now that the information has been corrected.
3. The original report was incorrect because it stated that the deceased daughter's child was living with her aunt when in fact this has never been the case. She lives with her father.
4. On investigation it is understood that this misunderstanding came from a telephone conversation but because notes of the calls were not properly taken it is impossible to establish whether this was due to wrong information being given or lack of understanding on part of the administrator.
5. Administrators have been reminded of best practice of taking notes of telephone calls and adding these to case records.

#### **Information Provided to March Committee**

6. Decisions on the payment of death grants has been delegated to Officers within the Pension Services Team, and these are normally made as part of the day to day operations of the Team. Under the Scheme of Delegation though, Officers are required to refer any contentious decisions back to the Committee for it to determine. There were two cases for consideration by the Committee at that time.

7. In the second case, the Member died on 21 September 2019 – this was a death in service notified by the scheme employer, who noted that they did not have any next of kin details on file. The member had not completed an “expression of wish” form for pensions.
8. However, the employer subsequently provided the name and contact details for a daughter who duly completed a pension declaration form stating that she was the only person with an interest in the death grant payable from the fund. However, during several telephone calls it found that there was also a son, living in Australia.
9. Initially, the son informed Pension Services that he did not have any interest in receiving part of any death grant payment but later conversations revealed that this decision was based on incorrect information supplied by his sister and so he then made declaration as an interested party. He also included a granddaughter (daughter of deceased sister) on this declaration.

Deceased Member
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Daughter - claimant	Daughter – deceased	Son - claimant
3 children	1 child – living with other daughter	1 child

10. The member’s will leaves her estate to be split between the five grandchildren when they attain the age of 25.
11. The death grant does not form part of the estate and is payable at Pension Fund discretion. This is a significant amount in excess of £100,000, and there are various options in how payment could be made:
  - 50/50 split between sister and brother
  - A three-way split between brother, sister and granddaughter, of the deceased member.
  - A percentage paid to sister and brother with the remainder being split between grandchildren
  - Payment split equally between grandchildren only
12. It should be noted that the fund has been advised that the initial claimant has paid £700 in respect of funeral costs out of her own funds

**LORNA BAXTER**  
Director of Finance

Background papers: None  
Contact Officer: Sally Fox - Tel: 01865 323854

April 2020