

FUTURE MEETINGS

Introduction

1. As Coronavirus restrictions are now easing the Committee are invited to consider the proposed approach to arrangements for future meetings.

Recommendation

2. The Committee is asked to:
 - a) Consider and agree the approach to future meetings for the Pension Fund Committee, Investment Sub Committee and Joint Committee and Board training meetings.
 - b) Agree the principle that meetings will be held either virtually or face to face but not a combination of both in any one meeting.

Background

3. The Pension Fund Committee is constituted as an advisory panel rather than a committee as defined under Section 102 of the Local Government Act (1972). It is therefore within the gift of the Committee to determine how future meetings should take place, be that fully virtually, fully in person or a combination between the two.
4. All meeting arrangements will be informed by national and local Covid 19 restrictions in force at the time.

Considerations

5. There are several considerations that Members may want to take into account when determining how future meetings should take place which are explored in more detail below.
6. The Fund is committed to reducing its carbon footprint. Committee meetings are typically attended by more than twenty people, some of whom travel from other parts of the country which can involve flights or train journeys. More local attendees still need to travel to the venue which inevitably means either travelling by car or train. Avoiding the need to travel not only reduces the carbon footprint but also saves travel costs.
7. In person meetings also include a requirement for refreshments to be organised and typically they are bought in from external companies at a cost to the Fund.
8. The availability of suitable venues is also becoming more of an issue as Councils look to consolidate their building stock with the reducing need for staff to work in offices full time. To continue with in person meetings, the Fund may need to rent space at non-Council venues.



9. All meetings have been held virtually over the past fifteen months and the Committee has been able to cover all Fund business as it normally would. This would suggest that virtual meetings are effective and can continue, at least for some meetings.
10. What is missing from virtual meetings is the ability for colleagues to network with each other, advisers, and other attendees. Virtual meetings can also stifle debate as they tend to be more focussed on working through the agenda.
11. Members may wish to agree different approaches for the three different meetings which take place numerous times throughout the year.

Pension Fund Committee: Members may choose to hold two Committee meetings in person and two virtually.

Investment Sub Committee: Meetings of the Investment Sub Committee, with its focussed agenda on Investment issues, lend itself to predominantly virtual meetings with only one in person meeting each year

Joint Training: A similar pattern could be followed for the joint training sessions with two taking place virtually and perhaps one face to face session per year.

12. Members may wish to note that the Local Pension Board has resolved to continue hold most of its meetings virtually.
13. The table below summarises for discussion a possible pattern of meetings if the approach proposed above was adopted. Meetings highlighted in blue represent in person meetings.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Pension Fund Committee	June	September	December	March
Investment Sub Committee	May	August	November	February
Joint Committee and Board Training	July		November	February

14. Hybrid approaches – where some members attend in person and some virtually in the same meeting are not recommended to ensure all can participate and engage equally.
15. Members are invited to debate the issues outlined above and agree how they would like to attend future meetings. Any changed arrangements would be subject to ongoing review and feedback to ensure meetings were effective in managing Fund business and ensuring all members can fulfil their role effectively.

