
Motion on Pension Investments

- 1** Cllr Michael Jones submitted a notice of motion to the Council on 6 November 2020, calling on the Pensions Committee to divest investments of fossil fuel companies as soon as practicable.
- 2** The motion was referred by the Chairman and was considered by the Governance Committee on 18 January 2021 as the responsible committee for pensions matters as an employer within the West Sussex Pension Fund. This was rather than by the Pensions Committee which has delegated authority from the Council as the scheme administering authority and in that capacity its members discharge a trustee role in relation to the Pension Fund and its beneficiaries. The Council may determine whether to make the request of the Pensions Committee. That Committee cannot advise the Council on the motion ahead of the Council debate as the Council is acting in its role as an employer within the Scheme.
- 3** The Governance Committee discussed whether it was appropriate for the County Council as an employer to forward advice to the Pensions Committee that might limit its discretion, mindful of the need of the Pensions Committee to act independently as the administering authority on behalf of the 200 or so employers in the West Sussex Local Government Pension Scheme. It was mindful of the Pensions Committee's fiduciary duty to maintain a financially sustainable pension fund.
- 4** Rather than support the motion as worded, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Council that the Pensions Committee be asked to maintain the application of environmental, social and governance principles throughout its process while seeking to maintain sustainable investment principles.

Janet Duncton

Chairman of Governance Committee

Contact Officer: Charles Gauntlett, Senior Advisor, 033 022 22524,
charles.gauntlett@westsussex.gov.uk

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Revised briefing note from Director of Finance and Support Services

Background papers

None