
PENSIONS COUNCIL

Meeting on Wednesday, 17 February 2021 at 3.00pm
Virtual meeting

Attendance: Jim Murray (Chair)
Joanne Roche
Tim O'Hanrahan
Munro O'Dwyer
Kirstie Flynn
Brendan Kennedy
Stephen Gillick
Roshin Sen
Roma Burke

Apologies: Deirdre Cummins
Eoin Dormer

Also present: Ailís Henry (Note taker)
Brian Purcell
Kenneth Devine (Central Bank)

Quorum: Quorum present
9 of 11 Council Members present (6 required)

Minutes

1. Adoption of agenda

The proposed agenda for this meeting was agreed.

2. Conflict of interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Approval of draft minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2021 were approved by the Council.

4. Review of Recent Developments

Roshin Sen provided an update on the recent developments from DSP:

- Work on transposing IORP II is ongoing and progressing.
- A new benefit for people over 65 was introduced on 08 February. The benefit means over 65s awaiting State Pension will not be required to be available for full-time work or genuinely seeking work and they will not be required to sign on the Live Register.
- There has been some recent press coverage about auto enrolment and the delays. The Government is conscious of current circumstances and a new implementation timeline will be announced in due course

It was noted under this agenda item that the Pensions Commission launched their public consultation, which invites the public to have their say on sustainable State Pension arrangements into the future. The deadline for submissions is 09 March.

Roma Burke requested a copy a Private Member's Bill regarding rights for pensioners, Roshin Sen will provide Roma with the required information.

Auto enrolment paper

The Chair thanked the Council members for their work and comments on the auto enrolment and investment paper, and stated it will be published soon and sent to the Minister.

The Future of Defined Benefit paper

Council members had a discussion about the paper on 'Future of Defined Benefit' and its direction. A number of questions were posed regarding policy for regulating DB schemes, if the minimum funding standard is useful, risks around longevity and issues round IORP II. It was also suggested that consolidation could be included in the paper. It was established that the two main issues could be split into two papers, one on the issues facing existing DB schemes, and the other examining whether there is any future for DB provision. Brendan Kennedy agreed to send the Chair a note about the two issues. The Chair will consider the issues raised in this discussion, and agreed to incorporate them into the DB paper and circulate to the Council members for comments.

5. Presentation and discussion on pension statistics

Kenneth Devine from the Central Bank of Ireland (CBI), joined the meeting to present CBI's new collection of pension data. The presented data consisted of Pillar 2 - occupational pension funds. The data is collected in line with European Central Bank data reporting requirements. There was a question and answer session at the end and Kenneth agreed to share his slides and contact details should the Council members wish to reach out to him regarding data collection and future statistical reporting.

6. Auto enrolment

The Chair raised a request from Mr. Colm Fagan regarding commissioning a feasibility study into his auto-enrolment proposal. The Council members were familiar with Mr. Fagan's proposal and there was a discussion that raised some queries. It was agreed to invite Mr. Fagan to a Council meeting to discuss the questions the members had raised. The Chair agreed to pose the questions to Mr Fagan and invite him to answer them at a future Pensions Council meeting.

7. Work Programme - discussion on future work.

The Chair reminded the Council members of the three agreed areas of work for 2021; decumulation (including drawdown), older pensioners and consumers and gender discrimination in pensions in addition to any requests from the Minister.

There was a discussion amongst the members around the issues associated with decumulation and the areas that could be focused on. Longevity was highlighted as a potential area to focus on, the cognitive decline of pensioners and the decisions they need to make at drawdown. Tim O'Hanrahan suggested it would be interesting to look at what happens internationally and agreed to circulate an academic paper that examines potential solutions in relation to the decumulation phase. Tim also suggested that the Council could invite the author of the paper to discuss the paper's findings. Munro added that master trusts are more suited to in scheme drawdown.

The Chair agreed to gather points raised by Council members in this discussion and to circulate a note on the programme of work. The Chair reminded the Council that it will require volunteers to carry out the work and acknowledged that the Council has less members than previous years to assist with the work required.

8. Other Business

None.

9. Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Pensions Council will take place on Wednesday, 24 March 2021.

10. To-do list

Incorporate comments and circulate 'Future of DB schemes' paper to Council members.	Jim Murray
Circulate potential questions for presentation on the AE proposal.	Jim Murray
Circulate academic paper on decumulation	Tim O'Hanrahan
Programme of work for 2021	Jim Murray