

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO THE PENSIONS & INVESTMENTS COMMITTEE – 25 OCTOBER 2023

1) Question from Sue Owen on behalf of Derbyshire Pensioners Action Group

“We note that you will be reviewing the targets for the Climate Related Disclosures Report this year.

Will you be revising your targets for reducing the carbon footprint of the Fund’s listed equity portfolio, in the light of the increasingly urgent voices from the IPCC and the United Nations that the world must cut the use of fossil fuels in order to avoid climate catastrophe, for example in the new Global Stocktake Report from the UN

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/sep/08/un-report-calls-for-phasing-out-of-fossil-fuels-as-paris-climate-goals-being-missed>

and

will you undertake to inform all pension holders of your position on whether the fund can reasonably fulfil obligations to its beneficiaries if the world remains on track for warming beyond 2 degrees?”

2) Question from Laura Stevens on behalf of Divest Derbyshire

Divest Derbyshire, of which I am a member, has been speaking with the Pension Committee since 2018 about wider communication, with many promises of creating a forum. Investment details should be accessible to all. My father is 91 and receives a pension from Norfolk County Council. He is not online nor does he have a mobile phone. I know people here in that boat; elderly friends not online. My father however, receives this impressive 20-page booklet quarterly from his Council pension board*. It is packed with useful information with summary accounts published annually. Might it be discriminatory not to enable access to pension investment information to your older members? Could Derbyshire maybe make something like this work? I understand there was once a leaflet published but it was deemed too expensive. I would be happy to contribute to the cost of such information from my pension funds? Maybe others too?

**(Shows leaflet)*

3) Question from Joanna Collins

Answers to questions to the Pensions Committee on 18 January state the Committee “proactively manages climate-related risks and opportunities”. However, the percentage of its equity portfolio invested in “clean technologies” is less than the benchmark, while only 5% of its UK conventional gilt portfolio is in green bonds. This suggests the Committee is not committed to green and ethical investment.

Research* states financial repercussions from the collapse in value of fossil fuel assets could eclipse those of the banking crisis. Investment in fossil fuels could constitute neglect of the Pensions Committee’s fiduciary responsibilities.

Will Council members put pressure on the Pension Fund to work proactively with advisers to find safer, environmentally sound investment, for example, by issuing a “Request for proposals” from clean energy fund providers?

*[Banking on Bailouts](#): Sizing the social costs when the fossil fuel bubble bursts”, One for One, January 2023.

4) Question from Michael Pomerantz

“In reading your Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) Report on your website I note the following*:

Low carbon and sustainable investments

We’ve also made significant progress towards our second target, which is to invest at least 30% of the Fund’s portfolio in low carbon and sustainable investments by the end of 2025. We expect to achieve this target by the end of 2023.

* Source: <https://www.derbyshirepensionfund.org.uk/about-the-fund/latest-news/news-items/2023-climate-related-financial-disclosures-report-published.aspx>

British Gas now reports that it sources its 48% of its electricity from renewables. Only 2% of its electricity comes from coal and 20% comes from natural gas. Other energy suppliers do even better to help reduce global warming.

Does your committee have any plans to further increase our low carbon and sustainable investments in the light of improvements seen elsewhere and the fact that the UK is facing a £62billion clean energy investment shortfall?”

Source:

<https://www.edie.net/uk-faces-62bn-clean-energy-investment-shortfall-ministers-warned/>