

## **Ulster Farmers Investments Ltd Retirement Benefits Plan (the "Scheme")**

### **Annual governance statement for the Scheme year ending 30 November 2019**

#### **1. Introduction**

As Trustee of the Scheme, we have reviewed and assessed that our systems, processes and controls across key governance functions are consistent with those set out in the Pensions Regulator's:

- code of practice 13: governance and administration of occupational trust-based schemes providing money purchase benefits (the "**DC code**"); and
- regulatory guidance for defined contribution schemes ("**DC regulatory guidance**").

Based on our assessment, the Trustee continues to work towards adopting the standards of practice set out in the DC code and DC regulatory guidance.

As at the date of this statement there are five deferred members of the Scheme. Two members have passed their normal retirement dates.

#### **2. Governance of the Default Arrangement**

The Scheme's assets are invested wholly in a conventional with profits fund provided by Aviva Life & Pensions UK Limited ("**Aviva**"), which is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority.

The Trustee has not prepared a statement of investment principles ("**SIP**") in relation to the Scheme because:

- the Scheme has fewer than 100 members, it is exempt from providing a SIP under regulation 2 of the Occupational Pension Schemes (Investment) Regulations 2005; and
- the Scheme ceased to receive contributions before 6 April 2015. As such, the Trustee is not required to prepare a default fund SIP under regulation 2A of the Occupational Pension Schemes (Investment) Regulations 2005.

#### **3. Objectives of the Scheme's default approach**

Aviva does not operate a default arrangement for members of the Scheme.

#### **4. Core Financial Transactions**

The Trustee has a duty to ensure that core financial transactions (including the investment of contributions, transfer of member assets into and out of the Scheme, transfers between different investments within the Scheme and payments to and in respect of members) relating to the Scheme are processed promptly and accurately. The Trustee delegates the processing of some of these transactions to Aviva and then retains responsibility for processing the remaining transactions itself.

So far as the Trustee acts as administrator in respect of those transaction, an independent auditor undertakes an external audit of the Trustee's administrative processes and controls (AAF 02/07) on an annual basis. In addition, the Trustee has internal controls policies and a Scheme specific risk register in place to mitigate potential risks relating to core financial transactions. This is reviewed by the Trustee at least annually.

In terms of processing core financial transactions, no issues were identified through the year and following the annual audit process.

## 5. Charges and Transaction Costs

The Occupational Pension Schemes (Scheme Administration) Regulations 1996 (the "**Administration Regulations**") require the Trustee to make an assessment of charges and transactions costs borne by the Scheme members and the extent to which those charges and costs represent good value for money for members.

Following our appointment as Trustee of the Scheme on 22 May 2019, we wrote to Aviva to request details of the charges and transaction costs borne by the Scheme members in order to make this assessment. In response, Aviva has confirmed by letter dated 6 April 2020 that members' benefits are invested in the Aviva Conventional With Profits Fund.

Whilst fund switches are not allowed whilst the member is in the Fund, there are no early exit charges if the member decides to transfer out of the Scheme.

The Fund does include a guaranteed growth rate of 1.75% per annum that is built into the securing rates of the plan. The Fund also includes a guaranteed annuity rate. If a member opts to defer their benefits past their normal retirement date, their funds are put into a deposit account earning interest currently at 1.1%. The fund does not include a guaranteed minimum pension.

### Conclusions

Given that the Scheme is in the process of being wound up and the charges are in line with market standards for this type of policy, the Trustee is sufficiently comfortable that the charge and costs referred to by Aviva in respect of the Scheme represent good value for money for the members. The Trustee, therefore, has concluded that the Scheme's assets should remain invested in their current funds until the Scheme is wound up.

### **Trustee Knowledge and Understanding (TKU)**

Section 248 of the Pensions Act 2004 requires the Trustee to possess, or have access to, sufficient knowledge and understanding to run the Scheme effectively.

The Trustee takes training and development responsibilities seriously and each member of the board of directors of the Trustee maintains a record of all training completed during the Scheme year. This record is reviewed annually in order to identify any gaps in knowledge and understanding and a training plan is then put in place over the course of the following Scheme year.

Each of the members of the board of directors is a UK qualified lawyer, either specialising in UK pensions law or insolvency and restructuring law. The Trustee combines the knowledge and understanding of the members of the board, together with the advice which is available to them through their consultants and advisers, to enable them to properly exercise their function as Trustee of the Scheme.

Over the course of the Scheme year, members of the board of directors have attended a number of training sessions relating to pensions law and practice relevant to the Scheme.

The Trustee has received copies of the Scheme's governing documents. Therefore, each member of the board of directors now has access to the Scheme's governing documents and will take the time necessary in order to ensure they are conversant with those documents.

Signed:



Date: 30 June 2020

Director of Open Trustees Limited (Chair of Trustees)