



Border to Coast Pensions Partnership Joint Committee

Date of Meeting: 8 March 2022

Report Title: 2021 Partner Fund Satisfaction Survey (for information and discussion)

Report Sponsor: Rachel Elwell, CEO Border to Coast

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 We hold an Annual Satisfaction Survey to understand how well we are delivering for, and on behalf of, our Partner Funds.
- 1.2 The feedback for the 2021 survey is very positive, and most areas saw a slight improvement on the 2020 scores. The satisfaction rate increased – ‘highly satisfied’ has increased from 49% to 59% while, in a new question, 62% ‘strongly agree’ (and 33% ‘agree’) that Border to Coast is a ‘trusted partner’ to their Partner Fund.
- 1.3 The Satisfaction Survey is a key mechanism to listen and respond to the thoughts and observations of our Partner Funds. We use this survey to identify areas for further development, which following discussion with Partner Fund Officers, has evolved into an action plan for the year ahead.
- 1.4 Potential areas for activity include:
 - How we can support closer collaboration between Partner Funds.
 - How we evolve the support we give to Officers.
 - How we continue to support our Partner Funds’ Responsible Investment needs.
 - How we better work together on the Strategic Asset Allocation process.
 - How we evolve our support and training for Committee members.
 - Reviewing and developing our various reports to Partner Funds.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the results of the survey and provide comment on the recommended actions to address the feedback.

3 2021 Partner Fund Satisfaction Survey

- 3.1 Our Annual Satisfaction survey is a key mechanism to allow us to understand our Partner Funds’ views on the progress we are making to deliver our strategic purpose – to make a difference to the LGPS.

- 3.2 The survey opened on Monday 18 October and formally closed on Monday 8 November. Issued to 48 individuals, 35 responded (73%; in 2020 the survey was issued to 49 people and 80% responded). This covers Pension Committee Chairs, Pension Officers, S151 Officers, and Independent Advisors.
- 3.3 Scores remained very positive and we made slight improvements in most areas compared to 2020.
- 3.4 Overall, the satisfaction rate has increased – ‘highly satisfied’ has increased from 49% to 59%; Somewhat satisfied has remained static (41% to 40%); Neutrals have fallen from 10% to 3%. In a new question, 62% ‘strongly agree’ (and 33% ‘agree’) that Border to Coast is a ‘trusted partner’ to their Partner Fund. There were no negative views.
- 3.5 Responsible Investment – both the day to day practicing of, and rapidly evolving reporting requirements, remains a priority for our Partner Funds. The ability to recruit and retain talent is increasingly regarded as an increasingly important issue.
- 3.6 Summary of responses to key survey questions**

Area	Response
If I raise an issue about Border to Coast or the services provided, I am confident that Border to Coast will deal with it appropriately	46% strongly agree 43% agree 11% Neutral 0% Disagree 0% Strongly Disagree
How well informed do you feel on the progress of Border to Coast? (Very informed & informed combined)	96% Investment performance 91% Responsible Investment 91% Development of investment capabilities 76% Corporate activity within Border to Coast
Building partnerships across Border to Coast remains very important. How well are we collectively doing in building these? (Very Well & Well combined)	88% - Responsible Investment 79% - Design of investment capabilities 82% - Implementation of PF strategic asset allocation 68% - Input to investment strategy reviews 82% - Facilitation of oversight by PFs 72% - PFs working collaboratively
For my Partner Fund, Border to Coast is a trusted partner.	62% Strongly agree 32% Agree 6% Neither agree nor disagree 0% Disagree 0% Strongly disagree
Future Priority Areas	89% - Responsible Investment (investing process) 86% - Responsible Investment (reporting) 63% - Investment capability development 60% - Information to allow investment oversight
Key engagement areas	97% - Responsible Investment 71% - Government policy on pooling 68% - Investment industry (fees, costs, transparency, etc) 65% - impact of regulation on pooling and the LGPS
Key Strategic Risks	80% - Investment offerings don't meet requirements 68% - Loss of key personnel / ability to recruit 67% - Drift towards sub-optimal lowest common denominator solutions
Overall Satisfaction	58% strongly agree 40% agree 2% Neutral 0% Disagree 0% Strongly Disagree

3.7 As a learning organisation, while feedback is good, acting on it is essential. Using the insight from the Annual Satisfaction Survey, the round table discussions at the Annual Conference, and formal and informal feedback from Partner Funds, an action plan has been developed to ensure we continue to serve the needs of our Partner Funds. This is summarised at Appendix I.

4 Risks

4.1 As a customer owned, customer focused organisation, it is important that Border to Coast understands, and responds, to the feedback provided by its Partner Funds. If this does not occur, there is a risk that the firm fails to deliver on behalf of its Partner Funds.

4.2 If we do not show that we are listening, we will fail to get the feedback needed to continue to develop in future years. Therefore the communication of the results of the survey and clear links from the feedback to actions are important.

5 Conclusion

5.1 The annual satisfaction survey suggests that there is a high level of satisfaction in how Border to Coast is delivering on behalf of its Partner Funds. However, as a customer focused organisation, to ensure this remains the case, we have developed an action plan based off the feedback from the 2021 survey.

6 Author

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21 February 2021

7 Supporting Documentation

Appendix I – 2021 Partner Fund Satisfaction Action Plan

Important Information

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Appendix I – 2021 Partner Fund Satisfaction Action Plan

Feedback Topic	Actions	Timeline
<u>Reporting</u>		
Continue to evolve quarterly investment reporting – more accessible, less focus on specific stocks, more insight on thematic issues and incorporation of ESG/RI narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus more on investment and portfolio themes and longer-term • Reduce emphasis on the most recent quarter and individual stocks • Develop glossary of terms & metrics to accompany reporting • Consider link to ESG/RI narrative in quarterly investment reporting 	2022
Ensure sufficient time to cover all asset classes quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Split external quarterly calls into separate equity / fixed income sessions 	Complete
Deliver Alternatives reporting in line with agreed timescales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment performance reporting expected to begin for the Alternatives programme from Q2 2022 onwards 	2022
Expand ESG/Carbon reporting beyond equities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following recent RFP for RI data procurement, we are in discussions with Officers around timelines for likely provision 	2022/23 depending on asset class
Continue to evolve wider Responsible Investment support & reduce duplication between Border to Coast and the Partner Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider whether carbon footprinting can be carried out centrally across the Partner Funds and their assets (perhaps joint procurement) • Other aspects also provided (TCFD, Stewardship Code, plus Data Room, etc) – but is there further support we can provide? 	2023
Collating information from multiple Border to Coast information sources can be challenging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapting quarterly assurance request to include links to various reports & sources for use by officers 	2022
<u>Collective Voice & Leadership</u>		
Where and how to make our collective influence felt, and take more of a lead with Partner Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise discussion with stakeholders to explore Border to Coast’s collective influence and understand desired scope 	2022
The challenges Border to Coast has in aligning stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek further feedback about how widely to share alignment and differences between Partner Funds 	2022
<u>Training</u>		
Continue training for Members – ideally face-to-face, providing opportunities to meet other Partner Funds throughout the year and scope to share experience and discuss hot topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise more regular in-person training for Members • Continue to consider best format for sharing bite-size online training (e.g. videos, podcasts) with Members • Officers to input on training needs and preferences 	Continue throughout 2022 & onwards

Feedback Topic	Actions	Timeline
<u>Capability Design Process</u>		
Improve Officer experience of capability design process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLA for materials 3BDs prior to workshops embedded (providing Officers more time to consider key materials pre-meeting) plus formal follow-up activity post workshop to ensure conclusions are checked and further reflections can be taken into account. 	Embedded and will be applied going forwards
How to support Partner Funds with income requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduled for 2023 discussions on capability launch planner Keen to understand Partner Funds' cashflow positions nearer term 	2022-23
Alternatives – assistance with cashflow management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing Cumbria/NT approach across Officer group 	In progress
<u>Customer Relationship & Servicing</u>		
Documentation and monitoring of Service Level Agreements (SLAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Now established SLAs workshop materials, ESG/Carbon reporting and factsheets to be reported to OOG going forwards 	2022
Named CRM contact for each Partner Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are supportive of this and will explore with Officers how best to implement during 2022 	2022
More small group feedback sessions and 1:1 check-in calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will be continued in 2022 - new Head of CRM will pick up 	2022
How Border to Coast can provide more support for Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate OOG discussion to understand potential areas of assistance 	2022
Assist Partner Funds in better understanding upcoming activity such as meetings and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRM to reintroduce a longer-term schedule of meetings with purpose & summary agendas, to share with Officers & Advisors 	2022
Provide better visibility of upcoming Partner Fund allocations & redemptions (identify crossing opportunities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule of known activity being developed. Intention is to share centrally with disclaimer in 2022 	2022
Lingering issues with Data Room access / local authority IT permissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with Officers to iron out issues, including calls between the respective IT teams 	Ongoing