Dear Mr Field

Halcrow Pension Fund

The Bernard Mathews case has thrown up yet another variant on companies treating pensioners as the bottom of the pile. I also am aware that the Work and Pensions Select Committee will be looking hard at the Pensions Regulator's role in looking after the interests of pensioners and indeed submitted an evidence paper.

I was glad to see that you had commissioned an independent briefing from Prem Sikka into the Bernard Mathews case and he made some very pertinent observations even though the full information was not available to him.

I believe it would be very worthwhile if a similar exercise was undertaken in respect to CH2M/Halcrow and the HPS. There are major questions around the sale to CH2M, the actions after the sale, the revisions to trading and accounts of HGL, the contention that HGL were imminently insolvent and the process to force pensioners into a scheme only just marginally better than PPF.

The Pensions Regulator published a long S89 Report to try to justify its actions or more accurately its lack of action. This to me is a glossy account from their perspective which might benefit from a close examination and review of their case files to see if their words match the reality. For example they seem to have simply accepted the trustees contention about insolvency without making a detailed independent examination of the recent accounts and practices of CH2M/HGL and the treatment of subsidiaries.

As the son of a miner, I was exposed to the battles that workers had to make their voice heard when they were being treated unfairly. I do not have the funds to take anyone to court but I am following due process on internal disputes. These I will take to the Pensions Ombudsman but the trustees are deliberately delaying the response so it is a slow process. I then have to convince the Ombudsman to take on the complaint which I understand may be difficult if it is more than a simple case of being paid the incorrect pension.

Your current workload must be severe but I hope you will find the time to consider commissioning a focussed investigation and briefing for the Halcrow case for your Committee to review.

Yours faithfully,

Kenneth Falls
Halcrow Pensioner

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