

The Gloucestershire Pension Fund - Pension Board

All Public Sector Pension schemes were required under the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 to set up a Pension Board with effect from 2015/16 to assist the administering authorities of their Pension scheme in ensuring compliance with Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and other pension regulations.

The County Council, as administering authority of the Gloucestershire Pension Fund agreed the terms of reference of the Pension Board in February 2015 and amended them during 2019/20. The terms of reference are included within the Fund's Governance Policy document, which can be found on the Funds website and in the 2022/23 Annual Report.

Under the constitution, the Board shall provide an annual report to the Pension Committee and then to a full meeting of Gloucestershire County Council. The report will include information on the business conducted by the Pension Board with any risks or concerns identified. The report will also be published on the Pension Fund's website. This report meets that requirement for the 2022/23 financial year, covering the work from the July 2022, October 2022, January 2023 and April 2023 Board meetings.

Board Membership and Attendance

During the year the Board received the resignation of Jon Topping, Scheme Member Representative and Colin Williams, Scheme Employer Representative. Expressions of interest from Scheme Members and Scheme Employers was sought and Gemma Bell from Cheltenham Borough Council has been appointed to the Board with effect from July 2023 as a Scheme Employer Representative. A vacancy for a Scheme Member Representative currently remains. The Scheme Employer Representative nominated by Gloucestershire County Council has also changed as a result of the Councils AGM in May 2023 with Cllr Mark Mackenzie-Charrington replacing Cllr Stephen Hirst on the Board. Cllr Mackenzie-Charrington had previously been a member of the Pensions Committee.

	Meeting attendance			
	21 July 2022	20 October 2022	18 January 2023	26 April 2023
Scheme Employer Representatives				
Annette Benson (University of Gloucestershire)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Colin Williams (Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board) <i>*resigned position February 2023</i>	✓	✓	✗	
Cllr Stephen Hirst (Gloucestershire County Council) <i>*replaced May 2023</i>	✓	✓	✗	✗
Scheme Member Representatives				
John Abbott	✗	✓	✓	✓
Michael Hunt	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jon Topping <i>*resigned position March 2023</i>	✗	✓	✓	

All meetings were chaired by the Independent non-voting chair, Sean Collins, Head of Pensions from the Oxfordshire Pension Fund.

With the agreement of the Independent Chairman and members of the Board, all meetings of the Board during 2022/23 were held virtually. As the Board was set up under separate legal provision from the other Council Committees, there is no legal requirement for meetings to be held in person.

In addition to attendance at Board Meetings, members of the Pension Board are provided with training opportunities in accordance with the training strategy and training plan. Members of the Pension Board are also sent all agenda papers for the Pension Committee meetings, which they can attend as observers. The minutes of the Pension Board are reported to the next Pension Committee.

Work Programme

The Board receives the following items in respect of its key responsibilities at every meeting:

- Operational update on funding levels and investment activities
- Risk Register
- Pension Administration Report
- Business Plan update

The Board received the following additional reports at its meetings:

- 21 July 2022
 - Audit plan
- 20 October 2022
 - Financial statements 2021/22
 - Governance policy & compliance statement
 - Initial 2022 valuation results (inc draft funding strategy statement)
 - Strategic asset allocation review
- 18 January 2023
 - Audit findings report
 - Fund cashflow projections
- 26 April 2023
 - 2022 valuation report and funding strategy statement
 - LGPS national knowledge assessment results
 - Fund business plan 2023/24

The Board welcomed the focus on the actuarial valuation process and outputs throughout 2022/23, as well as the continuation of the governance workplan which now focussed on the administration function, with an independent review being undertaken by AON and recommendations being brought back throughout 2021/22.

Whilst the Board welcomed the undertaking of the LGPS National Knowledge Assessment by both Board and Committee members to ensure good governance and an informed and appropriate training plan, the Board were concerned at the level of engagement by Committee Members, which reflected that only 50% of the Committee undertook the assessment. The Board would like to see a substantial increase, with an aspiration for 100% engagement, for both Committee and Board members when the exercise is repeated in 2024, thereby ensuring that appropriate knowledge and skills are maintained by those charged with governance.

Future Work Programme

The key responsibilities as set out above will continue to be covered by the Board in 2023/24, including the review of the Annual Report and Business Plan. This will include the continued monitoring of the delivery of the agreed workplan in respect of the governance review and the Board look forward to assisting the Committee with any outcomes of the administration review.

Another key area for the Board to consider during 2023/24 will be the monitoring arrangements associated with the new single Code of Practice to be issued by the Pension Regulator.

The Board will also look to support Committee in meeting its statutory duties by reviewing the long awaiting Government consultations on the future of the LGPS covering the future direction of pooling, climate related reporting, McCloud and the levelling up agenda, which we hope to receive throughout 2023/24.

Finally, the Board will look to support the Committee in delivering a number of the core projects contained in the business plan for 2023/24, which are;

- the review of the pensions administration system contract
- the Pensions dashboard (including a data improvement strategy)
- the McCloud judgement.

Board Members Training 2022/23

Appendix

Annette Benson	Responsible Investment Workshop	15 November 2022
John Abbott	Responsible Investment Workshop	15 November 2022
Michael Hunt	Brunel Investor Day	28 September 2022
Michael Hunt	Responsible Investment Workshop	15 November 2022
Michael Hunt	LGA Governance Conference	19/20 January 2023
Colin Williams	Brunel Investor Day	28 September 2022
Colin Williams	Responsible Investment Workshop	15 November 2022
Colin Williams	LGA Governance Conference	19/20 January 2023