

The Oxfordshire Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) 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 LGPS and other pension regulations.

The Oxfordshire Pension Fund Committee, acting as administering authority of the Oxfordshire LGPS, agreed the terms of reference of the Pension Board in March 2015. These terms of reference are available on the Board's website at <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/lgps-local-pension-board> .

Under the constitution of the Board, an annual report on the work of the Board should be produced by the Board for inclusion in the Fund's own annual report; and it should be presented to the Pension Fund Committee within 6 months following the end of the municipal year. This report meets that requirement for the 2020/21 financial year, covering the work from the July 2020 Board meeting to their meeting on 23 April 2021.

Board Membership

The Board started the year with an Interim Independent Chairman, Paul Blacker, who held the position of Director of Finance at Gloucestershire County Council. He chaired the first two meetings of the year, until a permanent appointment was made to the position of Head of Pensions at Gloucestershire. Matthew Trebilcock then chaired the final two Board meetings of the year. Lisa Hughes, one of the Scheme Employer representatives resigned her position on the Board for personal reasons immediately before the April meeting. Attendance at Board meetings was as follows:

	Attended 17 July 2020 Meeting	Attended 23 October 2020 Meeting	Attended 22 January 2021 Meeting	Attended 23 April 2021 Meeting
Scheme Employer Representatives				
Cllr Bob Johnston (Oxfordshire County Council)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Angela Priestley-Gibbins (The Thera Trust)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lisa Hughes (River Learning Trust)	No	Yes	Yes	n/a
Scheme Member Representatives				
Stephen Davis (Oxford City Council & Unite)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alistair Bastin (Oxfordshire County Council & Unison)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sarah Pritchard (Brookes University)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Cllr Bob Johnston, Angela Priestley-Gibbins, Alistair Bastin and Stephen Davis regularly attended the Pension Fund Committee as observers, with one of them presenting the report of the Board to the Committee. Board Members were also regular attenders at the training events run through the year, to which all Committee and Board members were invited.

Following the County Council elections in May 2021, Cllr Bob Johnston was appointed to Chair the new Pension Fund Committee. He has therefore resigned from his position on the Board as required under the Constitution. Two new scheme employer representatives are therefore being sought to sit on the Board for the 2021/22 year.

Work Programme

The July 2020 meeting of the Board was the first virtual meeting of the Board during the lockdown arrangements imposed due to the spread of the coronavirus. As a consequence, the agenda was lighter than normal, and focussed on the Investment Strategy including the Climate Change Implementation Plan and the standard Administration Report. Alistair Bastin has sat on the Climate Change Working Group as a representative of the Board and scheme members in looking to develop proposals for implementing the Climate Change Policy.

The Board made a request to ensure that whatever the circumstances, they should always have an item on the Risk Register on their agenda, even where it had not been considered by the proceeding meeting of the Pension Fund Committee. The Board also asked for the draft minutes of the preceding Committee meeting to come to their meetings to ensure they were able to consider all matters on a timely basis. Both requests were subsequently agreed by the Pension Fund Committee.

At the October, January and April meetings, the Board considered the reports presented to the Pension Fund Committee on future Governance arrangements, the review of the Annual Business Plan, the Risk Register and the Administration Report. The Board took a very keen interest in the Governance review, which started with the completion of the National Knowledge Assessment tool run by Hymans Robertson. All members of the Board completed the assessment, and their combined score of 72, out-ranked the average score of the Committee (56) and placed them 3rd out of the 18 Boards that completed the assessment.

The Board were then very keen to engage with the subsequent independent governance review of the Fund conducted by Hymans Robertson, with Bob Johnston, Alistair Bastin and Lisa Hughes all volunteering for individual interviews with members of the review team. The Board were keen for the review to clarify what they saw as a lack of clarity around the terms of reference of the Board and Committee and in particular the relationship and communication between the 2 bodies. They also supported a more robust training regime including annual assessment of the effectiveness of the

training undertaken for both Committee and Board members. At their October meeting they considered whether introducing payment of a stipend would lead to improvements in the relationship between the Committee and Board, but ultimately rejected the proposal.

In reviewing the reports on the Annual Business Plan and the performance of Administration Services, the Board focussed on the format of the reports received by the Committee and their usefulness in allowing effective strategic oversight of the delivery of the Committee's objectives. The Board made a number of suggested improvements to the reports to include a more visual presentation of the key issues through RAG ratings with direction of travel indicators, supported by shorter summary statements, and a focus on those performance issues outside expected outcomes. These proposals were subsequently accepted by the Committee.

Two other proposals made by the Board subsequently accepted by the Committee were to strengthen the relationship between the review of the Annual Business Plan and the Risk Register, and for a representative of the Committee to attend future Board meetings to provide clarification in respect of Committee decisions and hear directly from the Board members on issues of concern.

Finally, at their January 2021 meeting, the Board received a report on the annual fees paid to investment managers alongside the investment performance achieved by these managers. The Board made no firm proposals as a result of their review but have asked for a further report covering a 3-year period to be brought to their meeting in July 2021.

Future Work Programme

Many issues covered by the Board in 2020/21 will continue to be a focus for attention in the next year. In particular, the Board will continue to review the proposed changes to the governance arrangements to ensure the effective delivery of the statutory responsibilities of the Committee and to build an improved relationship between the Committee and the Board.

The Board will play a key role in supporting the Committee in delivering its responsibilities following the McCloud judgement and the need to retrospectively collect and review data for the scheme members in scope of the proposed remedy arrangements. There will be a number of challenges in terms of the collection of data for scheme employers, and the presentation of outcomes to scheme members where the Board's input will be important in determining the Committee's final approach.

Another key area for the Board to consider during 2021/22 will be the preparation for the next tri-ennial valuation of the Fund due at 31 March 2022. The Board will be invited to feed in comments into the review of the Funding Strategy Statement which will determine the principles to be followed in the valuation.

The Board will also maintain its focus on the standard administration report, review of the annual business plan and the risk register to ensure that the Committee is able to meet its statutory duties.

Board Members Training 2020/21

Appendix

Alistair Bastin	Pre-Committee – Good Governance	11th September 2020
Alistair Bastin	LGPS Autumn Seminar	28 th September 2020
Alistair Bastin	Brunel Investor Day – Public Markets	18 th November 2020
Alistair Bastin	Brunel Investor Day – Private Markets	19 th November 2020
Alistair Bastin	Pre-Committee – Governance Review	4 th December 2020
Alistair Bastin	LGA Webinar	26 January 2021
Alistair Bastin	Pre-Committee – TCFD reporting	5 March 2021
Angela Priestley-Gibbins	LGPS Autumn Seminar	28 th September 2020
Angela Priestley-Gibbins	LGA Fundamentals Webinar - day 1	6 th October 2020
Angela Priestley-Gibbins	LGA Fundamentals Webinar - day 2	7 th October 2020
Angela Priestley-Gibbins	LGA Fundamentals Webinar - day 3	8 th October 2020
Angela Priestley-Gibbins	Brunel Investor Day – Public Markets	18 th November 2020
Angela Priestley-Gibbins	Brunel Investor Day – Private Markets	19 th November 2020
Angela Priestley-Gibbins	Pre-Committee – Governance Review	4 th December 2020
Angela Priestley-Gibbins	LGA Webinar	26 January 2021
Angela Priestley-Gibbins	Pre-Committee – TCFD reporting	5 March 2021
Bob Johnston	Pre-Committee – Good Governance	11 th September 2020
Bob Johnston	LGA Fundamentals Webinar - day 2	7 th October 2020
Bob Johnston	LGA Fundamentals Webinar - day 3	8 th October 2020
Bob Johnston	Pre-Committee – Governance Review	4 th December 2020
Bob Johnston	LGA Webinar	26 January 2021
Bob Johnston	Pre-Committee – TCFD reporting	5 March 2021
Lisa Hughes	Brunel Investor Day – Public Markets	18 th November 2020
Lisa Hughes	Brunel Investor Day – Private Markets	19 th November 2020
Stephen Davis	Brunel Investor Day – Public Markets	18 th November 2020
Stephen Davis	Brunel Investor Day – Private Markets	19 th November 2020
Stephen Davis	Pre-Committee – TCFD reporting	5 March 2021