

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 2016/17 financial year (the initial annual report of the Pension Board covered the period November 2015 which was the initial meeting of the Board to July 2016, the Board's third meeting. This report therefore covers the work from the October 2016 Board meeting to their meeting on 7 April 2017. Future annual reports will cover the full year of meetings).

Board Membership

The Board continued to run with a scheme member representative vacancy until the April 2017, when Sarah Pritchard was appointed to the Board, following a process where all scheme members were invited to express an interest in the position. Membership during the year and attendance at Board meetings was as follows:

Scheme Employer Representatives	Attended 21 October 2016 Meeting	Attended 13 January 2017 Meeting	Attended 7 April 2017 Meeting
Cllr Bob Johnston (Oxfordshire County Council)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cllr Roger Cox (Vale of White Horse District Council)	Yes	No	No
David Locke (Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust)	Yes	In Part	No
Scheme Member Representatives			
Stephen Davis (Oxford City Council & Unite)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alistair Bastin (Oxfordshire County Council & Unison)	Yes	No	Yes
Sarah Pritchard (Brookes University)	n/a	n/a	Yes

Cllr Roger Cox sent apologies for two of the meetings which clashed with cabinet meetings he was required to attend at the Vale of White Horse District Council. Following the end of the financial year, he submitted his resignation to the Board given the continued capacity issue whilst he remained on the Cabinet of the District Council. A new expression of interest process was initiated with an appointment due to be confirmed by the end of July 2017.

All meetings were attended and chaired by Graham Burrow, the Head of Pensions for the Gloucestershire Pension Fund in line with his appointment as the Independent Chairman. At the April Board meeting, Graham announced his decision to step down from the position given his impending retirement. It was subsequently agreed that Mark Spilsbury, as the new Head of Pensions at the Gloucestershire Pension Fund would take on the role as Independent Chairman of the Oxfordshire Pension Board, with Sean Collins, the Head of Pensions for the Oxfordshire Fund remaining as Independent Chairman of the Gloucestershire Local Pension Board.

Work Programme

The main area of focus for the Pension Board throughout 2016/17 was in respect of employer management, and in particular the timely and accurate submission of data from employers to the Pension Services team. At their meeting in October 2016 the Board raised a number of concerns about the level of communication with Scheme Members where they did not receive their Annual Benefit Statement and expressed a view that all active and deferred members should receive some form of communication. Officers were asked to look at the options of sending a holding letter to inform the member we were still working on their statement which would follow, or to send out the statement based on the information provided by the employer, with a message that there were outstanding queries with the information, and that the scheme member should contact their employer to discuss.

The Board were also keen to see the development of improved management information, which would allow both the Board and the Committee to monitor progress on the production of the 2017 statements.

The January meeting of the Board considered further management information and welcomed the decision of the Committee to increase the establishment of the Pension Services team to help address some of the issues. There was also discussion as to how the process for collecting data could be improved, and in particular the extent it could be standardised which would assist scheme employers who had scheme members in multiple funds. The Board also noted the plans to improve employer training, and the escalation process in cases on non-compliance. The Board suggested that they could be involved in the escalation process and call in scheme employers to discuss the issues related to late, incomplete or inaccurate returns.

The Board was also keen to develop more data about the processes and results from other Funds, starting with the administering authorities within the

Brunel Pension Partnership. This should include information on the level of tolerances around data accepted by each Fund, and the level of risks taken by each Fund in processing the data received.

In April, the Board reviewed the latest position, and considered the action plan developed in response to the request from the Pension Regulator, which contained many of the items previously highlighted by the Board.

Other areas of work considered by the Board during 2016/17 included:

- The development of the Brunel Pension Partnership. The Board received update reports at each meeting and attended the engagement days with colleagues from the Pension Committee and members of the Pension Fund Committees and Boards from Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire
- The Risk Register. The Board reviewed the risk register at each meeting and raised any concerns with the Pension Fund Committee, including concerns re the potential loss of skills and knowledge on the Pension Fund Committee as a result of the County Council elections, and within the Pension Services team as a consequence over office moves.
- In October at the request of a Board Member, the Board considered the current Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC) Scheme. The Committee subsequently accepted the Board's recommendations for the next review of the Scheme to be undertaken by independent advisers and to include a comparison of the arrangements of the other Funds within the Brunel Pension Partnership, specifically the number of providers/fund choices open to scheme members.
- In April, the Board considered the Business Plan and the Investment Strategy Statement agreed by the March meeting of the Pension Fund Committee. The Board agreed to undertake further work on the future cash flow forecasts, and on the overall investment management costs and the benefits of active v passive fund management.

The minutes of each Board meeting are included in the agenda papers of the subsequent Pension Fund Committee and a Board representative is invited to present any key items to the Committee.