

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 2021/22 financial year, covering the work from the July 2021 Board meeting to their meeting on 22 April 2022.

Board Membership

The Board started the year with a vacancy for one scheme employer representative following the resignation of Lisa Hughes immediately before the April 2021 meeting. A further vacancy was created following the County Council elections in May 2021 which led to Cllr Bob Johnston being appointed as Chairman of the Pension Fund Committee, which meant he was required to step down from the Board.

Following receipt of three expressions of interest, interviews were held with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Pension Fund Committee and the Head of Pensions and Elizabeth Griffiths from West Oxfordshire District Council and Marcia Slater from Vale of White Horse/South Oxfordshire District councils were appointed to serve on the Board. Attendance at Board meetings was as follows:

	Attended 9 July 2021 Meeting	Attended 22 October 2021 Meeting	Attended 21 January 2022 Meeting	Attended 22 April 2022 Meeting
Scheme Employer Representatives				
Elizabeth Griffiths (West Oxfordshire District Council)	N/A	Yes	Yes	No
Angela Priestley-Gibbins (The Thera Trust)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Marcia Slater (Vale of White Horse/South Oxfordshire District Councils)	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes
Scheme Member Representatives				
Stephen Davis (Oxford City Council & Unite)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Alistair Bastin (Oxfordshire County Council & Unison)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Sarah Pritchard (Brookes University)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

All meetings were chaired by the Independent Chairman, Matthew Trebilcock, the Head of Pensions from the Gloucestershire Pension Fund. Cllr Bob Johnston regularly attended the meetings of the Board in his capacity as Chairman of the Pension Fund Committee as part of the arrangements agreed within the Governance Review to improve communications between the Committee and Board. Angela Priestley-Gibbins, Elizabeth Griffiths, Marcia Slater, Alistair Bastin and Stephen Davis all 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.

With the agreement of the Independent Chairman and members of the Board, all meetings of the Board during 2021/22 were held virtually. As the Board was set up under separate legal provision from the other County Council Committees, there is no legal requirement for meetings to be held in person.

Work Programme

At their July 2021 meeting, the Board agreed their annual report for the 2020/21 financial year. The agenda also included the standard items of the draft minutes of the most recent Pension Fund Committee, the Review of the Annual Business Plan, the Risk Register and the Administration Report. The Board continued to express their concerns about the levels of skills and knowledge on the Committee, reflecting the fact that there were 6 new members on the Committee, reflecting the new Constitution and the changes as a result of the May 2021 election results. The Board were keen to see the development of a comprehensive training programme for the new Committee. The July meeting also received a report on the investment management fees paid by the Fund over the last 3 years alongside information on investment performance during this period. The Board noted the complexity of the information presented and encouraged the Committee to review the information to ensure they were receiving value for money in respect of the fees paid to active managers.

The October Board meeting was the first attended by the new members Elizabeth Griffiths and Marcia Slater. The Board considered the actions agreed by the Pension Fund Committee in response to the Independent Governance Review. In particular, the Board asked for clarifications in respects of the new Fund specific Conflicts of Interest Policy, and how it related to their role as scheme member and scheme employer representatives. The Board again highlighted the importance of a comprehensive training programme and welcomed the proposal for robust arrangements to ensure adherence to the training policy.

The Board received the first report produced in line with the Taskforce for Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) template. The Board offered

their congratulations to the Officers both for producing the report in advance of the statutory requirements and for the positive results set out in the report. As part of their review of the standard items on the annual Business Plan, Risk Register and Administration Report, the Board suggested amendments to the Risk Register to reflect the potential loss of skills and knowledge given the turnover of Board membership.

The January meeting of the Board focused on the standard items associated with the Annual Business Plan, Risk Register and Administration Report. The Board considered the initial priority areas identified as part of the initial planning for the workshop on the 2022/23 Business Plan and asked that cyber security be added to the list of priorities. The Board also suggested amendments to the Risk Register to ensure this properly reflected the risks related to cyber security.

The April meeting of the Board received the standard items in respect of the Annual Business Plan, Risk Register and Administration Report. The main concerns raised by the Board under these items were the on-going issues of recruiting sufficient skilled and experienced staff to work in the Pensions Administration Teams, particularly in light of the increasing pressures associated with McCloud.

The April meeting also considered the new Engagement Policy aimed to provide robust timelines around moving all investee companies to become Paris aligned, starting with the Climate Action 100+ companies who are responsible for around 80% of the current emissions. The Board noted the role played by Alistair Bastin as the Board's representative on the Climate Change Working Group.

Finally the April meeting reviewed two exempt reports received by the Committee relating to operational policy decisions to provide assurance that the Committee were acting in accordance with their statutory responsibilities.

Future Work Programme

A key area for the Board to consider during 2022/23 will be the tri-ennial valuation of the Fund as 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. A key element of this will be for the Board to review the long awaiting Government consultation on the future of the LGPS which is expected later in 2022, and due to cover the future direction of pooling, climate related reporting, McCloud and the levelling up agenda.

The Board will maintain its focus on the future Governance arrangements for the Fund and will work closely with the new Governance and Communications Team Leader to review the existing governance arrangements in light of best practice and the Government's response to the Good Governance Review undertaken by Hymans Robertson for the Scheme Advisory Board.

Finally the Board will continue to be involved in the implementation of the Fund's Climate Policy and the Climate stocktake to be undertaken by the Brunel partnership.

Board Members Training 2021/22

Appendix

Alistair Bastin	Brunel Investor Day - Session 2	6th October 2021
Alistair Bastin	LAPFF Conference	8th to 10th December 2021
Alistair Bastin	LGPS Governance Conference	20th to 21st January 2022
Angela Priestley-Gibbins	Brunel Investor Day - Session 2	6th October 2021
Elizabeth Griffiths	Brunel Investor Day - Session 1	27th September 2021
Elizabeth Griffiths	Brunel Investor Day - Session 2	6th October 2021
Marcia Slater	Fundamentals training - Day 2	9th November 2021
Marcia Slater	Fundamentals training - Day 3	2nd December 2021
Marcia Slater	LGPS Governance Conference	20th to 21st January 2022
Stephen Davis	Brunel Investor Day - Session 2	6th October 2021
Stephen Davis	LAPFF Conference	8th to 10th December 2021