

## Attendance

### Members of the Pensions Board

#### Employer Representatives

Joe McCormick  
Paul Johnson (Vice-Chair)  
Ian Martin  
Mark Smith  
Cllr John Reynolds

#### Member Representatives

Adrian Turner (Chair)  
Julian Allam  
Terry Dingley

#### Observer Member

Steve Smith

#### Employees

Rachel Brothwood	Director of Pensions – West Midlands Pension Fund
Simon Taylor	Assistant Director, Pensions
Rachel Howe	Head of Governance and Corporate Services
Shiventa Sivanesan	Assistant Director – Investment Management and Stewardship
Amy Regler	Head of Operations
Rachael Lem	Responsible Investment Officer
Hayley Reid	Regulatory Governance Manager
Holly Slater	Governance Officer
Fabrica Hastings	Democratic Services Officer – City of Wolverhampton Council

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## Part 1 – items open to the press and public

*Item No.*     *Title*

- 1 Apologies for Absence**  
Apologies were received from Stan Ruddock, Member Representative, Sharon Campion, Member Representative and Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur, Member Representative.
- 2 Declaration of Interests**  
There were no declarations of interest made.
- 3 Minutes Approval**  
That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a correct record.

4 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

5 **Governance and Assurance**

Rachel Howe, Head of Governance and Corporate Services, presented the report on the work of the Fund to deliver a well governed scheme.

The Head of Governance and Corporate Services noted marginal movement across the Fund's Operational Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) over the most recent quarter, resulting in maintained performance across all Service Areas.

On presentation of the Fund's Strategic Risk Register it was noted that there had been movement on several risks including resourcing and data management, with external factors being a key element in the increased risk assessment.

In response to a question raised regarding the timescales for improvements in risk ratings, the Head of Governance and Corporate Services advised that a number of the risks were linked to external factors and that the Fund were waiting for the finalisation of regulatory changes. However, the Fund were committed to ensuring that resources were allocated appropriately to prepare for and implement change.

Rachel Brothwood, Director of Pensions, advised that the Fund was in the process of recruiting and regularly reviewed resource requirements in order to respond to risks and anticipated changes.

Resolved:

1. That the Pensions Board note the Fund's Key Performance Indicators
2. That the Pension Board note the latest strategic risk-register and the areas being closely monitored in the current environment
3. That the Pension Board note the compliance monitoring activity undertaken during the quarter.
4. The Pension Board note the Governing Body Training activities undertaken during the quarter.

6 **Annual Report and Accounts**

Rachel Brothwood, Director of Pensions, presented the report on the finalisation of the Statement of Accounts and the Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2021 and the latter's publication on the Fund's website.

The Director of Pensions advised that the Fund's Annual Accounts formed as part of the City of Wolverhampton Council's accounts as the Administering Authority for the Fund. The Annual Audit was completed alongside the Council's during October 2021 and the Fund's own Annual Report was published ahead of the 1 December 2021 deadline for LGPS reporting.

The Director of Pensions highlighted the service the Fund offers to all employers with regards to the production of pension fund accounting disclosures for their own annual report and accounts.

Resolved:

1. That the Pension Board note the Statement of Accounts for West Midlands Pension Fund (WMPF) for the year ending 31 March 2021 was audited and

completed alongside the finalisation of the City of Wolverhampton Council Statement of Accounts on 11 October.

2. That the Pension Board note the Management Representations letter to Grant Thornton was signed on 11 October by the Chair of Pensions Committee and the Director of Pensions on behalf of the Fund
3. That the Pension Board note that the Chair and Vice Chair of Pensions Committee approved the final publication of the Fund's 2020-2021 Annual Report in November 2021

## 7 **Investment Governance**

Rachel Brothwood, Director of Pensions and Rachael Lem, Responsible Investment Officer presented the report on the investment related matters, including the publication of the TCFD (Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures) Report and an update on responsible investment activities, together with the ongoing development of LGPS Central Investment Pool.

In response to a question raised regarding regional investments, the Director of Pensions advised that there were no specific regulations which dictate where LGPS Fund's should invest and that all investment decisions are taken in context of the Fund's overarching Investment Strategy Statement. The Director of Pensions further advised that the Fund held a range of investments in the region and the Pensions Committee establish and review the Fund's Investment and Funding strategies which would next be reviewed over 2022/23. The Board would be sighted on the decision-making process and have the opportunity to raise with the Pensions Committee any matters they feel require specific consideration.

The Board were asked to note the publication of the Fund's 2021 Climate Related Disclosure report prepared in line with the recommendations from the Taskforce for Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD). The report has been updated in line with the Fund's Climate Change Strategy and Framework.

Resolved:

1. That the Pension Board note the update on investment governance matters, including those in relation to responsible investment and investment pooling.
2. That the Pension Board note, the publication of the Fund's 2021 Taskforce for Climate-related Financial Disclosure (TCFD) Report (Appendix A).

## 8 **Pensions Administration**

Amy Regler, Head of Operations, presented the report on the routine operational work undertaken by the pensions administration service areas during the period 1 July to 30 September 2021.

The Board were advised that there had been a decrease in outstanding casework due to a focus on the clearance of outstanding work.

The Board were further advised that new regulations in respect of transfers took effect from 30 November 2021 and the regulations require Pension Scheme's to conduct appropriate due diligence and further checks before completing such transfers out of the scheme.

In response to a question raised regarding the average age of members opting to transfer out of the Fund, the Head of Operations advised the average age requesting to transfer out of the scheme was 45.

In response to a question raised regarding the impact on the team from the increase in transfer requests and the additional steps now required the Head of Operations advised that the Fund had introduced new roles to support analytical work, as well as a panel of Fund officers to review transfers out, it was also noted that additional training with regards to the new requirements had been provided.

Resolved:

1. That the Pension Board note the performance and workloads of the key pension administration functions
2. That the Pension Board note the development of the Fund's membership and participating employers. That Pension Board note the enhanced due diligence on transfer out requests, protecting members against pension scams.

## 9 **Customer Engagement Update**

Simon Taylor, Assistant Director – Pensions, presented the report on the Fund's customer engagement activity from 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021 and to cover future planned customer engagement activity in the context of the Fund's Customer Engagement Strategy.

The Fund's Member Services team continued to deliver support through digital channels, as the Fund's website/ virtual delivery continued to expand and remained well received.

It was noted that since the publication of the report and in light of recent Government guidance, the Fund had taken the decision to postpone its AGM (Annual General Meeting) and that an interactive update was being prepared for issue to all employers.

The Assistant Director provided an update on the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) limited consultation with regards to a proposal for the consolidation of academies within one Multi Academy Trust from regional LGPS Funds to a single LGPS Fund, outside of the region.

Resolved:

1. That the Board note the engagement activity and informed service development.

## 10 **Preparation for 2022 Valuation**

Simon Taylor, Assistant Director – Pensions, presented the report on the 2022 actuarial valuation process, deliverables, and context in preparation for the review of funding strategy and employer contribution rates.

Resolved:

1. That the Pension Board notes the report and the associated preparatory work and planning for the 2022 actuarial valuation of the West Midlands Pension Fund (the Fund).

## 11 **Areas for discussion**

Simon Taylor, Assistant Director – Pensions and Amy Regler, Head of Operations, presented Board Members with an update on the Fund's key Service Providers, following recent procurement of advisers including the Fund Actuary, Risk Advisor and Covenant Advisor and supplier for the Funds Pensions Administration Software.

Resolved:

1. That the Board note the update on the Fund's key service providers.