Representation Policy

Background

In accordance with best practice the Fund has established a policy on representation of scheme members and non-administering authority employers on its Governing Bodies (Pensions Committee and the Local Pensions Board) detailing its approach to representation and voting rights for each party.

Pensions Committee

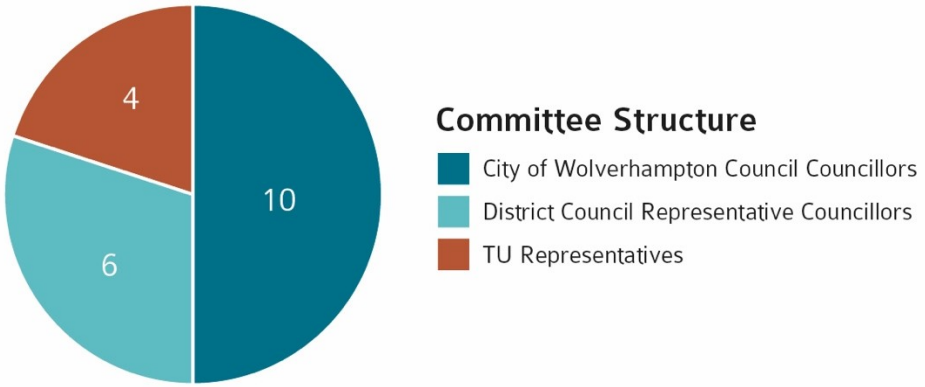
The City of Wolverhampton Council's Pensions Committee have delegated responsibility to undertake the role of the Scheme Manager in accordance with Section 4 of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013.

The Committee is responsible for; exercising all of the functions that are required as an Administering Authority for a Local Government Pension Scheme under the Public Service Pensions Act 2013, adhering to the principles required by Statutory Guidance, The Pensions Regulators (tPR) Code of Practice and performing the duties set out in the Terms of Reference for the Pensions Committee as detailed in the Administering Authority's Constitution available, on it's website.

Members of the Pensions Committee are accountable for all the Fund's activities and are responsible for ensuring that the Fund is managed in the best interest of all its employer's, member's and beneficiaries (employees of the public sector within the West Midlands region).

The membership of the Pensions Committee consists of;

- Ten City of Wolverhampton Council elected members who are nominated by the Full Council at the Annual Council Meeting. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee are appointed annually from these members by Full Council.
- Six District Council elected members, one representative from each of the six districts within the Fund (Birmingham City Council, Dudley MBC, Coventry City Council, Sandwell MBC, Solihull MBC and Walsall MBC).
- Four Trade Union 'member representatives' invited from the three main trade unions of the Administering Authority and nominated by their respective Union.



Elected members sit as full members of the Committee with debating and voting rights on all matters presented. Trade Union representatives are invited to sit on the Pensions Committee as observers on behalf of pension scheme members. Therefore, they may participate in debate and have the same access to papers, meetings and training opportunities but hold no voting rights. Trade Union representatives are invited to participate in training events in order to assist in informing debate.

The quorum for the Pensions committee is nine, this is to ensure that the committee remains politically balanced with best endeavours to ensure at least one District Council representative at each meeting to ensure adequate representation. Trade Union representatives do not count towards quorum however, every effort is made to ensure at least one individual is in attendance for each meeting.

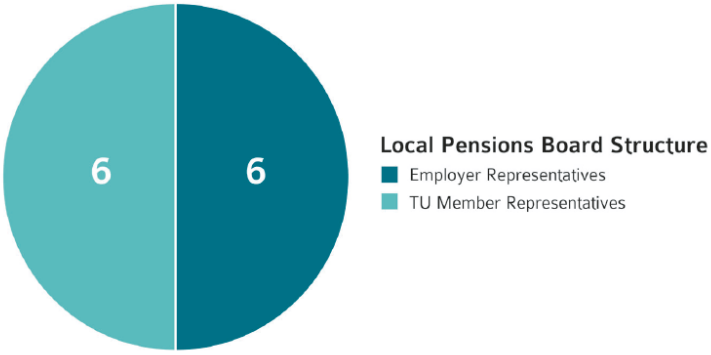
Pensions Board

In accordance with Section 5 of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and under regulation 106 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (as amended), the Fund have established the West Midlands Local Pension Board (The Board). The role of the Board is to assist in the good governance of the scheme through the monitoring of Fund performance.

The Pensions Board has 12 members, six employer representatives and six members representatives and is structured as follows;

- Five Employer Representatives, five officer seats, from each of the category of employers within the Fund.
- Five member representatives invited from three main trade unions of the Administering Authority, the number of seats for each trade union are based on the membership from the administering authority. Trade Union members are nominated by their respective union.
- Two elected member seats, one employer representative and one member representative selected by the Administering Authority at the Full Council meeting at the beginning of each municipal year. In line with statutory provisions, an elected Councillor who sits on pensions board, cannot also sit on the Pensions Committee and must be a member or employer representative.

Each member of the Board has a right to vote on matters brought before it. The nominations to Chair and Vice Chair are appointed to annually, with a rotation of employer and member representatives each year.



The Fund has established a Local Pensions Board appointments process, available here which details its approach to appointing members of the Board, brief details are outlined below:

- The Fund seeks nominations to two of its seats, one employer and one member annually at the start of each democratic year.
- The process for selecting which seats are up for nomination is determined at the Board meeting in January and should be instigated as follows;
    - Members who have been unable to adhere to their responsibilities with regards to attendance and training.
    - Vacant seats (including vacancies which may arise before the end of the year)
    - Rotation based on length of service, one from each group.
- This process allows for natural movement within the Board whilst retaining knowledge and experience.
- As detailed above, member representative nominations are invited from the three main trade unions at the administering authority.
- Employer nominations are invited through communication with the Fund's employer base, following formal advert and recruitment to the Fund's employer contacts. The Fund endeavours to ensure it has representation across the different employer types within including education authorities, local authorities scheduled bodies and admitted bodies.
- In accordance with the appointments policy an appointments panel is convened to agree nominations.

Wider Representation

Customer Engagement Strategy and Customer Engagement Plan
The Fund publishes an annual Customer Engagement Plan aligned ot the customer Engagement Strategy, setting out how the Fund will engage, consult and involve customers (members, employers, partner organisations, trade unions and statutory bodies), and stakeholders, including its Governing Bodies. The Customer Engagement Strategy encourages engagement and feedback from customers which serves to inform our delivery, enhancing overall outcomes. A copy of the Customer Engagement strategy is available here.

An annual Customer Engagement Plan detailing planned engagement activities with Fund stakeholder's (Employers, Members (active, deferred and pensioner) and Governing Body members) is also prepared and published on the Fund's website, available here.

Employer Peer Group
The Fund have established an Employer Peer Group, consisting of a group of representatives from the Fund's employer base. The Employer Peer Group has an open invitation to all employers, the primary focus of the group is listed in their terms of reference which is available here and includes enabling collaborative working with employers, sharing best practice and discussion on current issues within the LGPS and their impact. Items discussed by the employer peer group are relayed to the wider employer base through the Employer Brief (newsletter) at the Fund's Mid-Year Review and Annual General Meetings and the Fund's website.

The Wider LGPS
As a leader across the LGPS, our role on national bodies ensures the voices of our customers are heard by the those with responsibility for change, placing our members and employers at the centre of decisions which impact their futures.