

## 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 2022/23 financial year, covering the work from the July 2022 Board meeting to their meeting on 5 May 2023.

### Board Membership

The Board started the year with a vacancy for one scheme member representative following the resignation of Sarah Pritchard which was confirmed after the July 2022 meeting.

An email was sent to all scheme members who had recorded an email address as part of their pension record, as well as the normal advertisements within the Pension Newsletters and on the Fund Website. This attracted a very strong field of 9 applicants and following an interview process with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Pension Fund Committee and the Head of Pensions Liz Hayden, a retired member was appointed to serve on the Board. Attendance at Board meetings was as follows:

	Attended 8 July 2022 Meeting	Attended 21 October 2022 Meeting	Attended 20 January 2023 Meeting	Attended 5 May 2023 Meeting
Scheme Employer Representatives				
Elizabeth Griffiths (West Oxfordshire District Council)	No	Yes	Yes	No
Angela Priestley-Gibbins (The Thera Trust)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Marcia Slater (Vale of White Horse/South Oxfordshire District Councils)	Yes	No	Yes	No
Scheme Member Representatives				
Stephen Davis (Oxford Direct	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Services & Unite)				
Alistair Bastin (Oxfordshire County Council & Unison)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sarah Pritchard (Brookes University)	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Liz Hayden (Retired Member)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes

All meetings were chaired by the Independent Chairman, Matthew Trebilcock, the Head of Pensions from the Gloucestershire Pension Fund. Cllr Bob Johnston attended all but the May 2023 meeting 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. Cllr John Howson attended the May 2023 meeting in place of Cllr Johnston. Steve Moran, the Scheme member representative on the Pension Fund Committee also attended the Board meetings in October 2022 and January 2023.

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 2022/23 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.

The Board welcomed the addition of the new Governance and Communications Manager at their October meeting and noted that the officer would play a key role in the work of the Board going forward.

All voting members of the Board also attended the full day Planning Workshop held on 3 February 2023 which discussed the 2023/24 Business Plan in the morning session, and the Strategic Asset Allocation session in the afternoon.

The Board have also been represented throughout the year on the Climate Change Working Group by Alistair Bastin. Alistair has also served as a member of the Brunel Oversight Board as one of two representatives of all scheme members on that Board following an election process across the ten Funds within the Brunel Pension Partnership.

## Work Programme

The work programme for the Board continued as a mix of a regular review of a set of standard reports as presented to the previous meeting of the Pension Fund Committee, ad-hoc review of reports to the Pension Fund Committee

and new items brought direct by the Fund's officers or made at the request of Board members.

The standard reports reviewed at each of the Board meetings in that last year were:

- Review of the Annual Business Plan and Budget
- Risk Register
- Administration Report

The main issues identified by the Board and referred back to the Committee for further consideration from these reports included concerns about staffing levels, and in particular the resource requirements of dealing with the McCloud remedy, and cyber risks. They also offered advice to the Committee on the increased use of graphs and trend analysis within the performance reports received by the Committee.

During the year, the Board reviewed the following Committee reports:

- July 2022 – the report on the key assumptions to be adopted in the forthcoming Fund Valuation, and the confidential report on potential changes to the Fund's AVC provider. In both cases the Board was happy with the approach adopted by the Committee
- October 2022 – the further report on the Fund Valuation including the draft Funding Strategy Statement, the initial report on Cyber Security and the Funds latest climate report issued in line with the Taskforce for Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) report. The Board expressed concerns on the absence of an over-arching cyber risk policy as well as the need to ensure robust arrangements were in place for monitoring how the Fund's third-party suppliers managed cyber risk.
- January 2023 – the Board reviewed a follow up report on cyber risk as well as a report on the review of the Fund's current software provider. The Board endorsed the approach taken by the Committee on both items, noting that their previous comments on cyber risk had been incorporated into the future arrangements
- May 2023 – the Board reviewed the final report on cyber risk, as well as the report on the proposed changes to the Strategic Asset Allocation for the Fund. In respect of the latter, the Board recommended the Committee to add consideration of the fee levels paid and value for money into their final decision.

The new items considered by the Board which had not previously been presented to the Pension Fund Committee were:

- The Boards own Annual Report for the 2021/22 financial year considered at the July 2022 meeting
- The annual report on investment management fees and portfolio performance presented to the Board at its meeting in July 2022. The Board noted the limitations of the report given the lack of long-term

data resulting from the significant transition in investments as a consequence of the Government's pooling agenda.

- Two reports on scheme member engagement as presented to the January and May 2023 meetings, where the Board took the lead in shaping the initial proposals and the subsequent implementation plan for further consideration by the Pension Fund Committee.

## **Future Work Programme**

A key area for the Board to consider during 2023/24 will be the monitoring arrangements associated with the new General Code of Practice to be issued by the Pension Regulator. This is consistent with one of the primary objectives of the Board to ensure that the Pension Fund Committee is meeting its regulatory duties and Included within this ensuring all material breaches are reported to the Pension Regulator.

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 include the key targets set last year to review the long awaiting Government consultation on the future of the LGPS initially expected last year covering 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 Governance and Communications Manager 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.

The Board will also oversee the effectiveness of the new approach to scheme member engagement, including developing their own role in ensuring the work of the Board is appropriately communicated to scheme members and scheme employers.

Finally, the Board will continue to be involved in the implementation of the Fund's Climate Policy and wider Responsible Investment duties.

## Board Members Training 2022/23

## Appendix

Alistair Bastin	CIPFA's Annual Conference for Pension Board Members	18th May 2022
Alistair Bastin	Local Authority Conference 2022	13th to 15th June 2022
Alistair Bastin	Barnett Waddingham's Pension Board event	22nd June 2022
Alistair Bastin	Unison South East LGPS Forum AGM	03rd May 2022
Alistair Bastin	CIPFA Annual Pension Board Conference	18th May 2022
Alistair Bastin	Unison South East LGPS Forum	26th May 2022
Alistair Bastin	Brunel Oversight Board	09th June 2022
Alistair Bastin	PLSA Conference	13-15th June 2022
Alistair Bastin	Barnett Waddingham LPB Seminar	22nd June 2022
Alistair Bastin	Brunel Investor Day	28th September 2022
Alistair Bastin	LAPFF Conference	7-9th December 2022
Angela Priestley-Gibbins	Barnett Waddingham's Pension Board event	22nd June 2022
Angela Priestley-Gibbins	Brunel Investor Day	28th September 2022
Marcia Slater	Brunel Investor Day	28th September 2022
Stephen Davis	Local Authority Conference 2022	13th to 15th June 2022
Stephen Davis	Brunel Investor Day	28th September 2022