

Scheme Advisory Board

Hybrid meeting held on 24 November 2025

Item 3 – Paper A – Actions and Agreements

Actions and agreements – 21 July 2025 – 1.30pm

Present

Councillor Roger Phillips	Chair
Councillor Nathan Yeowell	Scheme Employer Representative/LGPC Chair
Councillor John Beesley	Scheme Employer Representative
Councillor Christopher Weaver	Scheme Employer Representative
Councillor Andrew Thornton	Scheme Employer Representative
George Georgiou	Scheme Member Representative (GMB)
John Neal	Scheme Member Representative (UNITE)
Tommy Bowler	Scheme Member Representative (UNITE)
George Graham	Practitioner Representative (South Yorkshire Pensions Authority)
Kelvin Menon	Association of Local Authority Treasurers representative – ALATS
Nick Kirby	Trades Union Congress (TUC)
Oliver Watson	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
Ben Lavelle	MHCLG
Matt Gurden	Government Actuary's Department (GAD)
Gary Delderfield	Eversheds Sutherland
Joe Dabrowski	Pensions UK
Eva Sobek	Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA)
Clair Alcock	Local Government Association (LGA) – Head of Pensions and Board Secretary
Jeremy Hughes	LGA – Deputy Board Secretary
Lorraine Bennett	LGA – Principal Pensions Adviser
Becky Clough	LGA – Board Support and Policy Officer
Ona Ehimuan	LGA – Pensions Secretary
Sophia Chivandire	LGA – Pensions and Policy Support Officer
Sarah Tingey	LGA – Research and Data Analyst
Charity Main	Nominated Scheme Employer Representative for the Education Sector (Observer)

Scheme Advisory Board Secretariat

Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ
E SABSecretariat@local.gov.uk W www.lgpsboard.org

Scheme Advisory Board

Les Timbey

Nominated Scheme Member Representative
(GMB lay member) (Observer))

Item 1. Welcome, apologies and introductions

1. The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting, including Clair Alcock to her first Board meeting since joining the LGA in May 2025 and Jeff Dong who attended the meeting as the new Compliance and Reporting Committee Chair.
2. Due to new central government processes, there are ongoing delays with approving new Board nominations. Charity Main, who has been nominated to replace Emelda Nicholroy from April 2025, attended the meeting as an observer for a second time. Les Timbey who has been nominated to replaced Garry Warwick as the GMB lay scheme member representative also attended as an observer.
3. Apologies for absence were received from David Murphy and Teresa Clay (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, MHCLG). Oliver Watson and Ben Lavelle were both in attendance from MHCLG.
4. The Chair informed the Board that Jon Richards' term as a Board member and vice-chair had come to an end. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked Jon for his service and contributions to the Board over the last 10 years. The Board was informed that the Secretariat were waiting for UNISON to nominate both their new member representatives.

Item 2. Meeting protocol and declarations of conflicts of interest

5. The Chair reminded attendees of the hybrid meeting protocol. There were no declarations of interest declared.

Item 3. Actions and agreements from 24 March 2025 meeting (Paper A)

6. The minutes of the meeting of 24 March 2025 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Item 4. LGPC Update (Paper B)

7. Lorraine Bennett (LB) introduced Paper B to the Board. There had been queries from funds about the discretion for Administering Authorities not to include the McCloud remedy in annual benefits statements. The Pensions Regulator (TPR) issued a statement on 19 June 2025 and LGPC fed back to TPR that the statement may be too late to assist funds, many of whom had already begun issuing statements. There were ongoing webinars run by LGPC on the implementation of McCloud being held in conjunction with Affinity Connect which were going well. Further dates will be added on a rolling basis.

Scheme Advisory Board

8. The Pensions Dashboards project continues with the LGA attending an event held on 9 July 2025 run by the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS). It was reported that the Pensions Minister, Torsten Bell MP has said that the State Pension's technical connection to the dashboard's ecosystem was complete. He also confirmed that Government will give the pensions industry six months' notice before making the MoneyHelper dashboard publicly available and that there is still a commitment to private sector dashboards.
9. It was confirmed that the Government will be introducing legislation to assist with issues arising from the Virgin Media v NTL Pension Trustees case, specifically that the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) will be empowered to provide certificates retrospectively that public sector schemes met the contracting out requirements for significant benefit changes. Matt Gurden (MG) explained that he was waiting for details on what data would be needed in order to do those checks.
10. The LGA's pensions qualifications programmes had commenced and were going well. In response to a question, LB confirmed the programmes are open to everyone wishing to undertake the course, however priority is given to administering authority staff.
11. The Fundamentals training programme will be running again this year with London based and online options being available. Places are available to book via the [LGA's events page](#).

Item 5. Access and Fairness consultation: proposed SAB response

12. LB introduced the item to the Board and confirmed that the LGPC response was signed off at the earlier LGPC meeting that day. A summary of the proposals and LGPC response was provided by LB. The equalisation of survivor benefits was welcome though statutory guidance will be needed on tracing beneficiaries and to provide clarity on the Government's expectations for implementation. There is support for the removal of the upper age limit for death grants although the LGPC recommended that this should be made retrospective for deaths from 2011 instead of 2014.
13. The LGPC response is generally supportive of the gender pension gap proposals however they have recommended some amendments to the proposals on the treatment of unpaid leave (specifically to shorten the period for which contributions will need to be made) and being less ambitious in the gender pension gap reporting approach.
14. The proposals on reporting of opt outs is supported however with a suggestion that this should also be include in MHCLG's statutory SF3 data collection.

Scheme Advisory Board

15. The proposals on forfeiture are also supported by the LGPC however there are some practical questions outstanding and the LGPC response expressed a need for Government to recognise the administrative impacts of making all of these changes at once, especially within the context of existing administrative and benefit calculation projects.
16. John Neal (JN) expressed support for the proposals in the consultation however said he would like to see recognition and equalisation of survivor benefits for surviving cohabiting partners of members with pre-2008 scheme service only. George Georgiou (GG) said that carers' leave should be included in the unpaid pensionable leave proposals as well.
17. Becky Clough (BC) went through Paper C and highlighted the specific additional or different points proposed for inclusion in the Board's response. It was agreed that the administrative burden and resource constraints needed to be considered by Government.

ACTION – that the Board adopts the LGPC response to the Access and Fairness consultation and the Secretariat finalises the SAB's response including SAB specific points before submitting to MHCLG.

Item 6. Fit for the Future consultation outcome

18. Clair Alcock (CA) introduced Paper D to the Board. There are challenges associated with the implementation of the government's plans and uncertainty for the 21 funds currently participating in the ACCESS and Brunel pools. Additionally, the remaining six pools have significant changes to meet the government's requirements.
19. Councillor John Beesley gave his perspective from a fund within Brunel pool as they have been engaging with the process of finding a new pool. There was concern that the number of available pools to join are limited and the work involved in finding a new pool was deflecting attention from the delivery of business-as-usual operations. Also, there were likely to be some significant changes in pension committee composition following on from the May local elections which will mean that some pension committee members may have to make significant decisions at their first meeting. There was overall concern on the degree of change required by March 2026, and the timelines involved.
20. CA also mentioned that the Pension Schemes Bill was introduced to Parliament on 5 June 2025 and had its second reading on 8 July 2025. The Committee stage would continue after summer recess. The Bill included broad powers to merge funds, and the Board agreed it would be useful to place on record the limits of these powers and gain assurance on the circumstances that would lead to the usage of these powers.

Scheme Advisory Board

21. On the powers detailed in the Pension Schemes Bills to give the government the ability to direct pool companies a concern was raised by George Georgiou (GGe) on behalf of GMB. He confirmed that the union will be making strong representations on the Bill, as they believe Ministerial directions on investments would not be welcome and could potentially compromise the existing fiduciary duty of funds.
22. It was agreed that a focus on pool governance, in particular the need for guidance on managing conflicts of interests and enabling funds to hold their pool to account, was needed. The Board had commissioned legal advice to clarify some of conflict-of-interest issues, and this would be submitted for approval once the final draft had been received.
23. The Board discussed whether it needed to review the way it operated in light of these changes and the growing centrality of the investment pools. The Secretariat were invited to think more how the Board and its Committees could engage on a more comprehensive and systematic way with the pools in the future.
24. Oliver Watson (OW) acknowledged the comments and said that the powers contained in the Bill would be used in rare circumstances as a backstop in circumstances where fund is without a pool or is performing poorly. MHCLG would engage the Secretariat (and through them the Board) on the development of the anticipated statutory guidance.

Item 7. SAB Website Upgrade Project and communications strategy (Paper E)

25. Ona Ehimuan (OE) introduced Paper E to the Board which gave an update of the Board's progress on procuring of a new website and the new communications strategy to promote the work of the Board. The project on the website had begun and is expected to be completed on time and within budget. The Board were presented with some initial design concepts for the website. The Chair thanked OE for her management of the project saying that a new website would be an essential part of effectively communicating the work of the Board. Included at Annex A was the project plan which the Board noted.
26. The communications programme remained under development. The Chair invited all Board members to attend the Annual Assembly, which was aimed at pension committee and pension board chairs. This will be held on 22 October 2025 at the LGA offices. The Chair said that this would be a major event for engagement between and the Board and the chairs. It was hoped that Local Government Minister, Jim McMahon MP would attend and give an address to the attendees.

Scheme Advisory Board

Item 8. Risk Register (Paper F)

27. JH introduced Paper F to the Board which gave an overview of the recent changes. The increase in risk associated with implementation of the Fit for the Future proposals on investment pooling had already been noted. Similarly, it was welcomed that the compliance risks associated with the accessibility of the SAB's website were now being addressed. On the risks of maintaining Board members with the necessary knowledge and experience were recognised. The member representatives on the Committee also felt that their particular circumstances, where it might not be possible to rotate appropriate full-time officers to attend the Board, weren't being recognised by MHCLG officials and this needed to be considered further.
28. It was indicated that the risk of maintaining up-to-date administration software systems (to minimise the need for calculations by hand) and the limited competition in the market should be reclassified as higher risk than currently assessed, given the issues revealed through projects such as McCloud and dashboards.

Item 9. Board and Committee Membership – Paper G

29. OE introduced Paper G to the Board. The Board discussed and approved all the recommended nominations for the Committees and the Responsible Investment Advisory Group (RIAG). It was agreed to write a letter of thanks to the outgoing Board Vice-Chair, Jon Richards, the outgoing Compliance and Reporting Committee Chair (CRC) Mark Wynn and Rachel Brothwood who served as a practitioner on the Committee and led the Funding Strategy Statement Guidance working group.
30. The Board was informed that Board Chair, Councillor Roger Phillips term was due to come to an end in April 2026 and that discussions with MHCLG were ongoing on the public appointment process. On the specific topic of remuneration for the new Board Chair, there were mixed views about both the merits and practical issues around having a paid Chair. It was concluded that the final decision would need to be made by MHCLG, and one factor would be whether the Minister had a view on the type of person that he was looking to fill the post, i.e. a Councillor or a pensions professional might have different expectations around remuneration if putting themselves forward for the appointment.
31. The Board were informed that the new conflicts of interest register remained under development for Board and Committee members and would be published on the website once complete.
32. It was also agreed that the process for selecting a new Board vice-chair as laid out in the paper be implemented.

Scheme Advisory Board

33. On the topic of developing an approach to managing the trade union membership on the Board, Ben Lavelle (BL) said further discussion would be needed about how to effectively manage the difficulties expressed by the trade union representatives on the Board around the lack of additional officers that could appropriately take up the role and the difference in treatment between the LGPS SAB and other public sector pension scheme SABs.

ACTION – that the Board writes to Jon Richards, Mark Wynn and Rachel Brothwood to thank them for their contributions to the Board and the Compliance and Reporting Committee (CRC).

Item 12. Compliance and Reporting Committee (CRC) Report (Paper H)

34. Jeffrey Dong (JD) introduced Paper H to the Board which gave an overview of the key items discussed at the last CRC meeting on 23 June 2025. JD chaired his first meeting as the newly appointed Chair. The discussions at the meeting highlighted the fact that there is a significant amount of work for the Committee to manage as a result of the Fit for the Future plans.
35. The Committee were pleased to hear the developments on decoupling of pension accounts from main authority accounts via the English Devolution Bill. An update on the new peer support offer was received and it was agreed to develop a pilot which could be funded from the 2026/27 budget. The actual programme funding model would form part of the project proposal to be brought to the Board in November.

Item 13. Cost Management, Benefit Design and Administration (CMBDA) Committee Report (Paper I)

36. GGe introduced Paper I, which gave an overview of the key items discussed when the Committee met on 30 June 2025. The Committee agreed to highlight information that had been received regarding United Learning to the Board who are believed to be offering an alternative pension scheme to employees instead of the LGPS in exchange for increased pay. The Board agreed that there needed to be a clear legal view on the matter, for example whether it was appropriate that an individual could not transfer their pension without taking independent financial advice, but employers were incentivising staff to leave one pension scheme and join another without providing any advice of whether this was in their best interests. It was agreed to raise this in the LGPC Access and Fairness response.
37. Nick Kirby (NK) informed the Board that the Department for Education (DfE) have agreed to add a stipulation in the academies' financial handbook that a business case would be needed to be approved by them, demonstrating that this was in the public interest, before an academy trust could offer such incentives.

Scheme Advisory Board

Item 14. Investment Committee Report (Paper J)

38. Cllr Andrew Thornton (AT) introduced Paper J to the Board, reviewing the items of discussion from the last Investment Committee meeting on 7 July 2025. Included at Annex A was the revised project plan for the Code of Transparency (CoT) framework project plan and at Annex B was the CoT review project plan. The framework project was making good progress, and an initial specification had been developed by the founders' group working on the framework. In connection with this project, the Secretariat had identified a need to revise the Code itself and a consultation on proposed changes was ongoing. That consultation would close on 15 August 2025.
39. As mentioned in Item 6, legal advice had been commissioned by the Board on managing conflicts of interest which was expected to be reflected in pooling governance and would be shared with the Board.

ACTION – that the Secretariat share the final version of the pooling governance legal advice with the Board before publication on the Board website.

ACTION – that the Secretariat submits the final version of the updated Code of Transparency to the Board for approval after the consultation closes on 15 August.

Item 14. Board Budget 2026/27 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (Paper K) – CONFIDENTIAL

40. The Board received Paper K which outlined expected workstreams and associated budget for 2026/27. It was agreed to use this as the basis to develop a final budget for submission to the Minister for approval, but with additional funds to cover the increased number of events being run by the Board such as the Board Annual Assembly.

ACTION – that the Secretariat develops the final 2026/27 SAB budget for approval at the November Board before submission to the Minister for approval.

Item 15. AOB and date of next meeting

41. The Chair thanked the Secretariat for their ongoing work on various workstreams. There were no items of other business.
42. The date of the next meeting is set for 24 November 2025 at 1:30pm.
