

**Committee and Date**

Pensions Board

1 May 2026

PENSIONS BOARD**Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2026****In the The Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ
10.00am – 11.00am****Responsible Officer:** Michelle Dulson

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Present

Member representatives: John Hall (Vice-Chair), Nick James, Rebecca Summerlin (remote)

Employer representatives: Paul Partridge

Also in attendance: Justin Bridges (Head of Pensions - LGPS Senior Officer), Vicky Jenks (Pensions Administration Manager), Martin Griffiths (Communications & Governance team Leader) and Councillor Gary Groves (Chair of Pensions Committee).

25 Apologies

An apology was received from Liz Furey (Employer representative).

26 Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

27 Minutes of the previous meeting**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

28 Public Question Time

Three public questions had been received from members of the public. The first questioner was not in attendance, and their question was therefore read out on their behalf by the Pensions Administration Manager. The other two questioners were in attendance to read out their questions in person. The responses to each question were read out by the Head of Pensions - LGPS Senior Officer. A full copy of the questions and responses provided are attached to the webpage for the meeting.

A supplementary question was asked about whether the Pensions Board itself had closely reviewed the statement on dealing with investments in high-risk conflict zones (specifically Appendix D), and whether the Board was satisfied that the statement met its responsibilities under the Geneva Conventions and Genocide Act. It was emphasised that

responsibility lay with every institution to ensure compliance, not just by relying on government guidance.

In response, it was confirmed that the statement had been included in Pension Committee papers, which were shared with the Board, so the Board was made aware of it. However, it had not specifically come to the Board for consideration. The Board agreed to take the point away and come back with a response, acknowledging that they had not yet closely reviewed the statement itself.

29 Administration and Regulatory Updates

The Board received the report of the Pensions Administration Manager which provided Members with the latest administration and regulatory updates affecting the Local Government Pension Scheme.

The Pensions Administration Manager introduced and amplified her report which updated Members on the work undertaken by the pensions administration team. She reported that 10 out of 14 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) met the 95% target for timely case completion.

Changes in work allocation were discussed; to address lagging tasks, particularly in transfer out and deferred benefits cases, the team will transition from an alpha split to a skill set and capacity-based allocation model from February. Recruitment of an additional Pensions Officer and two Pensions Assistants was underway to increase capacity, with particular focus on improving deferred benefits processing, which remained below target due to high volume, staff turnover, and reliance on employer notifications.

The Pensions Administration Manager highlighted the help desk and online portal usage, noting high take-up among pensioners and plans to target deferred members for increased registration. Data quality initiatives, including address tracing and dashboard readiness, were ongoing, with some delays attributed to software implementation issues.

CIPFA benchmarking results indicate Shropshire's costs were below average, with balanced membership and efficient payroll operations. Regulatory updates were provided, including forthcoming changes to inheritance tax, death benefits, and minimum pension age, with the team monitoring and preparing for new reporting requirements.

A number of questions were asked, and answers were provided as follows:

- The deferred benefits KPI was low due to high workload, staff turnover, and dependence on employer updates. Recruitment was boosting capacity, and efforts were underway to enhance information flow from employers. It was confirmed that the deferred benefits KPI had consistently been under 95%, but it was hoped that the increased pensions assistant capacity would improve performance.
- A question was raised about the correlation between online activation keys issued and registrations. The response clarified that there was a close correlation, with active registrations promoted upon scheme entry, but deferred member registration needed further improvement.

- It was clarified that amber breaches relating to payroll issues indicated that these problems had continued for more than three months. However, while the breaches had persisted for over three months, employers were taking active steps to address them and aimed to resolve all issues by the end of the year.
- A question was raised regarding the timeframe for escalating breaches to red status. It was clarified that escalation depended upon ongoing communication with the employer and the progress being made; should these prove unsatisfactory, matters may be referred to the Pensions Regulator.
- It was confirmed that delays in dashboard progress for AVC information and address tracing were caused by software issues, which were being resolved and affected all funds using the same system. The delay did not impact members as the dashboard was not yet live.
- The response to the question about benchmarking comparisons clarified differences such as team structure, fund size, and salary levels. It emphasised that Shropshire was well-resourced and invested heavily in systems to boost efficiency.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

30 Pensions Committee Reports and Feedback

The reports considered by the Pensions Committee at its meeting on 5 December 2025 had been received by the Board.

31 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was to be confirmed.

NB. the next meeting was subsequently arranged for Friday 1 May 2026 at 10.00am.

32 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with the provision of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, Section 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations and Paragraphs 3 of the Council's Access to Information Rules, the public and press be excluded during consideration of the following items.

33 Exempt Minutes (Exempted by Category 3)

RESOLVED:

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

34 Economic Update (Exempted by Category 3)

The Board received the exempt report of the Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager which provided an update on the general economic conditions since the last update, along with the impact on the pension fund investments in the first nine months of 2025/26.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report and Appendix A be noted.

35 Pensions Committee Exempt Reports and Feedback (Exempted by Category 3)

The exempt reports considered by the Pensions Committee at its meeting on 5 December 2025 had been received by the Board.

36 Governance Update (Exempted by Category 3)

The Board received the exempt report of the Pensions Administration Manager which provided an update on the Breaches of LGPS regulations recorded between 1 April 2025 and 30 November 2025 affecting the Shropshire County Pension Fund. Updates on all other governance issues were also included within the report along with an update on the number of stage 1 and 2 appeals which had been received under the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure (IDRP).

RESOLVED:

To note the contents of the report, along with the contents of Appendices A – D.

Signed (Chairman)

Date:

