Shropshire Council

Pensions Committee

18 September 2026

10.00 a.m.

**MINUTES OF THE PENSIONS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 JUNE 2026
10.00 A.M. - 11.46 A.M.**

Responsible Officer: Sarah Townsend
Email: sarah.townsend@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257721

Present:

Members of the Committee:
Councillors Gary Groves, Malcolm Myles-Hook and Charles Shackerley-Bennett

Co-Opted Members (Voting):
Councillors Zona Hannington and Stephen Reynolds (Substitute) (substitute for Paul Davis)

Co-Opted Members (Non-Voting):
Thomas Biggins and Byron Cooke (remotely via MS Teams)

Others Present:

Shropshire Council Officers:
Justin Bridges (Head of Pensions – LGPS Senior Officer), Peter Chadderton (Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager), Vicky Jenks (Pensions Administration Manager) and Martin Griffiths (Pensions Governance and Communication Team Leader)

Aon:
Luke Hammond

LGPS Central:
Jayne Atkinson (remotely via MS Teams), Anthony Cherrington, John Goodall and Russell Oades

Independent Advisor to the Committee:
Philip Hebson

Pensions Board Members:
John Hall (remotely via MS Teams)

1 **Election of Chairman**

RESOLVED:
That Councillor Gary Groves be elected as Chairman of the Pensions Committee for the forthcoming municipal year.

2 Apologies and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Paul Davis, Councillor Roger Evans and Mr David Burton. Councillor Stephen Reynolds was in attendance as Councillor Paul Davis' substitute.

3 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED:
That Councillor Zona Hannington be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Pensions Committee for the forthcoming municipal year.

4 Disclosable Interests

None were declared.

5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED:
That the minutes of the meeting held on 20th March 2026 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

6 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

7 Pensions Administration Monitoring

The Committee received the report of the Pensions Administration Manager which provided them with monitoring information on the performance of and issues affecting the Pensions Administration Team.

A question was asked regarding Penny the Pensions Bot and why its accuracy rate appeared to have remained at around 75% despite ongoing updates to the knowledge bank and whether further improvements were expected. The Pensions Administration Manager explained that whilst the knowledge bank was continually reviewed and updated in response to member queries,_accuracy remained at approximately 75% regardless of the additional information added. It was_noted that more sophisticated tools were expected to become available and that the potential adoption of a more sophisticated bot to improve performance was under consideration.

RESOLVED:

1. That the KPI chart and information on those KPI's not currently meeting the 95% target and the actions being taken to address this (Appendix A) be noted.

2. That the progress of the Pension Dashboard implementation which is provided in the update report (Appendix C) be noted.

3. It be noted that the regulatory updates are having a significant impact on the work of the team.

8 **Governance**

The Committee received the report of the Pensions Administration Manager which provided them with information regarding regulatory breaches arising from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 that have been recorded in the breaches log. Also reported were any stage one or stage two appeals that had been received under the internal dispute resolution procedure (IDRP). Finally, fund policies that had been reviewed in the last quarter and required approval by Committee were also included within the report.

Members were advised that there had been an increase in red breaches, partly as a result of a revised approach to assessing repeated breaches over a twelve month period. Where an employer had exceeded six breaches during the year, these were now classified as red breaches. It was reported that particular issues had arisen where employers had changed payroll providers, affecting both the quality and timeliness of information submitted. One multi-academy trust covering twelve schools continued to present significant difficulties and Officers were working closely with the employer to resolve the matter. Overall, employer information and payments were generally being received on time.

The Committee were asked to approve the appointment of two additional doctors, Dr Paul Davies from Smart Clinic and Dr Tahal Khan from MTK Doctors, to be used by Fund employers in the review of cases for ill health retirements. It was noted that this information had not been included within the report as the request had only recently been submitted.

It was noted that although the most recent valuation had been completed, preparatory work was already underway for the next valuation period.

A question was asked regarding the process and timescales for reporting red breaches to The Pensions Regulator (TPR) and the Pensions Administration Manager explained that breaches were escalated internally with the employer first. If the issue was not resolved, a report could be made to The Pensions Regulator, who would then contact the employer. The Pensions Regulator would expect to see evidence that the Fund was working with the employer to resolve the issue. Formal action, including the possibility of a fine, would usually only follow if the employer was not engaging or failing to meet its obligations. In the case highlighted, the employer was attempting to resolve the issue, but progress had not been sufficiently quick.

In response to a further question about whether year on year breach trends could be included in future reports, Officers confirmed that this information was included within the Annual Report and agreed that it could also be considered for inclusion in future governance reports.

RESOLVED:

1. That the content of Appendix A to the report, breaches recorded from April 2025 to March 2026, be noted.

2. That the following fund policies be approved:

- Conflicts of Interest Policy (updated) (Appendix B)
- Data Retention Policy (new) (Appendix C)
- Data improvement Strategy and workplan 2025-27 (updated) (Appendix D)
- Communication Policy (updated) (Appendix E)

3. That Dr Paul Davies from Smart Clinic and Dr Tahal Khan from MTK Doctors to be used by Fund employers in the review of cases for ill health retirements be approved.

9 **Corporate Governance Monitoring**

The Committee received the report of the Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager which informed them of corporate governance changes, including the government's response to the Scheme Advisory Board's letter of October 2025 in respect of investments in conflict zones, and a review of socially responsible investment issues arising in the quarter period 1st January 2026 to 31st March 2026.

Regarding the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) and investments in companies in conflict affected areas, it was reported that a response had been received from the Government confirming that the Committee's responsibility was limited to its fiduciary duty and that decisions regarding divestment were a matter for central government, not local authorities. It was noted that this supported the approach taken by the Committee to date and was consistent with the CAHRA policy published on the Fund's website.

The Committee were informed that the Pensions Bill gained royal accent on 29th April 2026 and brought into law the recommendations raised under the Government's LGPS: Fit for the future consultation. On 1st April 2026, LGPS Central moved to a pooling company covering fourteen funds and with regard to investments, they became responsible for all of the Fund's investments, including legacy investments.

In responding to a question regarding local investments and the definition of 'local', it was confirmed that this was set out in the draft Investment Strategy Statement and would be considered in the exempt part of the meeting.

RESOLVED:
That the position as set out in the report of the Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager in respect of voting and engagement activity be noted and accepted:

- LGPS Central included in report;
- Columbia Threadneedle Investments Responsible Engagement Overlay Activity Report at Appendix A;
- LAPFF Engagement Report at Appendix B;
- The update from MHCLG on investing in companies in conflict zones at Appendix C; and
- The update on the Pension Bill 2026.

10 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED:
That under paragraph 10.2 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, the proceedings of the Committee in relation to Agenda Items 11 to 15, be not conducted in public on the grounds that they might involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the categories specified against them.

11 **Exempt Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Exempted by Category 3)**

RESOLVED:
That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 20th March 2026 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

12 **New Employers (Exempted by Category 3)**

The Committee received the exempt report of the Pensions Administration Manager which provided them with details regarding new academy admissions to the Fund under Schedule 2, Part 1 (20) of the LGPS regulations 2013. The report also provided the Committee with details regarding new employer admissions to the Fund under Schedule 2 Part 3 Regulation 1(d) (i) of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 as well as details regarding parish councils who had made a resolution to join the Fund under Schedule 2 Part 2 Scheme Employers (designated bodies).

RESOLVED:
That the recommendations as set out in the exempt report of the Pensions Administration Manager be noted.

13 **Investment Portfolio Update (Exempted by Category 3)**

The Committee received a presentation from Mr Luke Hammond, Aon, which provided them with an investment portfolio update.

14 **Investment Strategy Update (Exempted by Category 3)**

The Committee received the exempt report of the Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager which provided them with an Investment Strategy update.

RESOLVED:
That the recommendations as set out in the exempt report of the Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager be approved.

15 **Investment Monitoring - Quarter to 31 March 2026 (Exempted by Category 3)**

The Committee received the exempt report of the Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager which provided them with monitoring information on investment performance and managers for the quarter period to 31st March 2026 and reported on the technical meetings held with managers since the quarter end.

RESOLVED:
That the recommendations as set out in the exempt report of the Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager be approved.

16 **Training Session on Understanding the Accounting and Audit Regulations**

Immediately after the meeting, a training session was held for Members of the Pensions Committee and Pensions Board on Understanding the Accounting and Audit Regulations, presented by Mr Jonathan Perera, Mercer.

Signed .... (Chairman)

Date: ....