

Governance Compliance Statement

Introduction

Under Regulation 55 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (as amended) an Administering Authority must, after consultation with such persons as it considers appropriate, prepare, publish and maintain a Governance Compliance Statement.

This statement is required to set out:

- (a) whether the Administering Authority delegates its function or part of its function in relation to maintaining a pension fund to a committee, a sub-committee or an officer of the administering authority;
- (b) if the authority does so:-
 - (i) the terms, structure and operational procedures of the delegation,
 - (ii) the frequency of any committee or sub-committee meetings,
 - (iii) whether such a committee or sub-committee includes representatives of Scheme employers or members, and if so, whether those representatives have voting rights;
- (c) the extent to which a delegation, or the absence of a delegation, complies with guidance given by the Secretary of State and, to the extent that it does not so comply, the reasons for not complying; and
- (d) details of the terms, structure and operational procedures relating to the local pension board established under regulation 53(4) (Scheme managers).

The statement must be revised and published by the Administering Authority following a material change in their policy on any of the matters referred to above.

Delegation of management of Pension Fund

All decision making responsibility of Somerset County Council as administering authority of the Somerset County Council Pension Fund is delegated to the Pensions Committee. The operation of the Pensions Committee is governed by the following Terms of Reference.

**PENSION COMMITTEE OF THE SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL
PENSION FUND**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the terms of reference of the Pensions Committee of Somerset County Council. The Pensions Committee is a committee with delegated decision making powers for the Fund in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 1.2 The terms of reference will be formally approved by the Council as the Administering Authority and by the Committee itself thereafter.
- 1.3 These terms of reference shall be reviewed by the Council on the advice of the Committee and on an annual basis to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and in accordance with any regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Any revisions will be agreed by the Council and by the Committee.

2. Definitions

- the Fund - Somerset County Council Pension Fund.
- the Committee – The Pensions Committee of Somerset County Council.
- the Pensions Board – The Pensions Board of Somerset County Council.
- LGPS – The Local Government Pension Scheme

3. Purpose and functions of the Committee

- 3.1 The Committee discharges the functions of the Council in its role as the administering authority of the Somerset County Council Pension Fund as defined in the LGPS Regulations.

3.2 The Committee's principal duties are:

- (i) Ensure the fund is run in line with all relevant law, statutory guidance and industry codes of best practice.
- (ii) Ensure all contributions due are collected from employers.
- (iii) Ensure that all benefits due are paid correctly and in a timely manner.
- (iv) Decide the aims of the investment policy.
- (v) Make arrangements for managing the fund's investments.
- (vi) Regularly monitor investment performance.
- (vii) Make arrangements to publish the fund's annual report and accounts.
- (viii) Consult stakeholders, and publish the funding strategy statement, statement of investment principles and other policies and documents as necessary.
- (ix) Order actuarial valuations to be carried out in line with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations.
- (x) Consider requests from organisations who want to join the fund as admitted bodies and consider any requests to change the terms of an existing admission agreement.
- (xi) Make representations to the Government about any planned changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme and all aspects of managing benefits.

4. Membership of the Committee

4.1 The Committee shall consist of 8 members and be constituted as follows:

- (a) Seven employer representatives
 - (i) Four employer representative will be county councillors who are not a member of the Pension Board or Cabinet and will be selected by the Administering Authority having taken account of their relevant experience and their knowledge and understanding of the Local Government Pension Scheme;
 - (ii) One employer representative of the 5 district councils that are members of the Fund to be selected by the district councils collectively having taken account of their relevant experience and their knowledge and understanding of the Local Government Pension Scheme;
 - (iii) One employer representative of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon & Somerset to be selected by the Police and Crime Commissioner having taken account of their relevant experience and their knowledge and understanding of the Local Government Pension Scheme;
 - (iv) one employer representative to be nominated by the remaining employers within the Fund who are not represented by (i)-(iii) above having demonstrated their relevant experience, their capacity to represent other scheme employers and their knowledge and understanding of the LGPS. In the event of there being more than one nomination, the Administering Authority will arrange for a voting process of the qualifying employers.
- (b) One scheme member representative:
 - (i) To be nominated by the Unions.

4.2 The Chair will be appointed annually by the Council as Administering Authority.

4.3 Due to the specialist knowledge requirements of Committee members, substitutes to the appointed members of the Committee are not permitted.

4.4 The committee will also be attended by:

- (i) an officer; and
- (ii) a specialist independent adviser. In this respect the term independent means:
 - (i) having no current employment, contractual, financial or other material interest in either Somerset County Council or any scheme employer in the Fund; and
 - (ii) not being a member of the LGPS in the Fund.

The independent advisor will be a remunerated position.

5. Responsibilities of the Chair

5.1 The Chair is responsible for:

- (a) ensuring the Board delivers its purpose as set out in the Committee's terms of reference;
- (b) the arrangements for meetings of the Committee;
- (c) ensuring that Committee meetings are productive and effective and that opportunity is provided for the views of all Committee members to be expressed and considered; and
- (d) seeking to achieve the consensus of all Committee members on the business presented to the Committee and ensure that decisions are properly put to a vote when that cannot be reached.

6. Conflicts of interest

- 6.1 All members of the Committee must declare on appointment and at any such time as their circumstances change any potential conflict of interest arising as a result of their position on the Committee.
- 6.2 On appointment to the Committee and following any subsequent declaration of potential conflict the conflict must be managed in line with the, the internal procedures of Somerset County Council, the requirements of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and the requirements of the Pensions Regulator's codes of practice on conflict of interest for Committee members.
- 6.3 The Council's Monitoring Officer shall include interests registered by all members of the Committee in the published Members' and Co-opted Members' Register of Interests. All such interests are to be registered with the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of appointment to the Committee.

7. Knowledge and understanding including training

- 7.1 All new members must follow an induction training plan and all members of the Committee will be expected to attend the training provided to ensure that they have the requisite knowledge and understanding to fulfil their role.
- 7.2 The Committee has adopted a training policy and all members of the Committee are expected to meet the requirements of that policy.
- 7.3 Failure to attend training or participate in the processes referred to above may lead to removal from the Board.

8. Term of office and removal from office

- 8.1 The members of the Committee serve for a four year term, subject to the following:
 - (a) the representatives of the administering authority shall be appointed annually by the Somerset County Council Annual Council Meeting, but with a view to maintaining stability of membership;
 - (b) the representatives of the district councils and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset can be replaced by the relevant appointing group at their behest, but with a view to maintaining stability of membership;
 - (c) the members' representative may be replaced by the Unions, but with a view to maintaining stability of membership.
- 8.2 Members of the Committee will be expected to attend all meetings and training sessions. This will be recorded and published.
- 8.3 Other than by ceasing to be eligible for appointment to the Committee, Committee members may only be removed from office during their term of appointment by the unanimous agreement of all of the other members of the Committee at a meeting of the Committee where this is specified as an agenda item or with the agreement of the Council at a Full Council meeting.
- 8.4 Arrangements shall be made for the replacement of Committee members in line with the procedures for their original appointment.

9. Meetings

- 9.1 The frequency of meetings is to be determined by the Committee once it has agreed a workplan, with a minimum of four meetings annually. In addition to this, training sessions will be held as necessary to ensure that Committee members have sufficient knowledge and skills to undertake the role.
- 9.2 The Chair of the Committee may call additional meetings with the consent of other members of the Committee. Urgent business of the Committee between meetings may, in exceptional circumstances, be conducted via communications between members of the Committee including telephone conferencing and emails.
- 9.3 The Committee will meet at the Council's main offices, or another location to be agreed by the Chair. Meetings will be held during normal working hours at times to be agreed by the Chair.
- 9.4 As a committee of the Council, the Rules of Procedure in Section 6 of the Council's constitution apply to meetings of the Committee. Committee meetings will be held in open session with closed sessions where appropriate. The agenda papers will be circulated to members of the Committee and published in advance of meeting in line with Council policy. The minutes of meetings will be recorded and published in line with Council policy.

10. Quorum

- 10.1 The quorum of the Board shall be 3 elected members.

11. Voting rights

- 11.1 Each of the 8 members of the committee will have voting rights. In the event of a tied vote the Chair has the option of having a final casting vote.

12. Code of Conduct

- 12.1 All members of the Board will be required to formally sign up to comply with the Somerset County Council Code of Conduct set out at Part 2, Section C of the Council's constitution.

13. Allowances and Expenses

- 13.1 Any councillor of the Council appointed to the Committee will be entitled to receive allowances in accordance with Part 2, Section D of the Council's constitution (Scheme of Members' Allowances).
- 13.2 Reimbursement of expenses for all members of the Committee will be claimable in line with Somerset County Council's agreed expenses rates.

14. Budget

- 14.1 All costs arising from accommodation and administrative support to conduct its meetings and other business, and the training needs of the Committee will be met by the Fund.
- 14.2 The Council's Community Governance Team will provide the secretariat services to the Committee, the cost of which will be met by the Fund.

15. Accountability and reporting

- 15.1 The Committee is accountable solely to the County Council for the effective operation of its functions.
- 15.3 The Committee shall report annually to Full Council on its work.

16. Data protection and Freedom of Information

- 16.1 For legal purposes the Committee is considered a committee of and part of the administering authority legal entity. Therefore the Committee must comply with the Council's Data Protection and Freedom of Information policies.

Compliance with the guidance

The extent to which a delegation, or the absence of a delegation, complies with guidance given by the Secretary of State and, to the extent that it does not so comply, the reasons for not complying are covered in the following tables.

Statutory Guidance Governance Standards and Principles	Our compliance status	Evidence of compliance and justification for non-compliance
A – Structure		
a) The management of the administration of benefits and strategic management of fund assets clearly rests with the main committee established by the appointing council.	Compliant	Somerset County Council has established the Somerset County Council Pensions Committee for this purpose. The specific terms of reference for the Committee are set within the fund’s Governance Policy Statement.
b) That representatives of participating LGPS employers, admitted bodies and scheme members (including pensioner and deferred members) are members of either the main or secondary committee established to underpin the work of the main committee.	Compliant	The Pensions Committee includes representation of all the participating employers. Scheme Members (active, pensioner and deferred) are represented through a Unison nominated representative on the Pensions Committee.
c) That where a secondary committee or panel has been established, the structure ensures effective communication across both levels.	Not Applicable	There are no secondary committees or panels in place.
d) That where a secondary committee or panel has been established, at least one seat on the main committee is allocated for a member from the secondary committee or panel.	Not Applicable	There are no secondary committees or panels in place.

B – Representation

<p>a) That all key stakeholders are afforded the opportunity to be represented within the main or secondary committee structure. These include:</p>		
<p>i) employing authorities (including non-scheme employers, e.g., admitted bodies);</p>	Compliant	<p>The Pensions Committee includes representation of all the scheme employers, including the County Council, District Councils, the Police and the Admitted Bodies.</p>
<p>ii) scheme members (including deferred and pensioner scheme members);</p>	Compliant	<p>Scheme Members (active, pensioner and deferred) are represented through a Unison nominated representative on the Pensions Committee.</p>
<p>iii) where appropriate, independent professional observers;</p>	Compliant	<p>The independent investment advisor attends all Pensions Committee Meetings.</p>
<p>iv) expert advisors (on an ad-hoc basis).</p>	Compliant	<p>Our in-house officer expert advisors attend all Pension Committee meetings, including the Chief Financial Officer, investments manager and fund administration manager.</p> <p>The appointed actuary, external auditors and performance advisors also attend on an ad-hoc basis at least once per annum.</p>

<p>b) That where lay members sit on a main or secondary committee, they are treated equally in terms of access to papers and meetings, training and are given full opportunity to contribute to the decision making process, with or without voting rights.</p>	<p>Compliant</p>	<p>All members of the Pensions Committee receive equal access to the papers and training and have equal speaking rights in the consideration and discussion of all matters as part of the decision making processes.</p>
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C – Role of members

<p>a) That Committee or panel members are made fully aware of the status, role and function they are required to perform on either a main or secondary committee.</p>	<p>Compliant</p>	<p>All new members receive regular specific training and access to external training and seminars.</p> <p>On appointment this includes specific time with lead officers to provide an induction into the role and a background to the Fund. Copies of relevant Committee Reports and Annual Reports are also made available.</p> <p>Specific Terms of Reference are also in place as part of the Fund’s Governance Policy Statement and specific legal guidance as to the role of Members has been provided to the Committee by the County Council Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>All Committee Members also understand that they are not there to represent or promote their own personal or political interests, and that they must declare any self-interest or conflicts of interest of a financial or non-financial nature and abstain from participation in that item on the agenda if appropriate.</p>
<p>b) That at the start of any meeting, committee members are invited to declare any financial or pecuniary interest related to specific matters on the agenda.</p>	<p>Compliant</p>	<p>Since the inauguration of the Pension Committee the declaration of interests by members has been a standing item on the agenda.</p>

D – Voting		
a) The policy of individual administering authorities on voting rights is clear and transparent, including the justification for not extending voting rights to each body or group represented on main LGPS committees.	Compliant	All members of the Pensions Committee have full voting rights.
E – Training, facility time and expenses		
a) That in relation to the way in which statutory and related decisions are taken by the administering authority, there is a clear policy on training, facility time and reimbursement of expenses in respect of members involved in the decision-making process.	Compliant	<p>A formal training policy for members has been adopted by the Pensions Committee.</p> <p>The Committee forward work plan provides for specifically tailored training days, together with access to, and support for, external training provision and attendance at appropriate seminars.</p> <p>All members are encouraged to undertake regular training including attendance at the specific training days.</p> <p>All costs in relation to training, including expenses are met from, and reimbursed by, the Pension Fund as appropriate.</p>
b) That where such a policy exists, it applies equally to all members of committees, sub-committees, advisory panels or any other form of secondary forum.	Compliant	All Pensions Committee members have equal access and rights to training and related support.

<p>c) That the administering authority considers the adoption of annual training plans for committee members and maintains a log of all such training undertaken</p>	<p>Compliant</p>	<p>A training policy has been adopted by the Pensions Committee under which attendance at Committee meetings and training undertaken will be reported annually.</p>
<p>F – Meetings (frequency/quorum)</p>		
<p>a) That an administering authority's main committee or committees meet at least quarterly.</p>	<p>Compliant</p>	<p>The Pensions Committee meets on a quarterly basis and forward dates have been agreed for at least twelve months in advance. A forward meeting plan is also in place</p>
<p>b) That an administering authority's secondary committee or panel meet at least twice a year and is synchronised with the dates when the main committee sits.</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>	<p>There are no secondary committees or panels in place.</p>
<p>c) That an administering authorities who does not include lay members in their formal governance arrangements, provide a forum outside of those arrangements by which the interests of key stakeholders can be represented.</p>	<p>Compliant</p>	<p>The Pensions Committee does include lay members and this allows for the representation of all key stakeholders.</p>

G – Access		
a) That subject to any rules in the council’s constitution, all members of main and secondary committees or panels have equal access to committee papers, documents and advice that falls to be considered at meetings of the main committee.	Compliant	All members of the Pensions Committee receive the same agenda and papers containing advice for each meeting. All our Pensions Committee members can ask questions of our professional advisors who attend the Pensions Committee meetings.
H – Scope		
a) That administering authorities have taken steps to bring wider scheme issues within the scope of their governance arrangements	Compliant	<p>Each meeting of the Pensions Committee receives a report on the performance of our pension fund, progress against the Forward Business Plan and key issues in respect of benefits administration.</p> <p>The Committee also receives regular reports and updates on approved policies including the communications policy statements.</p> <p>There are also annual reports from the appointed actuary, external auditor and performance advisors.</p>

I – Publicity

a) That administering authorities have published details of their governance arrangements in such a way that stakeholders with an interest in the way in which the scheme is governed, can express an interest in wanting to be part of those arrangements.

Compliant

The Governance Arrangements of the Pensions Committee are formally reviewed every four years as part of the Forward Business Plan.

There are procedures in place for the re-appointment of individuals to the Pensions Committee at least every four years.

All of the policies adopted by the Pensions Committee on behalf of the administering authority including the Statement of Investment Principles, Funding Strategy Statement, Governance Policy Statement and Communications Policy Statement are published annually in the Fund's annual report and financial statement and are available on the County Council's website. All of the policies and the annual report are available in hard or electronic copy on request.

Local Pensions Board

The operations of the local pension board established under regulation 53(4) (Scheme managers) is governed by the Following Terms of Reference.

PENSION BOARD OF THE SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL PENSION FUND

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

- 1.4 This document sets out the terms of reference of the Pension Board of Somerset County Council. The Pension Board is established under Section 5 of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and regulation 106 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (as amended).
- 1.5 The Board is established by Somerset County Council in its capacity as the Administering Authority of the Somerset County Council Pension Fund and operates independently of the Pensions Committee.
- 1.6 The terms of reference will be formally approved by the Council as the Administering Authority and by the Board itself at its first meeting.
- 1.7 These terms of reference shall be reviewed by the Council on the advice of the Board and on an annual basis to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and in accordance with any regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Any revisions will be agreed by the Council and by the Board.

2. Definitions

- the Fund - Somerset County Council Pension Fund.
- the Board – The Pensions Board of Somerset County Council.
- the Pensions Committee – The Pensions Committee of Somerset County Council.
- LGPS – The Local Government Pension Scheme

3. Purpose and functions of the Board

- 3.1 The regulations state that the role of the Board is to assist the Administration Authority to:
- (a) secure compliance with:
- the LGPS Regulations;
 - any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the LGPS; and
 - the requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator in relation to the LGPS, and
- (b) ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the LGPS.
- 3.2 The Board will assist the Administering Authority by making recommendations about compliance, process and governance. The Board does not have a decision making role with regard to strategy or policy and can only challenge decisions made by the Pensions Committee where the Board considers a decision to be in breach of the relevant Regulations (or overriding legislation). The Board's role is to have oversight of the governance process for making decisions and agreeing policy.
- 3.3 In discharging its role, the Board's remit shall cover all aspects of governance and administration of the LGPS, including funding and investments. The Board must have regard to advice issued by the Scheme Advisory Board in accordance with section 7(3) of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013.

3.4 The Board will exercise its duties in the following areas:

- (a) monitor compliance with the relevant legislation and Codes of Practice set by The Pensions Regulator;
- (b) review and ensure compliance of the Fund's:
 - (i) governance compliance statement
 - (ii) funding strategy statement
 - (iii) pension administration strategy statement
 - (iv) discretionary policy statement
 - (v) communications policy statement
 - (vi) statement of investment principles
 - (vii) annual report and accounts
- (c) review and scrutinise the performance of the Fund in relation to its governance and administration, policy objectives and performance targets;
- (d) ensure policies and processes are in place so that employers comply with their obligations under the regulations;
- (e) review the processes for setting strategy, policy and decision-making and ensure they are robust;
- (f) agree the annual internal audit plan for the Fund;
- (g) consider the output of any internal audit work carried out on the Fund;
- (h) consider the external audit report on the Fund's Annual Report and Statement of Accounts;
- (i) review the Fund's risk register;
- (j) monitor the Fund's Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures;
- (k) from time to time the administering authority may consult the Board or ask assistance on specific issues.

3.5 Under Regulation 106(8) the Board has the general power to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of its functions.

3.6 The Board must always act within its Terms of Reference.

4. Membership of the Board

4.1 The Board shall consist of 6 members and be constituted as follows:

(a) Three employer representatives

- (i) one employer representative will be a county councillor who is not a member of the Pension Committee and will be selected by the Administering Authority having taken account of their relevant experience, their capacity to represent other scheme employers and their knowledge and understanding of the Local Government Pension Scheme;
- (ii) two employer representatives to be nominated by the employers having demonstrated their capacity to represent other scheme employers, their relevant experience and their knowledge and understanding of the LGPS. In the event of there being more than one nomination, the Administering Authority will carry out a selection process.

(b) Three scheme member representatives

- i) two members representatives will be nominated by the recognised trade unions having demonstrated their capacity to represent other scheme employers, their relevant experience and their knowledge and understanding of the LGPS;
- ii) one members representative will be open to all scheme members. The administering authority shall contact scheme members advising them of the role and seeking nominations and asking them to demonstrate their capacity to represent other scheme members, their relevant experience and their knowledge and understanding of the LGPS. In the event of there being more than one nomination, the Administering Authority will carry out a selection process.

4.2 Due to the specialist knowledge requirements of Board members, substitutes to the appointed members of the Board are not permitted.

5. Responsibilities of the Chair

5.1 The Chair is responsible for:

- (e) ensuring the Board delivers its purpose as set out in the Board's terms of reference;
- (f) the arrangements for meetings of the Board;
- (g) ensuring that Board meetings are productive and effective and that opportunity is provided for the views of all Board members to be expressed and considered;
- (h) seeking to achieve the consensus of all Board members on the business presented to the Board and ensure that decisions are properly put to a vote when that cannot be reached.

5.2 The Chair will be appointed annually by Board. The Chair will be rotated around the 6 members of the Board.

6. Conflicts of interest

6.1 All members of the Board must declare on appointment and at any such time as their circumstances change any potential conflict of interest arising as a result of their position on the Board.

6.2 On appointment to the Board and following any subsequent declaration of potential conflict the conflict must be managed in line with the Board's policy on conflicts of interest, the internal procedures of Somerset County Council, the requirements of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and the requirements of the Pensions Regulator's codes of practice on conflict of interest for Board members.

6.3 The Council's Monitoring Officer shall include interests registered by all members of the Board in the published Members' and Co-opted Members' Register of Interests. All such interests are to be registered with the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of appointment to the Board.

7. Knowledge and understanding including training

- 7.1 All new members must follow an induction training plan and all members of the Board will be expected to attend the training provided to ensure that they have the requisite knowledge and understanding to fulfil their role.
- 7.2 All members must be prepared to participate in such regular personal training needs analysis or other processes as are put in place to ensure that they maintain the required level of knowledge and understanding to carry out their role.
- 7.3 Failure to attend training or participate in the processes referred to above may lead to removal from the Board.

8. Term of office and removal from office

- 8.1 The members of the Board serve for a four year term, subject to the following:
 - (a) the representatives of the administering authority shall be appointed annually by the Somerset County Council Annual Council Meeting, but with a view to maintaining stability of membership;
 - (b) the two union nominated member representatives can be amended at any time by the unions, but with a view to maintaining stability of membership.
- 8.2 Members of the Board will be expected to attend all meetings and training sessions. This will be recorded and published. The membership of any member who fails to attend for two consecutive meetings or two consecutive training events shall be reviewed by the Board and shall be terminated in the absence of mitigating factors

- 8.3 Subject to 8.4 below, a Board member can be removed from the Board in the following circumstances (but not limited to):
- (a) A poor attendance record;
 - (b) if a member does not undertake training as requested by the administering authority;
 - (c) if a member is In breach of Council's Code of Conduct / Declarations policy;
 - (d) if a member has a conflict of interest that cannot be managed in accordance with the Board's conflicts policy;
 - (e) if a representative member ceases to represent his constituency e.g. leaves the employer so no longer has the capacity to represent the Fund's employers.
- 8.4 Other than by ceasing to be eligible for appointment to the Board, Board members may only be removed from office during their term of appointment by the unanimous agreement of all of the other members of the Board at a meeting of the Board where this is specified as an agenda item or with the agreement of the Council at a Full Council meeting.
- 8.5 Arrangements shall be made for the replacement of Board members in line with the procedures for their original appointment.

9. Meetings

- 9.1 The frequency of meetings is to be determined by the Board once it has agreed a workplan, with a minimum of two meetings annually. In addition to this, training sessions will be held as necessary to ensure that Board members have sufficient knowledge and skills to undertake the role.
- 9.2 The Chair of the Board may call additional meetings with the consent of other members of the Board. Urgent business of the Board between meetings may, in exceptional circumstances, be conducted via communications between members of the Board including telephone conferencing and emails.
- 9.3 The Board will meet at the Council's main offices, or another location to be agreed by the Chair. Meetings will be held during normal working hours at times to be agreed by the Chair.
- 9.4 As a committee of the Council, the Rules of Procedure in Section 6 of the Council's constitution apply to meetings of the Board. Board meetings will be held in open session with closed sessions where appropriate. The agenda papers will be circulated to members of the Board and published in advance of meeting in line with Council policy. The minutes of meetings will be recorded and published in line with Council policy.

10. Quorum

10.1 The quorum of the Board shall be 3 to include the Chair. The quorum must include one employer representative and one member representative.

11. Voting rights

11.1 Each of the 6 members of the committee will have voting rights. In the event of a tied vote the Chair has the option of having a final casting vote.

12. Code of Conduct

12.1 All members of the Board will be required to formally sign up to comply with the Somerset County Council Code of Conduct set out at Part 2, Section C of the Council's constitution.

13. Allowances and Expenses

13.1 Any councillor of the Council appointed to the Board will be entitled to receive allowances in accordance with Part 2, Section D of the Council's constitution (Scheme of Members' Allowances).

13.2 Reimbursement of expenses for all members of the Board will be claimable in line with Somerset County Council's agreed expenses rates.

14. Budget

14.1 All costs arising from accommodation and administrative support to conduct its meetings and other business, and the training needs of the Board will be met by the Fund.

14.2 The Council's Community Governance Team will provide the secretariat services to the Board, the cost of which will be met by the Fund.

14.3 The Board will have open access to all officers involved in the running of the Fund and any advisors already employed by the Fund (e.g. the Fund's Actuary).

14.4 The Board may make requests to the Section 151 Officer to approve any additional expenditure required to fulfil its obligations which will then be charged to the Fund. This would include any officer resources not already employed by the Fund.

15. Accountability and reporting

15.1 The Board is accountable solely to the County Council for the effective operation of its functions.

15.2 The Board shall report to the Pensions Committee as often as the Board deems necessary and at least annually on:

- (a) a summary of the work undertaken;
- (b) the work plan for the next 12 months;
- (c) areas raised to the Board to be investigated and how they were dealt with;
- (d) any risks or other areas of potential concern it wishes to raise;
- (e) details of training received and planned; and
- (f) details of any conflicts of interest and how they were dealt with.

15.3 The Board shall report annually to Full Council on its work. It will also and as necessary from time to time report to Full Council any breach in compliance, or other significant issue, which has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the Board within a reasonable time of being reported to the Pensions Committee.

15.4 The Board shall report to the Scheme Advisory Board:

- (a) any areas of persistent non-compliance;
- (b) any areas of non-compliance with the LGPS Regulations that have been reported to the Pensions Committee and full council but persist to be of a material concern.

15.5 The Board shall report to the Pensions Regulator all material breaches of the Pensions Regulator regulatory guidance, following notification to full council and the Pensions Committee.

16. Data protection and Freedom of Information

16.1 For legal purposes the Board is considered a committee of and part of the administering authority legal entity. Therefore the Board must comply with the Council's Data Protection and Freedom of Information policies.

Arrangements for reviewing the Governance Compliance Statement

This policy statement will be regularly reviewed by the pensions committee. If we need to make any significant changes, we will consult all employers whose employees are members of the fund and publish the amended policy.

**Approved by the Pensions Committee
Somerset County Council Pension Fund
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