

**PENSION BOARD OF THE SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL PENSION FUND
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 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).
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 The terms of reference will be formally approved by the Council as the Administering Authority and by the Board itself at its first meeting.
- 1.4 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:
- (a) ensuring the Board delivers its purpose as set out in the Board's terms of reference;
 - (b) the arrangements for meetings of the Board;
 - (c) 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;
 - (d) 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.