

## Cambridgeshire Pension Fund Board Minutes (Public)

Date: 25 July 2025

Time: 10.00 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

Venue: Virtual

Present: Employer Representatives: Councillor Denis Payne [Chair],  
Councillor Ross Martin and Councillor Peter Fane

Employee Representatives: Val Limb, Barry O’Sullivan [Vice  
Chair] and Tom Humphrey

### 1. Membership Update Report

The Board received the Membership Update Report. The report updated Members on the recent recruitment of Tom Humphrey as a Scheme Member Representative.

It was resolved unanimously to note the appointment of Tom Humphrey for a four-year term as a Scheme Member Representative on the Pension Fund Board.

### 2. Election of Chair

It was proposed by Val Limb, and seconded by Barry O’Sullivan, and approved unanimously to elect Denis Payne as the Chair of the Cambridgeshire Pension Fund Board for the municipal year 2025-26.

### 3. Election of Vice-Chair

It was proposed by Denis Payne, seconded by Val Limb, and approved unanimously to elect Barry O’Sullivan as the Vice-Chair of the Cambridgeshire Pension Fund Board for the municipal year 2025-26.

### 4. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

The Chair thanked Councillor Simon King and Councillor Seeff for their dedication and attendance on the Pension Fund Board.

The Board welcomed three new Members. Tom Humphrey was the new Scheme Member Representative. Councillor Martin and Councillor Fane were appointed by Full Council in May 2025 as Employer Representatives on the Pension Fund Board.

No apologies for absence were received.

There were no declarations of interest.

## 5. Minutes – 4 April 2025 (Public) and Action Log

While discussing the minutes of the Pension Fund Board meeting on 4 April 2025, a Member queried the wording of an action listed in Minute 201. It was agreed to amend the wording to 'It was requested, and agreed by the Head of Audit and Risk Management, that a one-line summary would be included in the executive summary to state that Management had agreed to the audit findings and actions had been put in place.' – **action required**.

Following the agreed amendment, the public minutes were approved as an accurate record.

[Councillor Fane joined the meeting at 10.12 a.m.]

While discussing the action log, Members:

- queried if Minute 205 should state 'Cambridgeshire Pension Fund'. Officers agreed to review this – **action required**.
- noted that an update had been requested for Minute 200.
- noted that following the amendment to the minutes, Minute 201 would be updated – **action required**.
- learnt that an updated audit position had been circulated to Members.
- noted Minute 204 had been completed.
- highlighted a typographical error in Minute 205. Officers agreed to review this – **action required**.
- queried the ongoing action listed in Minute 196. Officers agreed to circulate information to the Board Members outside of the meeting – **action required**.

The action log was noted.

## 6. Governance and Compliance Report

The Board received an update on the McCloud remedy, activities of the Scheme Advisory Board, activities of the Pensions Regulator, LGPS England and Wales, and skills and knowledge opportunities.

Due to new membership on the Board, the Governance and Regulations Manager agreed to provide a more detailed introduction to the report than in previous meetings.

The McCloud remedy addressed the age discrimination in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) following a court ruling. Due to the

complexity and scale of the work, the Pension Fund Committee agreed a proposed determination decision to extend the McCloud implementation phase by 12 months. 'New final underpin dates and deaths from 1 October 2023 (group 1)' were compliant. 'Cases falling under part 3 of the 2023 Regulations (group 2)' and 'all other cases (group 3)' were not compliant. Group 3 was nearly compliant, however a small number of cases required further analysis. Letters had been sent out in batches to retrospective retirement cases in group 2 to control the replies. 34 letters had been sent, and 15 responses had been returned. There was an action plan, which included timelines, which would be presented at the next Board meeting. The Local Government Association (LGA) confirmed there would be centralised communication templates regarding death processes cases due to the sensitive nature. It was noted there was no deadline for a member to state information was missing from their record which could bring them into scope of the remedy.

The LGPS 'access and fairness' consultation was launched on 15 May and would close on 7 August 2025. A draft response to the consultation had been formalised and sent to the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Pension Fund Committee and Pension Fund Board. As a result of the consultation, the business plan activities have been updated.

Pension dashboards needed to be connected to the ecosystem by 31 October 2025. A report would be presented at the next Board meeting as stage 2 of onboarding was about to begin. Stage 2 consisted of a four-week plan and the aim was to be live mid-August which was ahead of the deadline. A single source solution had been chosen for the additional voluntary contributions (AVC). Nationally, controlled testing in a live environment would begin over the summer.

A training plan was included in the agenda pack. LOLA was the core method of training and there was a mandatory six-month deadline to complete modules which were linked with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Skills and Knowledge Framework. Members of the Pension Fund Committee and the Pension Fund Board were signed up to the national skills exercise in 2026, to ensure any knowledge gaps could be closed. An updated conference list had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Board and Committee reviewed policies and strategies on a three-year cycle. Immaterial changes following the annual officer review would be reported to the Board. Members had the opportunity to comment on these and provide post-scrutiny of policies and strategies.

While discussing the report, Members:

- queried the feasibility of the pension dashboard four-week plan with the upcoming summer holidays. Members learnt that availability had been confirmed for Heywood's stage 2 plan.

- questioned if there was a rolling year training plan to ensure there was sufficient notice for conferences and training events. The Governance and Regulations Manager noted the Member's query and stated that officers included estimated conference dates.
- clarified that Members of the Pension Fund Committee and Pension Fund Board should contact the Governance and Regulations Manager or the Governance Specialist if they wished to attend training events.

It was resolved unanimously to note the Governance and Compliance Report.

## 7. KPMG Audit Plan for Cambridgeshire Pension Fund 2024-25

The Board received the audit plan for the Cambridgeshire Pension Fund for 2024-25 produced by the Fund's external auditor KPMG. The report provided a summary of the work that will be undertaken by the auditor and included the areas of significant risk and areas of focus. These included the management of controls and the valuation of level two or three assets. The auditors would need to gather assurance around how estimates were calculated between the draft and final accounts and recommend an adjustment, if required. Materiality had been set at £48 million. The report had previously been presented to the Audit and Accounts Committee and the Pension Fund Committee.

Cambridge and Counties Bank had an external valuation by Grant Thornton. The statutory fee for the KPMG audit was £98K and was set by the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA). The draft statement of accounts had been presented to the Pension Fund Committee.

While discussing the report, Members:

- learnt that the override of management controls was tested through journal sampling.
- noted there was an error in 1.1 of the report which stated 'SPA' rather than 'SOA'. The Investments and Funding Accounting Manager stated this would be corrected - **action required**.
- queried if there could be a change in resources, either from the Fund or KPMG, over the next four to six months which could affect the audit. Members were assured that this was not an anticipated issue, and the audit was expected to finish on time.
- learnt that Grant Thornton was external to KPMG and CCB, and conducted the valuation of CCB. The Grant Thornton fee was separate to the KPMG fee and was enclosed in the statement of accounts.
- questioned if it was best policy to have the same audit team year to year and asked if this could pose a risk. The Investment and Fund Accounting Manager stated that statutory working papers were prepared in advance and would be required by any auditor. Members were assured there were rules regarding

the rotation of roles which mitigated possible risks, and the auditor changed every three years.

- noted that officers were comfortable with the materiality levels set, which was usually 1% of the total draft assets.

It was resolved unanimously to note the Audit Plan 2024-25.

## 8. Administering Authority Discretions Policy

The Board received the Administering Authority Discretions Policy which was approved by the Pension Fund Committee in June 2025. The purpose of the policy was to provide a clear and consistent framework of how discretions were exercised in line with relevant regulations.

Changes to the policy were outlined in section 3.2 of the report. One change had been made, which was to allow extensions to the notice period on voluntary early and flexible retirement time limits. The discretion was favourable to the scheme member; however, it was reviewed to see if any members could be disadvantaged with the current 1-month window.

While discussing the report, Members:

- queried if external legal advice was sought and asked if the policy aligned with the general code of practice or if it conflicted with case law or Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) guidance. The Governance and Regulations Manager informed Members that advice was provided internally by regulations specialists, and the policy was updated when there was a change in regulations. The Head of Pensions stated that legal advice was not necessary for this policy. When necessary, legal advice was sought.
- questioned how discretions were documented and tracked to ensure consistency. Members learnt that all discretions had operational processes, and some had a higher-level formal process such as exit credits. These were tracked and reported to the Pension Fund Committee and Pension Fund Board. Within the Fund, these discretions were made by the Head of Pensions unless another individual was specified. The Head of Pensions stated a decision sheet recorded all the evidence required and included the rationale of the decision. The Member highlighted the importance of treating each case individually, however emphasised the necessity to document how the decision was made.
- learnt that in unique cases, such as two beneficiaries who were both equally entitled to the death grant or if someone had nominated their pet as the beneficiary, there would be an internal review. Where necessary, legal advice would be sought.
- noted that the number of formal disputes were low. Members learnt that the Head of Pensions was the stage one adjudicator for appeals under the IDR process.

It was unanimously resolved to review the Administering Authority Discretions Policy located in Appendix 1.

## 9. Cambridgeshire Pension Fund Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI) Policy

The Board received the Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy which had been agreed by the Pension Fund Committee in June 2025. The policy was based on The Pension Regulator (TPR) guidance which was issued in March 2023 which outlined the principles of how EDI issues should be approached.

The intention of the policy was to set out the approach and commitment of the Cambridgeshire Pension Fund to EDI to ensure those managing the Fund were individuals with a broad range of characteristics, life experience, expertise and skills. The policy aligned with the Cambridgeshire County Council policy. 'Equity' was included in the title of the policy due to previous Committee and Board discussions.

Members learnt that the TPR EDI template had been used for the recent recruitment of Scheme Member Representatives for the Pension Fund Board which had been received successfully. There was a log which noted any issues scheme members experienced to identify any trends. There was a review of informal complaints and stage one of the IDR process, to review if there were any barriers or communication issues in the cases.

While discussing the report, Members:

- highlighted that the Committee and Board were not diverse but noted that some representatives were appointed by Full Council. The Governance and Regulations Manager highlighted the importance of EDI training for Members and for officers.
- stated that 'EEDI' and 'EDI' were used interchangeably throughout the policy.

It was unanimously resolved to review the new Cambridgeshire Pension Fund Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI) Policy.

## 10. Administration Performance Report

The Board received the Administration Performance Report. The report was in a revised format to provide oversight on administrative matters. The Head of Pensions provided an update to Members on KPIs, receipt of employee and employer contributions, breaches of the law, Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) cases, material data breaches, significant overpayments, business plan activities, employer admissions and cessations, and risk monitoring.

Members were informed of the scale of 'business as usual' (BAU). Over 7,500 calculations were made over the period 1 March and 31 May 2025. A survey was issued to scheme members following any completed tasks on the system and the average rating of the Fund's administration was approximately 4 out of 5.

The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) located in Appendix 1 included the new CIPFA KPIs. These included reporting on new areas such as retirement quotations and refunds. Divorce KPIs were identified as areas that required improvements and work was being undertaken. Customer service KPIs were reliant on multiple parties including the Fund, the employer and the scheme member.

Members learnt that the IDRPs cases, which had a due date of 28 June, had been partially upheld.

Two business plan activities had been substituted. Rectify survivor benefits cases had been expanded to include the whole 'access and fairness' consultation. The activity to support the build of the ACCESS Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and regulated entity had been updated to reflect the reprofiled work following Government's response to the ACCESS build proposal. The Pension Fund Committee agreed to outsource 1,000 cases of the unprocessed undecided leavers to an existing supplier over an 8-to-12-month period to assist reducing the backlog.

Risk monitoring was comprehensive and there was a revised risk register. Some additional risks were added and listed in section 3.26 of the report. Members learnt that Risk 8c required updating. The risk assurance table reviewed red or amber risks and identified KPIs which monitored the risk.

Members learnt the role of the Pension Fund Committee in the employers admissions and cessations process.

While discussing the report, Members:

- welcomed the percentages listed in section 3.12 of the report.
- Highlighted that section 3.30 should state 'Hertfordshire Catering Limited (Hauxton Primary School).'
- questioned the rationale behind which risks were included in the exempt and public risk register. The Head of Pensions highlighted that the exempt risk register included risks such as cyber risk, scams, and fraud which could not be in the public domain. The inclusion of a public and exempt risk register was due to previous Board discussions and maximised the amount of information in the public domain. The Governance and Regulations Manager highlighted that a public risk had been included in the exempt appendix by error.
- highlighted that 5d 'Failure to process all casework in line with service standards and statutory deadlines' included the oversight of performance by

the Pension Fund Committee and the Pension Fund Board as a mitigation. It was queried if this was a suitable internal control. The Head of Pensions agreed to review this – **action required**.

- welcomed the new report format.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- 1) note the contents of the report
- 2) review the risk register located in appendices 5 and 7 (exempt)
- 3) Note the admission of the following transferee admission bodies to the Cambridgeshire Pension Fund:
  - ABM Catering Limited (Fulbourn Primary School)
  - Compass Group UK and Ireland Limited (Four C's Multi Academy Trust)
  - Innovate Services Limited (Astrea Multi Academy Trust)
  - KGB Cleaning South West Limited (The Active Learning Trust)
  - ServiceMaster Limited (Heltwate School)
- 4) Note one employer joining Cambridgeshire Pension Fund as a resolution body:
  - Littleport Town Council
- 5) Note the cessation of following admission agreements:
  - Caterlink Limited (The Active Learning Trust)
  - Edwards & Blake Limited (Bassingbourn Primary School)
  - Hertfordshire Catering Limited Hauxton Primary School)
  - ServiceMaster Limited (The Active Learning Trust)
- 6) Note the updates to two previously reported cessations relating to:
  - Aspens Services Limited (St John the Baptist Catholic Academy Trust)
  - Burwell Parish Council

## 11. Cambridgeshire Pension Fund Board Agenda Plan

While noting the agenda plan, a Member highlighted that the January Board meeting date clashed with a conference. The Governance and Regulations Manager agreed to review this date with Democratic Services – **action required**.

It was resolved unanimously to note the agenda plan.

## 12. Exclusion of Press and Public

It was resolved unanimously that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the agenda contains exempt information under

Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and that it would not be in the public interest for this information to be disclosed information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

13. Minutes – 4 April 2025 (Confidential)

The confidential minutes of the meeting on 4 April 2025, with the amendment raised in the public session, were approved as an accurate record.

14. Valuation Update (Confidential)

Members received a report which provided an update on the valuation of the Pension Fund.

It was resolved unanimously to note the recommendations as set out in the report.

15. ACCESS Update – (Confidential)

The Board received an ACCESS update report.

It was resolved unanimously to note the recommendations as set out in the report.

Chair