

Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Guildhall,
Frankwell Quay,
Shrewsbury
SY3 8HQ

Date: 15 May 2025

**Committee:
Pensions Board**

Date: Friday, 23 May 2025

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: The Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ

You are requested to attend the above meeting. The Agenda is attached

There will be some access to the meeting room for members of the press and public, but this will be limited. If you wish to attend the meeting please email democracy@shropshire.gov.uk to check that a seat will be available for you.

Please click [here](#) to view the livestream of the meeting on the date and time stated on the agenda

The recording of the event will also be made available shortly after the meeting on the Shropshire Council Youtube Channel [Here](#)

Tim Collard
Assistant Director - Legal and Governance

Members of Pensions Board

Member Representatives

John Hall

Rebecca Summerlin

Dave Wright (Chairman)

Employer Representatives

Liz Furey

Madeline Murphy

Tricia Slater

Your Committee Officer is:

Michelle Dulson Committee Officer

Tel: 01743 257719 Email: michelle.dulson@shropshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 Apologies

To receive apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

Members are reminded that they should declare any interests which may lead to conflicts of interest in the subject area or any specific agenda item of this meeting. A conflict of interest is defined as a financial or other interest which is likely to prejudice a person's exercise of functions as a member of the Pension Board. It does not include a financial or other interest arising merely by virtue of that person being a member of the LGPS.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 1 - 6)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2024 are attached for confirmation.

Contact: Michelle Dulson (01743) 257719

4 Public Question Time

To receive any questions from the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. The deadline for this meeting is 12noon on Monday 19 May 2025.

5 Administration and Regulatory Updates (Pages 7 - 26)

Report attached.

Contact: Vicky Jenks 01743 252192

6 Pensions Committee Reports and Feedback

For Board Members to raise any questions following the recent Pensions Committee meetings.

Please click on the link below to access the reports considered by the Pensions Committee at its meetings on 6 December 2024 and 21 March 2025.

[Agenda for Pensions Committee on Friday, 6th December, 2024, 10.00 am — Shropshire Council](#)

7 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Pensions Board will be held at 10.00am on Friday 4 July 2025.

8 Exclusion of Press and Public

To RESOLVE 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.

9 Exempt Minutes (Exempted by Category 3) (Pages 27 - 30)

The Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on the 8 November 2024 are attached for confirmation.

Contact Michelle Dulson (01743) 257719

10 Economic Update (Exempted by Category 3) (Pages 31 - 40)

Report attached.

Contact: Peter Chadderton 07990 086399

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

For Board Members to raise any questions following the recent Pensions Committee meetings.

Please click on the link below to access the reports considered by the Pensions Committee at its meetings on 6 December 2024 and 21 March 2025.

[Agenda for Pensions Committee on Friday, 6th December, 2024, 10.00 am — Shropshire Council](#)

[Agenda for Pensions Committee on Friday, 21st March, 2025, 10.00 am — Shropshire Council](#)

12 Governance Update (Exempted by Category 3) (Pages 41 - 66)

Report attached.

Contact: Alison Grange (01743) 253823



Committee and Date

Pensions Board

25 January 2025

PENSIONS BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2024

In the Wilfred Owen Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

10.00 - 11.15 am

Responsible Officer: Michelle Dulson

Email: michelle.dulson@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257719

Present

Member representatives: John Hall, Rebecca Summerlin, Dave Wright (Chair)

Employer representatives: Liz Furey, Madeline Murphy (remote), Tricia Slater

13 Apologies and Introductions

None received.

14 Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

None were declared.

15 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Paragraph 5. Administration and Regulatory Updates

In response to a query the Pensions Administration Manager confirmed that there would be an update on work around the Pensions Dashboard later on in the meeting which included an update on data quality.

In response to a query around the merging of personal records, the Pensions Administration Manager confirmed that they did ensure that records were matched and merged, where necessary.

16 Public Question Time

No public questions were received.

17 Administration and Regulatory Updates

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

The Pensions Administration Manager introduced and amplified her report which updated Members on the work undertaken by the pensions administration team including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and progress on projects including McCloud, Pension Dashboards and my Pension Online. It also provided an update from the Scheme Advisory Board.

The Pensions Administration Manager drew attention to Appendix A which set out how the team were performing in relation to the 16 KPIs for the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 with 95% being the target. Appendix A also set out a comparison between quarters, as requested by the Pensions Committee. She reported that the customer target was ambitious compared to the legal target and were set within their Administration Strategy which was due to be reviewed within the next 6 months when they would look to align the customer target more closely to the legal targets. She reported that many of the workflows were achieving close to or above 95% of the legal target and where they were not, they were looking to recruit two new Pensions Assistants to work on achieving those targets.

The Pensions Administration Manager informed the meeting that the Cyber Security Policy had been signed off by the Pensions Committee in June. It had been tested in September via the Council's Risk Assessment team alongside their Business Continuity Plan and their Business Impact Analysis and Service Recovery Plan. The plans had been tweaked slightly but they were happy that there were robust processes in place.

She updated Members in relation to the 'My Pensions Online' portal which had been upgraded in October. A soft launch had been undertaken with pensioners via a newsletter in order to gauge the types of questions they might get asked. This allowed them to tweak the information available on the website including instructions for registering. The next communication would be to those members who were already registered to let them know that they would have to transfer their account to the new facility. She went on to explain why a phased approach had been taken.

Turning to McCloud, the Pensions Administration Manager reported that this work was ongoing, and they were currently looking to create the work plan for the rectification cases (those members who left the Pension Fund during the remedy period and needed an underpin applying to their benefits). She explained that there were some cases where work could not be undertaken due to outstanding software developments to be delivered in the next 12 to 18 months along with outstanding guidance.

In relation to the Pension Dashboard, the Board were informed that they had signed up for their ISP connection to allow their software to connect to the system and would be implemented in January 2025 ready to go live by October 2025. The team were currently undertaking a data matching/partial matching exercise to hopefully reduce the number of enquiries received by the team. The biggest problem area was around members addresses and they were looking to procure a tracing service to keep addresses updated.

In response to a query in relation to recruitment, the Pensions Administration Manager confirmed that the posts currently being recruited to were for an additional two Pensions Assistants. In addition, additional hours have been added to the communications teams. There was also another vacant post that they wished to recruit to, and this would be for a 'floating' Pensions Assistant to work across all three teams.

It was commented that it was difficult to see on the table in Appendix A how the volume of work was changing over quarters. In response, the Pensions Administration Manager explained that the Pensions Committee had asked for more information about the ongoing work in each quarter, which was why they had created the line chart. She reported that the KPI table would also be changing going forward to show the quarterly figures.

In terms of prioritisation of workloads, the Pensions Administration Manager discussed how the work was split out by the operations team, which was currently done on a multifunctional, alpha split prioritising retirements to ensure benefits were paid out which did mean that transfers slipped however going forward they needed to think about how to better prioritise the work including auto allocation according to availability.

Looking at the Pensions Dashboard, it was requested that the 'go live' dates be included on the project updates. The meeting was informed that the time scales were set in legislation and that the go-live date for all pension schemes to be connected and members being able to log on to a dashboard and see their pension information was October 2026. In response to a further query, the Pensions Administration Manager explained that the timescales for pensions schemes was phased at intervals between October 2025 and October 2026. During this time, they would do some testing to ensure that members could get on etc. The Government would give them a six-month lead in time at which time communications would be rolled out to Members.

In response to a query, the Pensions Administration Manager confirmed that in relation to the 'initial letters acknowledging deaths' KPI, there could be some complications with certain cases, sometime just a delay in calculating the value of the benefits due to some anomaly on their record or it could just be a case of a pensioner who had been in payment for a long time as some information was still held on microfiche so it could be difficult to find the information. There was a project in place to get the microfiche records digitised which would make the process quicker.

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the report.

18 Update from Pension Board Chairs Meeting

An update from the Pension Board Chairs meeting on 21 October 2024 had been circulated. The Chairman drew attention to the Scheme Advisory Board report that was imbedded within the Minutes and which he felt was very interesting.

The Head of Pensions drew attention to the ongoing pensions review and although not much had been announced in the 30 October budget but there could potentially be some announcements in the Mansion House speech by the Chancellor on Thursday 14th November as the report on phase one of the review was expected by the end of the year. He reported that there had been some talk about more investment in the UK to drive economic growth and the progression of pension funds pooling assets. He hoped to update Board members at the next meeting in January 2025.

It was reported that there was a new chairman of the Pension Board Chairs meeting along with a new LGPS Central team and it was felt that they would bring a different, much more client focussed approach. The next meeting was on the 24 March 2025.

19 Pensions Committee Reports and Feedback

It was confirmed that the reports considered by the Pensions Committee at its meeting on 13th September 2024 had been received by the Board and also that the meeting had been observed by two members of the Board.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that the two Telford & Wrekin Council representatives had been appointed to the Pensions Committee at its last meeting of Cabinet.

20 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Friday 25 January 2025 at 10am.

21 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.

22 Exempt Minutes (Exempted by Category 3)

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

23 Economic Update (Exempted by Category 3)

The Board considered and noted the exempt report of the Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager which provided an update on the general economic conditions and of the impact on the pension fund investments since July 2024.

24 Pensions Committee Exempt Reports and Papers (Exempted by Category 3)

The exempt reports considered by the Pensions Committee at its meeting on 13 September 2024 were received and discussed by the Board

25 Governance Update (Exempted by Category 3)

The Board considered and noted the exempt report of the Communications and Governance Team Leader which provided an update on governance issues.

Signed (Chairman)

Date:

This page is intentionally left blank



Pensions Board
Date 24 January 2025

Item

Public

Pensions Administration and Regulatory Update Report

Responsible Officer:	Vicky Jenks		
email:	Vicky.jenks@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 252192
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):			

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 The report provides members with monitoring information on the performance of and issues affecting the pensions administration team.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. Details are provided on team workloads and performance and projects currently being undertaken.
- 2.2. Information regarding Regulatory changes effecting the Local Government Pension Scheme are also included.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. Members are asked to note the content of this report with or without comment.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. Risk Management
Performance is considered and monitored to ensure regulatory timescales and key performance indicators are adhered to. Administration risks are identified and managed and are reported to committee on an annual basis.
- 4.2. Human Rights Act Appraisal

The recommendations contained in this report are compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

4.3. Environmental Appraisal

There is no direct environmental, equalities or climate change consequences of this report.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. Managing team performance and collaborating with other administering authorities ensures we continue to deliver value for money.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. Energy and fuel consumption: No effect
Renewable energy generation: No effect
Carbon offsetting or mitigation: No effect
Climate Change adaptation: No effect

7. Administration and regulatory update

- 7.1. Appendix A shows the 16 key performance indicators (KPIs) for cases processed by the Membership and Benefits team for the last year 1st April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

- 7.2. The chart shows that 12 of the 16 KPIs are achieving at least 95% of cases being completed by the legal timeframes.

- The 2 new Pensions Assistants who joined the Membership and Benefits team are receiving training, they will also have the opportunity to attend The LGA Insights residential course that introduces the Pensions industry and the LGPS. Following that we would hope that they will be able to progress and study for the Level 2 qualification in Pensions Administration.
- A third new Pensions Assistant joined the team in March and will work across all 3 teams supporting with project work and cover for absence. Training has been provided for assisting the help desk to answer email queries and phone calls and for processing deferred benefit cases for the membership and benefits team.
- We have just successfully recruited 2 communications and governance assistants. 1 for maternity cover and 1 for a replacement for a member of staff who has left the team.
- We have also covered another maternity internally and promoted a member of the team to backfill a post on the Helpdesk.
- In the summer we will have 3 members of the team enrolling on the Level 2 qualification. This will take 9 months to complete.

- We continue our work to develop more automated processes for aspects of work the team complete; to date we have been able to implement a bulk process for refund cases and we are now looking to do the same for simple deferred benefits cases, these will be for members who only have CARE membership.
- We are making progress to identify information that can be published to member online accounts, rather than being posted. We will send an email notification to the member to inform them to check their account and read the information we have sent out.

7.3. The work completed on the fund's business plan for 1st April 2024 to 31 March 2025 is available at **Appendix B**. Most items listed have been completed or on track if they are continuing.

7.4. The team have done a fantastic job over the last year, particularly with the additional work created by on-going projects and training of new staff.

8. Communications and Governance

8.1. The following chart shows statistics on the work undertaken by the helpdesk team not covered by the workflow system and reported with the wider team statistics in **Appendix A**.

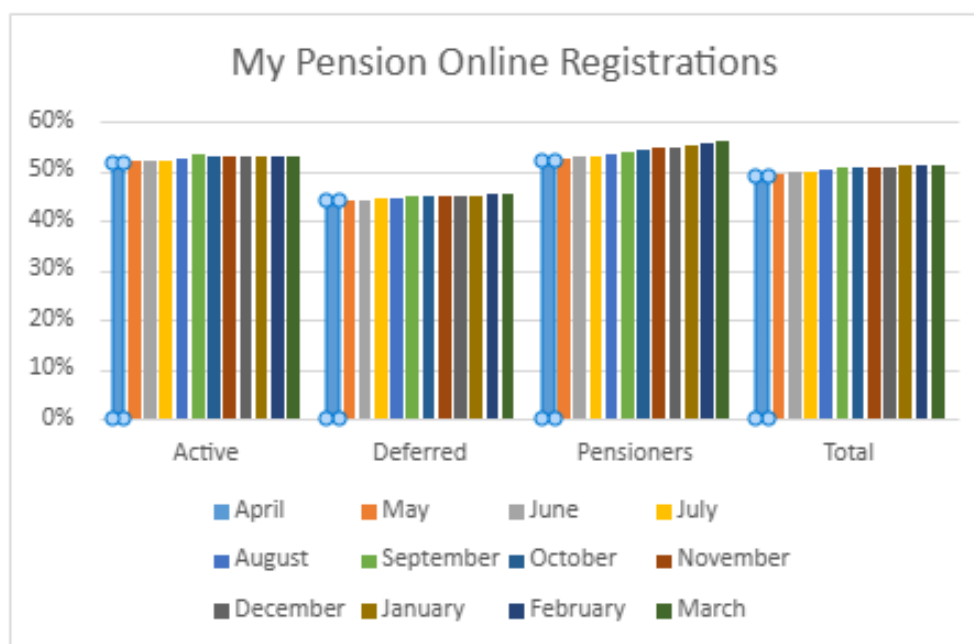
	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025
Telephone calls received to helpdesk team	773	616	622
% of calls answered	96%	96%	93%
Emails received to pensions@shropshire.gov.uk	971	771	891
% of emails responded to within 10 working days	100%	100%	100%
My Pension Online activation keys issued	105	78	104
Incoming post received and indexed to the pensions administration system	2,719	2,421	2,536
1-2-1 video appointments held with scheme members	9	7	7
Users visiting the website	3,800	2,120	**

**** March 2025 stats not available due to website migration**

The team have been looking at developing a contact form for members to complete when they have a query for the team. Currently members can email the inbox, but very often they do not provide all the information required to answer their query. This creates unnecessary additional work for the team when they must reply and ask for further details.

Online portal

- 8.2. The Chart below shows the % of members who are registered for MSS, it is encouraging that we have approximately 50% of our total membership registered and this is increasing steadily, month on month.



- 8.3. We have started to send targeted emails to members who are not yet registered, to encourage them to use the online platform. We have also started to send reminder messages to members who are registered but have not logged on in the last 6 months.
- 8.4. **Penny (Pension Bot)** - More of our members are starting to use the Pension Bot, Penny, which is available via our website. The knowledge base (questions) is constantly being updated/added to, based on feedback from previous months' questions and helpdesk queries.

	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25
Questions submitted	130	31	53	44	55	57	115	144	67	86	66	83
Asked an expert	9	3	3	4	4	7	4	9	4	9	2	10
Accuracy %	75%	85%	81%	82%	88%	80%	77%	81%	83%	91%	90%	90%

9. Employer Performance

- 9.1. In line with the Shropshire County Pension Fund administration strategy, employers must pay their contributions and lump sum deficit payment by the 19th of the month. Accompanying data must also be submitted via i-Connect by this date. The below table shows the percentage of employers who have made payments by the deadline for the year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.
- 9.2. This table also includes information about employers who make monthly deficit lump sum payments, these form part of employer contributions. Information about employers who did not meet these deadlines is covered in the governance report via the reported breaches chart.

	IConnect Submissions on time	Contributions paid on time	Lump sum deficit payments paid on time
April 2024	97%	97%	71%
May 2024	98%	95%	95%
June 2024	98%	97%	98%
July 2024	97%	98%	96%
August 2024	100%	98%	91%
September 2024	99%	99%	82%
October 2024	95%	99%	96%
November 2024	99%	99%	98%
December 2024	99%	99%	79%
January 2025	99%	99%	98%
February 2025	99%	99%	96%
March 2025	92%	96%	84%
Average for the year	98%	98%	90%

The main reason for the lump sum deficit payments being low in some months, is where a payment date falls at a weekend, and payment is not made the Friday before. In most cases these are for Multi Academy Trusts making payments for more than one school. A reminder is sent to those that pay late, to inform them that this is recorded on the Breaches log.

10. Projects

- 10.1. **Pensions Increase** – Active pension accounts, deferred pensions and pensions in payment are adjusted each April in line with the cost of living. The increase is based on the September-to-September change in the Consumer Prices Index (CPI). The CPI increase for the year up to September 2024 was 1.7%.

The team have updated pension in payment records so that pensioners received the increase from 7th April. A pensioner newsletter (Intouch) plus P60 information has been sent out to members in April.

- 10.2. **Year End** – Employers have been returning their signed off reconciliation forms needed for the year end 31 March 2025. Revised deficit schedules have also been issued for the uprated lump sum amounts due from some employers in 2025/2026.

10.3. **Valuation** - 2025 is a valuation year and the team have begun work on the project. Information on this process was provided in a presentation by Mercer in the March committee meeting. We have scheduled the employer meeting in November, where Mercer will present their findings and new employer rate schedules will be sent out to employers before this, so that they have them in preparation for this meeting.

10.4. **Pension Dashboards** – The team have been working together with our Software provider, Heywood Pension Technologies, to implement the Integrated Service Provider (ISP). This will allow the Pension Dashboards ecosystem to send member find requests to us and show information to members about their pension held with Shropshire.

The team are also working on a data matching exercise for members who hold added voluntary contribution (AVC) accounts with our 2 AVC providers, Prudential, and Utmost. This is so that when members find their pension information on the Dashboards this will also include information for their connected AVC account.

We have now also completed the procurement of the tracing, mortality screening and bank account verification tools and have begun the implementation of these tools. The tracing tool will help to keep member addresses as up to date as possible, which will improve our data quality scores and assist members to locate their pension records through the Dashboard as well as helping to make sure we write out to members at their current address when sending information about their pension benefits.

The latest project report is available at **Appendix C**.

11. Regulatory updates

11.1. HMRC released a consultation on 30th October 2024, regarding Inheritance tax on pensions. The consultation closed on 22 January 2025, an officer response has been sent, this response is in line with the response issued by the LGA/LGPC.

11.2. The consultation asked for views on how the taxation on death benefits could be implemented and the timescales for making payment of any tax charge that may become due. The changes are due to take effect from 6 April 2027.

11.3. This would be a change for the LPGS as death benefits are currently exempt from Inheritance tax.

11.4. Torsten Bell MP was appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Pensions) in the Department for Work and Pensions on 14 January 2025. Emma Reynolds, who previously held this role, was appointed Economic Secretary to the Treasury.

11.5. On 14 January 2025, the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) published a [blog on the future of pensions administration](#). The blog focuses on three key

areas:

- increasing complexity in pensions administration
- technical debt due to underinvestment in technology
- talent shortages, including the challenge of recruitment.

It also looks at the challenges ahead in 2025, covering Pensions Dashboards, data management and the role of artificial intelligence in enhancing efficiency and member experience.

11.6. The Neonatal Care Leave and Pay (Consequential Amendments to Subordinate Legislation) Regulations 2025. On 24 February 2025, the Department for Business and Trade laid the Neonatal Care Leave and Pay (Consequential Amendments to Subordinate Legislation) Regulations 2025. The regulations come into force on 6 April 2025. Members on unpaid neonatal care leave can choose to buy back the lost pension through a shared-cost additional pension contract.

11.7 Normal Minimum Pension Age (NMPA) 2028 increase- Registered pension schemes, such as the LGPS, must not normally pay any benefits to members until they reach the NMPA, except on ill health grounds. The NMPA, outlined in the Finance Act 2004, will increase from age 55 to 57 on 6 April 2028

The Finance Act 2004 provides transitional protection to certain members through a protected pension age (PPA), allowing them to receive benefits after 5 April 2028 before age 57 without incurring unauthorised tax charges.

LGPS members - A member's eligibility for a PPA is relevant only if they reach age 57 after 5 April 2028. LGPS members who, immediately before 4 November 2021, were active, deferred, deferred pensioner or pension credit members qualify for a PPA of 55.

We have been communicating this change with members so they can consider this when planning their retirement, however further information is required from government on some aspects of how this will apply in certain cases. As part of the National Pension Officers Group (formerly LGPS Technical working Group) we have asked for this clarification to be treated as a priority by MHCLG and expect a consultation to be released in the summer on this.

11.8 Consultation mid- valuation employer contribution rates - MHCLG intends to consult on changes to the regulations that cover mid-valuation cycle changes to employer contribution rates. This was set out in an MHCLG letter to all administering authorities in England and Wales dated 10 March 2025. In the letter, Michelle Warbis, Deputy Director for the LGPS at MHCLG, confirms the Government's view of when the provisions of regulation 64A of the LGPS Regulations 2013 should be exercised.

Their view is that a review is appropriate in response to changes in an employer's liabilities, or its ability to meet its obligations.

Amending the employer contribution rate mid-valuation cycle is not intended as a way of managing surpluses or deficits.

The Government will consult on tightening up the rules covering when the provisions of regulation 64A can be exercised and the fund actuary's role in that process. We expect the consultation to be launched after the local government elections on 1 May 2025.

We also expect to see consultations through the summer on New Fair Deal, Pensions Gender gap, equalisation of partner benefits in connection with the Goodwin case.

12. Scheme Advisory Board (SAB)

12.1. Following the publication of the Government's [English Devolution White Paper](#) on 16 December 2024, an open consultation was launched setting out proposals for overhauling the local audit system in England. The consultation is called '[Local audit reform: a strategy for overhauling the local audit system in England](#)' and closed on 29 January 2025. The consultation set out a strategy which commits to a series of measures to improve the local audit system. Notably, paragraph 77 contained a proposal to decouple the pension fund accounts from the main accounts of administering authorities, which has been recommended by the Board for some time. The Board welcomes the Government's commitment set out in this proposal and has responded to the consultation. The response is limited to the decoupling proposal and is available on [the Board's website](#).

12.2. The Board has received Nigel Giffin KC's updated opinion on the fiduciary duty in LGPS. This is intended as a review of, and update to, Nigel's 2014 opinion and is entitled "Local Government Pension Scheme: Investments and Non-Financial Considerations." The updated opinion can be found on the Board's website on the [Legal Opinions and Summaries page](#). The Board's Secretariat will consider whether further advice on specific points would be helpful and will work with funds to ensure instructions cover the pertinent questions and elements of most interest.

12.3. The Board Chair, Cllr Roger Phillips, has written a letter addressed to chief financial officers and pension committee chairs at administering authorities. The purpose of the letter is to ensure that administering authorities provide appropriate resources for effective pension service delivery.

12.4. Cllr Roger Phillips has also written to the new Pensions Minister Torsten Bell to welcome him to his role. The letter makes three recommendations to the Minister:

- to provide clarity for the LGPS on the impact of the judgment made in the dismissed appeal of the Virgin Media Ltd v NTL Ltd case in July 2024
- to increase the limit in the Administration of Estates (Small Payments) Act 1965 to allow for more small payments to be made without the need for grant of probate or letters of administration
- to set the timetable for Phase 2 of the Pensions Review.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Pensions Committee Papers 21 March 2025 – Administration update

Cabinet Member (portfolio Holder)

N/A

Local Member:

N/A

Appendices

Appendix A – KPI Chart (April 2024 to March 2025)

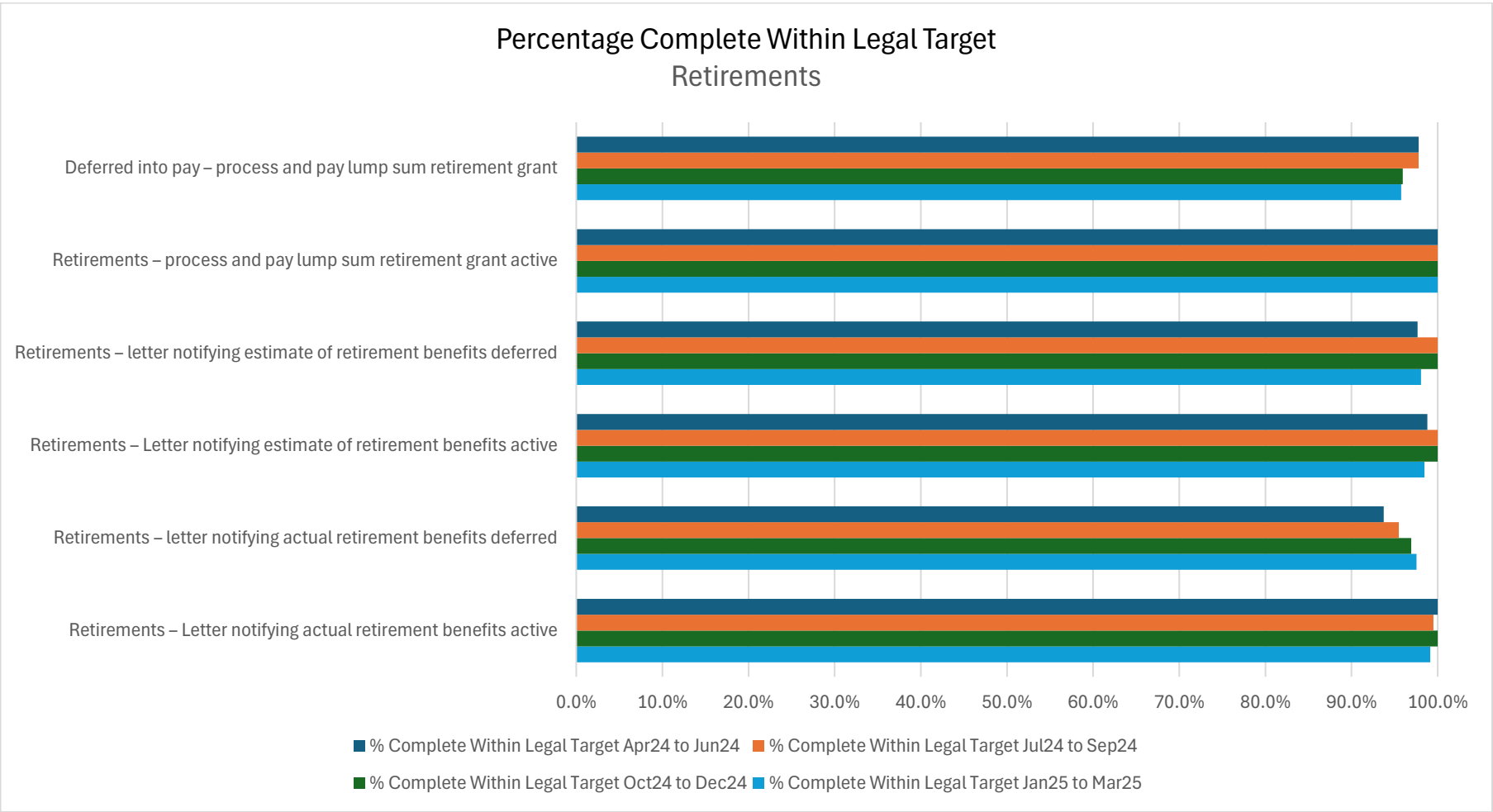
Appendix B – Business Plan update (April 2024 – March 2025)

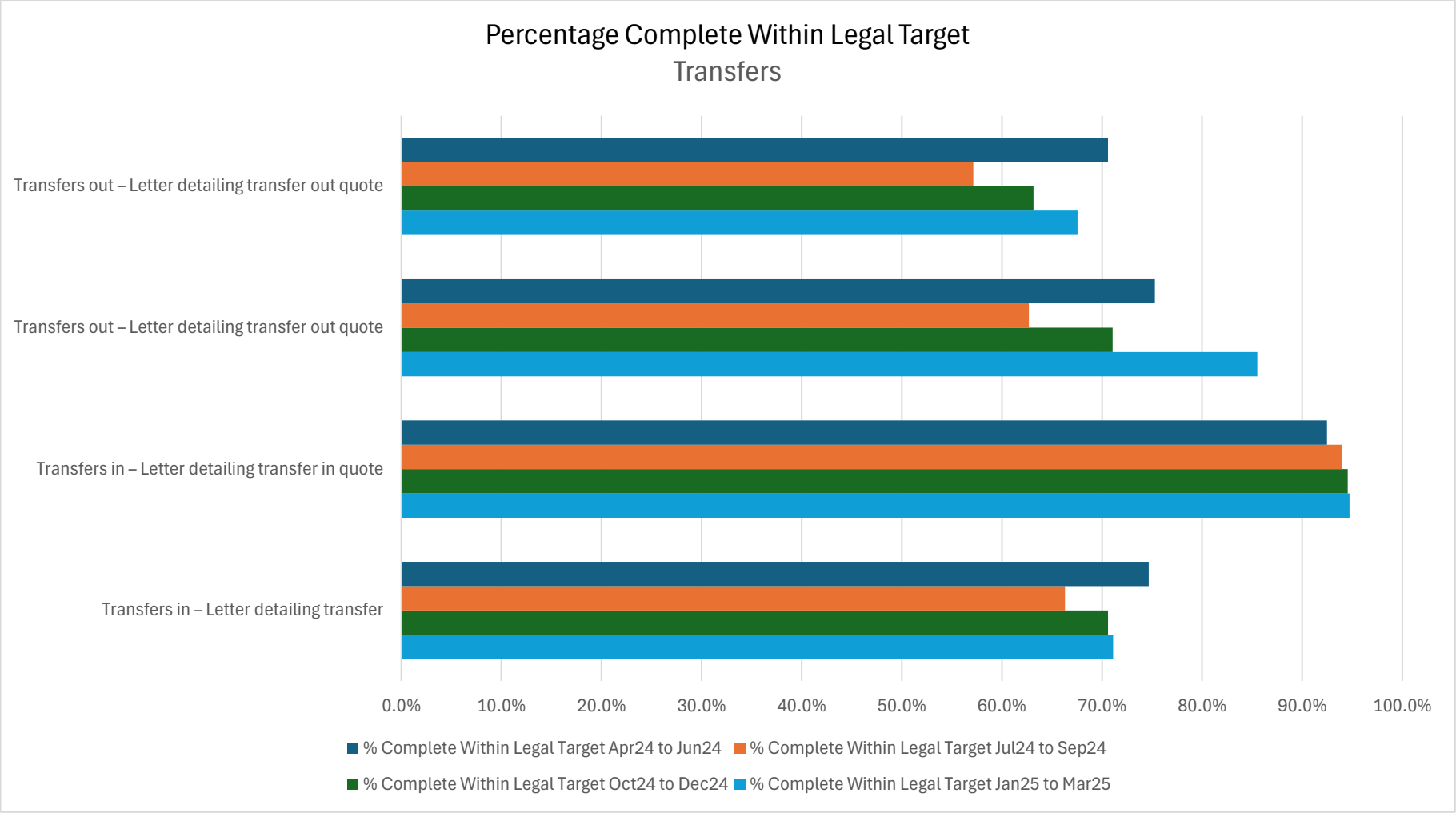
Appendix C – Pensions Dashboard update report (April)

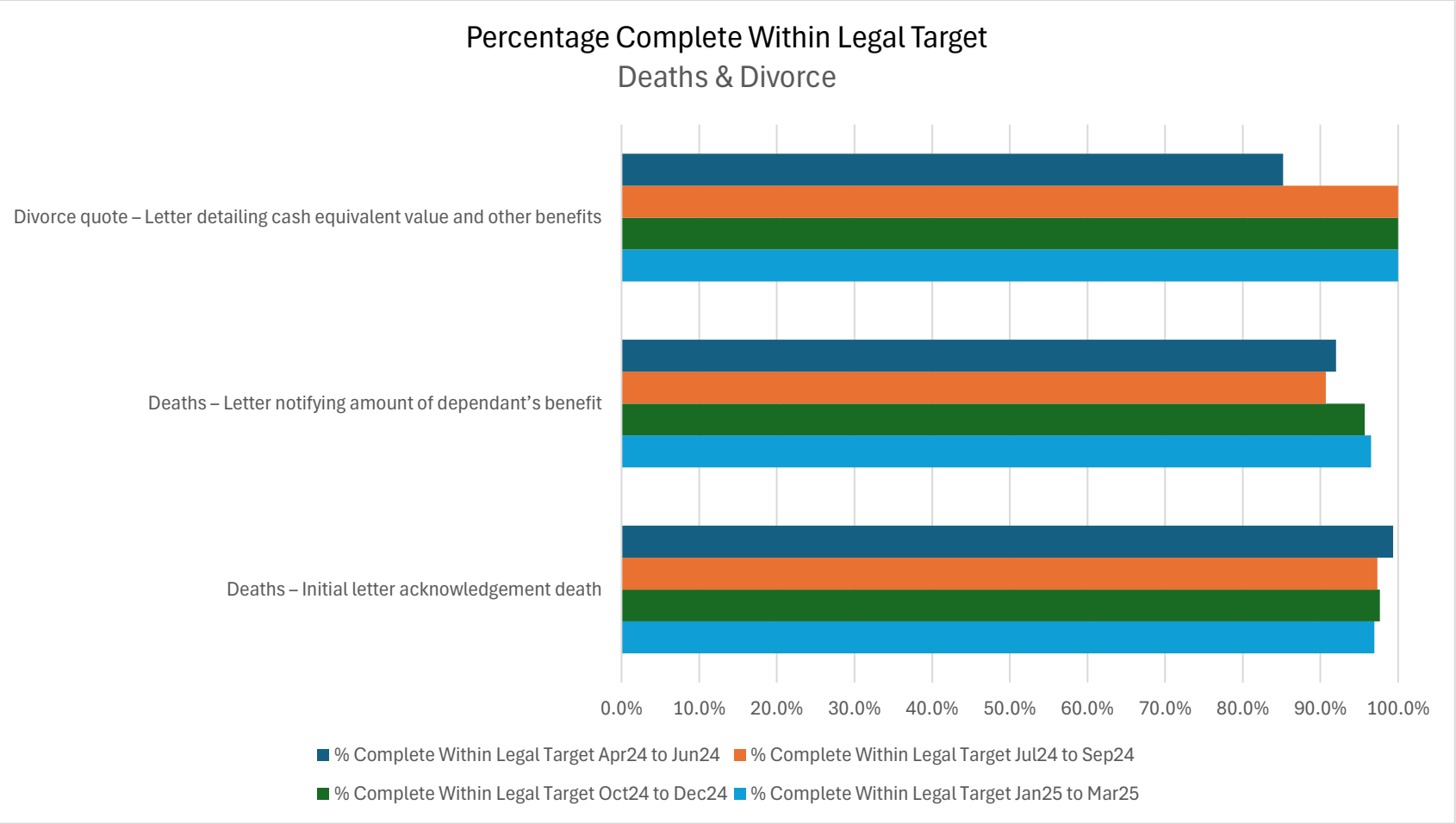
This page is intentionally left blank

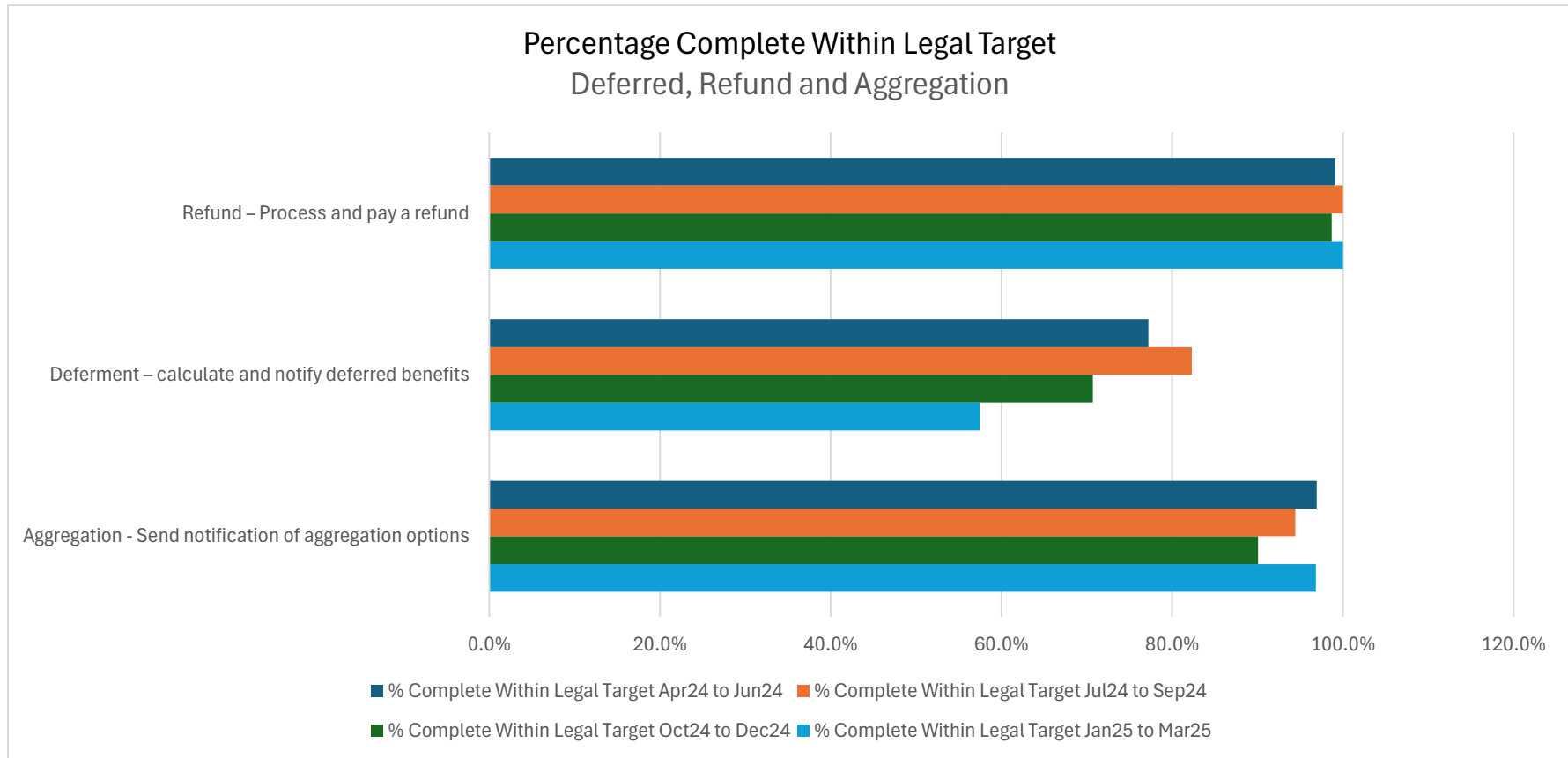
Appendix A KPI's April 2024 to March 2025

Category	Q1 Complete at End of Period Apr 24 to Jun24	Q2 Complete at End of Period Jul24 to Sep24	Q3 Complete at End of Period Oct24 to Dec24	Q4 Complete at End of Period Jan25 to Mar25	Legal target	Q1 Complete Within Legal Target Apr24 to Jun24	Q2 Complete Within Legal Target Jul24 to Sep24	Q3 Complete Within Legal Target Oct24 to Dec24	Q4 Complete Within Legal Target Jan25 to Mar25
Aggregation - Send notification of aggregation options	328	251	302	347	2 months	97.0%	94.4%	90.1%	96.8%
Deaths – Initial letter acknowledgement death	152	112	127	131	2 months	99.3%	97.3%	97.6%	96.9%
Deaths – Letter notifying amount of dependant's benefit	75	86	93	86	2 months	92.0%	90.7%	95.7%	96.5%
Deferment – calculate and notify deferred benefits	518	260	222	228	2 months	77.2%	82.3%	70.7%	57.5%
Deferred into pay – process and pay lump sum retirement grant	225	181	198	212	2 months	97.8%	97.8%	96.0%	95.8%
Divorce quote – Letter detailing cash equivalent value and other benefits	27	17	23	29	2 months	85.2%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Refund – Process and pay a refund	112	82	76	88	2 months	99.1%	100.0%	98.7%	100.0%
Retirements – Letter notifying actual retirement benefits active	109	200	116	116	2 months	100.0%	99.5%	100.0%	99.1%
Retirements – letter notifying actual retirement benefits deferred	255	266	196	286	2 months	93.7%	95.5%	96.9%	97.6%
Retirements – Letter notifying estimate of retirement benefits active	84	76	69	65	2 months	98.8%	100.0%	100.0%	98.5%
Retirements – letter notifying estimate of retirement benefits deferred	43	37	35	52	2 months	97.7%	100.0%	100.0%	98.1%
Retirements – process and pay lump sum retirement grant active	134	122	158	129	2 months	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Transfers in – Letter detailing transfer	75	89	85	90	2 months	74.7%	66.3%	70.6%	71.1%
Transfers in – Letter detailing transfer in quote	93	132	110	95	2 months	92.5%	93.9%	94.5%	94.7%
Transfers out – letter detailing transfer	85	67	76	69	2 months	75.3%	62.7%	71.1%	85.5%
Transfers out – Letter detailing transfer out quote	34	42	38	37	2 months	70.6%	57.1%	63.2%	67.6%
Grand Total	2349	2020	1924	2060					









This page is intentionally left blank

Pensions Administration & Investment Business Plan Update										
Project Name	Context	Actions	June Update Q1		September Update Q2		December Update Q3		March Update Q4	
Administration			Progress	Status	Progress	Status	Progress	Status	Progress	Status
Year-end 2023/2024	All records to be checked from postings. All employer forms to be reconciled to total of monthly postings	Data cleansing to be undertaken following last i-Connect submission for March 2024. Reconciliation forms and communication to employers to be issued February 2024. Forms reconciled to accounts. Project to completed by 30th June 2024.	Almost complete with a few employers submitting information late.	G - On Track	Now completed	Complete	Completed Q2	Complete	Completed Q2	Complete
Annual Benefit Statements (Active and Deferred)	All Annual Benefit Statements issued by 31 August	Project plan to be put in place by 31st March 2024. Statement preparation to commence following completion of year end processes.	ABS issued to deferred benefits in July and Active members 2nd week of August. 9 statements couldn't be produced for flexible retirements.	Complete	Now completed	Complete	Completed Q2	Complete	Completed Q2	Complete
Preparation of Pension Fund Annual Report	To produce annual report by statutory deadline of 1st December 2024.	Project plan to be put in place by March 2024. Review new guidance when available. This will be compulsory from 2025. Draft version available to be signed off by September 2024 pension committee.		G - On Track	Waiting for Council accounts to be signed off before Grant Thornton information can be submitted (to be published by 30/11/24).	G - On Track	Annual report is on the fund's website but we are still waiting for the Council's accounts to be signed off.	G - On Track	Completed Q3	Complete
TPR One Code of Practice outcome	To demonstrate compliance with any recommendations/regulation changes put in place	Review guidance when available.	Checklist now in place and being reviewed to be completed by 30th September.	G - On Track	Action plan to be presented to December Committee	G - On Track	Action list completed and taken to committee December	Complete	Completed Q3	Complete
SAB Good Governance Review Outcome	To demonstrate compliance with any recommendations/regulation changes put in place	Review guidance when available.	Still awaiting information from MHCLG -delayed due to General Election.	G - On Track	Waiting for further information when this is available	Y - On Hold	Some aspects of Good Governance are included in the Fit for the Future consultation. We await the outcome of this to see what gets pushed forward.	Ongoing	Ongoing and will carry forward into 25/26	Ongoing
McCloud Remedy	To implement the 1st October 2023 McCloud legislation and to ensure any guaranteed amounts are paid to protected members.	Ensure the system is configured to allow all calculations to perform the underpin calculation. All relevant documentation to be amended. Disclosure requirements to be met by 31st December 2023 due to the change in legislation. Rectification cases of past cases during the remedy period to be undertaken.	Went live 8th November 2023. For members in scope an indicator has been added so that the underpin check can be performed when benefits are calculated. Priority documentation updated for go live. Website updated. Pensioners notified by InTouch newsletter October 2023. Active and Deferred members were notified in December 2023. For past cases the underpin indicator and underpin check has been run, the team are working through these to identify any members who may require an adjustment to pension. The Home Office have issued guidance on the priority order for cases that should be worked through. Team to review work required for retrospective cases. Number of cases have been identified and resources will be allocated to this work following the review.	G - On Track	Operations team reviewing retrospective cases in order to plan and complete the work on these. Age 65 pay data being collected. LGA have update their McCloud guides. Some transfer cases are having to be calculated manually as developments in software have not yet caught up.	G - On Track	Retrospective cases will be reviewed following training in February. Reviewing follow up information from Heywood on Pension Increase. Age 65 pay data collected and work to populate this on records is being looked at. For records where pay has not been received, we will look to use pay recorded on remuneration data view. LGA have provided a spreadsheet for certain simple club transfers. Still waiting for information from system provider on how transfer in information is to be held. Part of system development on system transfers is being undertaken (over a 2 year period).	G - On Track	Retrospective cases still being reviewed and training received from Hymans. Awaiting feedback from NPOG on whether a consistent approach to conversion on retirement benefits can be agreed or whether funds will make their own decision on how to process. Advice required from Heywood on McCloud guide for retirements as information included in the guide is not clear or complete. Development on transfer calculations in the system is ongoing. Carry forward into 25/26. Confirmation that McCloud underpin information is included for 2025 ABS.	G - On Track
Employer Spreadsheet	Creation of a central spreadsheet of employers to track starters, leavers, and actuarial data.	Spreadsheet created by Mercer for use by the team.	In use from November 2023. The team are creating a central repository so that employers can be tracked more easily. The spreadsheet from Mercer lists employers, but needs to be reviewed so that details regarding contract end dates, bonds and convenience can be added, processes to be delivered in order to make sure reviews are in place.	G - On Track	Central location on SharePoint created with links to employer spreadsheets used by the team.	Complete	Completed Q2	Complete	Completed Q2	Complete
Review of Bonds (Employer guarantor)	For certain types of admitted bodies a Bond is required to provide an assurance that contributions can be collected in the event of an employer having financial difficulties	As part of the valuation process Bond values are reviewed. The administration team need to liaise with employers to ensure bonds are put in place and reviewed before they expire	Information regarding Employers with bonds is being captured on the central Employer list. Contact is being made with those employers where the Bond requires review. Majority of bonds are now in place with a small number still outstanding.	G - On Track	Work is progressing to ensure that outstanding bonds are in place.	G - On Track	Work is progressing to ensure that outstanding bonds are in place.	G - On Track	Work is progressing to ensure that outstanding bonds are in place but will be subject to change following the 2025 valuation.	G - On Track
Heywood Contract Performance Monitoring	Working with GMPF and Audit to produce a contract performance monitoring document for the hosted service.	Document to be finalised and presented to Heywood's	Document has been created and shared with Heywood, review meetings to be scheduled on a quarterly basis. Liaising with Council Audit team to ensure spreadsheet is fit for purpose.	G - On Track	Document in place and meetings with Heywood Client Manager are to be arranged going forward.	Complete	Completed Q2	Complete	Completed Q2	Complete
External Audit of Pension Fund	Annual requirement	Providing information required within the agreed timescales.	Meeting held with external Auditor to plan Audit work to be completed in 2024, this will include system audit. Audit work has been completed. Draft outcome report to be presented to September Pensions Committee.	G - On Track	Completed Q1	Complete	Completed Q1	Complete	Completed Q1	Complete
Production of Pension Savings Statements	Comply with HMRC regulations	Identify the members who have breached the annual allowance. Provide a pension saving statement by the 5th October 2024 deadline.	Work is now underway to produce statements. Flexible retirement statements to be produced manually.	G - On Track	Completed Q1	Complete	Completed Q1	Complete	Completed Q1	Complete
Pensions Increase 2024	To ensure pensioners and deferred are uprated with annual increase amount	Bulk process to update the system with the confirmed CPI increase on 8th April 2024.	Tested in February/March and Actual increase run in April.	Complete	Completed Q1	Complete	Completed Q1	Complete	Completed Q1	Complete
Pensions Dashboard Implementation	Implement in line with national guidelines by October 2026.	To procure an ISP provider in 2024.	Purchase of ISP complete. Procurement of data tools started. Work on AVC match-up has also started. Separate progress report will be presented to Board and Committee.	G - On Track	Tender process for Data Tools will hopefully go live 01/11/24. Work on the AVC match-up continues. Phase 1 connection has been scheduled for January 2025.	G - On Track	Implementation for the ISP kicks off 14/01/25 with team training the following week. The Data Tools contract is with Heywood to review and will then be sent to Legal for sign-off.	G - On Track	Phase 1 ISP implementation completed and phase 2 booked in with Heywood. Work to implement mortality screening underway and address tracing to follow.	G - On Track
Bulk Revaluation	Annual CARE uprating to be applied to active records	Bulk process to be run after year end postings are complete in May/June 2024	Completed.	Complete	Completed Q1	Complete	Completed Q1	Complete	Completed Q1	Complete
P60 to Pensioners	To produce a P60 for pensioner members by 31st May	Following year end 2023/24 payroll processes run P60 production in end March/April 2024.	Completed.	Complete	Completed Q1	Complete	Completed Q1	Complete	Completed Q1	Complete

Pensions Administration & Investment Business Plan Update										
Project Name	Context	Actions	June Update Q1		September Update Q2		December Update Q3		March Update Q4	
Implementation of Engage to replace my pensions online	The my pensions online portal is being phased out by Heywood and replaced with Engage, the platform should provide clearer information to scheme members regarding their pension and provide tools to help plan for retirement	The administration team will need to work with Heywood and internal IT teams in implement this change. Communications to scheme members to inform them of new look online portal with be required.	Project has now commenced and working with Heywood to implement Engage, project plan in place. Soft launch to pensioners with notification in the next InTouch. Will look to run a promotion during 2025 to those not registered on Engage.	G - On Track	Go live date 16/10/24.	Complete	Completed Q2	Complete	Completed Q2	Complete
Investment										
UK Stewardship Code	Stewardship is the responsible allocation, management and oversight of capital to create long-term value for clients and beneficiaries leading to sustainable benefits for the economy, the environment and society. The UK Stewardship Code 2020 comprises a set of 12 'apply and explain' Principles for asset owners. As part of the Fund's desire to demonstrate its good governance and stewardship of its assets, the Fund submitted its first report in October 2022. The Fund was successful in its submission and is now a signatory to the UK Stewardship Code. The Fund has received feedback from the FRC on its submission and the Fund will develop its submission following this feedback. The Fund will submit a report annually to the Financial Reporting Council ("FRC") to maintain its status as signatory to the Code. As part of the work on the Stewardship Code the Fund will review its approach to stewardship and engagement to ensure that it continues to meet the requirements of the Committee.	ESG monitoring is in place as part of business as usual. Resources have been allocated to review positions with Investment Managers at end of 2022 to address any points from the 2022 application. Lead Officer: Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager	An updated draft application will be presented to the Pensions Committee in September 2024 for submission in October 2024. Project progressing as planned	G - On Track	To be approved and sent off by 31/10/24.	G - On Track	Application submitted in October and awaiting results.	G - On Track	Application submitted and successful. Annual to be carried forward into 25/26	Complete
Triannual Valuation Results	Work with Actuary to prepare and consider the Actuarial valuation results. The next valuation date is the 31st March 2025 alongside the Fund's Funding Strategy Statement.	Regular update meetings are held with the Actuary. Communications will be issued to scheme employers in 2024/25 in respect of the valuation process. The Funding Strategy Statement has been updated as part of the 2022 valuation and will be reviewed and issued for consultation following the 2025 valuation. Lead Officer: Head of Pensions – LGPS Senior Officer	All action has been taken in respect of the March 2022 valuation and an indicative timeline of work is in place for the 2025 valuation. Agreed with Mercer to undertake an interim valuation to inform funding levels prior to the employer meetings and considerations to adjustments to fund policies.	G - On Track	Work is being carried out on the interim valuation. Catch-up call held with Mercer to discuss preliminary results.	G - On Track	Catch-up to be held with Mercer 22/01/25 to discuss the plan	G - On Track	Regular meetings with Mercer and draft plan in place. Carry forward to 25/26	G - On Track
Covenant Review	Work with Actuary to review Employer covenants on an annual basis to monitor risk to fund.	Meetings have been held with Actuary to discuss employers subject to review and the terms and reference of the reviews. Lead Officer: Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager	The covenant review for 2023/24 has been completed and no issues identified that require action. A separate covenant review will be undertaken for 24/25 as part of the tri-annual valuation work.	G - On Track	No actions that required follow-up.	Complete	Planning for next Covenant review will commence from April 2025	Complete		Complete
Climate Change Risk	The Fund issues an annual climate risk report and TCFD report as part of its commitment to net zero. In addition, the Fund supports these reports by undertaking Climate scenario analysis on a bi-annual basis to ensure that developments in this field are fed into ongoing analysis.	Climate Risk reports and TCFD reports have been commissioned with LGPS Central. Alternative Investment managers ESG policies and progress on Climate Risk monitoring are reviewed periodically with a view to establishing full portfolio monitoring. Lead Officer: Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager	The 2023 Climate Risk & TCFD Reports were presented to Pensions Committee in December 2023. The draft climate strategy will be presented to the September 2024 Pensions Committee.	G - On Track	Climate Strategy agreed at September Committee. Climate Risk & TCFD reports are being prepared.	G - On Track	Climate report was presented to the December Committee and updated Climate Stewardship Plan will go to the March Committee.	Ongoing	Climate Stewardship Plan went to March Committee and was agreed. SIM report to June Committee.	G - On Track
Biodiversity Risk	The Government is currently consulting on TNFD (Taskforce for Nature related Financial Disclosures). The Fund is monitoring the position and discussing potential data sources with investment managers and other Funds with a view to be able to report in a similar context to TCFD on climate.	Discuss the format of TNFD reports with LGPS Central to establish what can be accurately reported. Consider integration of Biodiversity risk into climate change strategy as whilst different risks there is an underlying fundamental link. Liaise with Investment Managers with a view to establishing full portfolio monitoring. Lead Officer: Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager	Continue to raise TNFD monitoring with Investment Managers pending full release of guidelines expected in 2024.	G - On Track	No guidance received yet on TNFD due to the current pensions review. Continue to raise with the Investment Managers.	Y - On Hold	Continue to raise with the Investment Managers. No details released as yet.	Y - On Hold	No change from previous update.	Y - On Hold
Investment Strategy Statement	The Fund sets a triannual investment strategy which was last reviewed in June 2023 and the Fund is currently working on transition plans to meet the new strategic asset allocation. The investment strategy review took place concurrently with the review of the Funding Strategy Statement in 2022/23. The outstanding actions now are implementing the agreed changes to the investment strategy. The implementation of the revised investment strategy will occur over a period to manage transition risks.	Reports on the Investment transition to meet the new ISS were presented to Pensions Committee in September 2023. The transition will take approx. 18 to 24 months to fully implement given some of the illiquid asset classes involved. A full timetable is in place and Pensions Committee will be updated on a quarterly basis of major changes. Lead Officer: Head of Pensions – LGPS Senior Officer	The Investment strategy was agreed in June 2023. Transition to Investment Grade Corporate Bonds was completed in October 2023. Quarterly updates provided to Pensions Committee. Due to be reviewed following the March 2025 valuation.	G - On Track	Made a commitment of £90m to private credit and £30m to private equity through LGPS Central. Committed £13m to ABRDN re residential property investment. Committee will be provided with quarterly updates.	G - On Track	Quarterly update taken to December Committee and will continue to be monitored quarterly pending the valuation results.	G - On Track	Quarterly update taken to March Committee and will continue to be monitored quarterly pending the valuation results.	G - On Track
Pooling	The Fund works directly with LGPS Central to ensure that appropriate products are available to meet future investment requirements and allow transition from legacy managers as investments mature. Following the General Election, the new Pensions Minister has instigated a pensions review with phase 1 including the Local Government Pension Scheme, in particular the pooling of investments. The recommendations to this will be know towards the end of 2024	The Fund Continues to work with LGPS Central to ensure that appropriate investment vehicles are available to allow the transfer of the Funds uncommitted assets. The transition of illiquid assets will continue to be reviewed based on maturity profiles and investment opportunities available. The Fund has responded to the consolation on moving pooling forward. Lead Officer: Head of Pensions – LGPS Senior Officer	The Fund continues to transition assets as opportunities arise. In progress, from a fund perspective, we consider 70% of the fund to have been pooled. The Fund continue to work with LGPS Central with a view to pooling legacy assets.	G - On Track	Currently working with LGP Central on concluding an advisory agreement in respect of the LGIM passive equity investment which will take our pooling figure to above 70%. The Fund continue to work with LGPS Central with a view to pooling legacy assets.	G - On Track	Fit for the Future consultation issued by the Government following the Mansion House speech. Final response is to be submitted by 16/01/25. Outcomes of the consultation are expected by 31/03/25.	G - On Track	Still awaiting the outcome of the Fit for the Future consultation.	G - On Track

Project Highlight Report

Pensions Board



Project Name:	Pensions Dashboard	Report Number:	004
Period	December 2024 to April 2025	Date Completed:	28/04/2025
Completed By:	Jake Glover Senior Pensions Project Officer		

TREND SINCE LAST REPORT	Green
CURRENT STATUS	Green
EXPECTED STATUS AT NEXT REVIEW	Green

Progress so far The following activities have taken place:	Planned work for next month and beyond Activities planned for May are:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ISP (Integrated Service Provider) has been procured and signed off by Legal. Implementation will commence January 2025 • Vicky, Pensions Admin Manager and Jake, Senior Pensions Project Officer to finalise documentation for the Member Data Tools procurement and instruct Procurement to upload these to Delta, the Council's online tender portal. • Risks, Issues and Decisions reviewed at November project catch-up. • Member Data Tools procurement exercise drawing to a close. Bids have been evaluated and chosen provider has been sent the contract award letter following no challenge from losing bidders. Heywood Pension Technologies are the winning provider. • Member Data Tools procurement exercise completed and the contract signed. Project kick-off call for mortality tracing was held 06/03/25. • ISP phase 1 implementation complete and UAT acceptance signed and returned 27/03/25. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mortality tracing implementation continues with a period of UAT due to complete by the end of April. Internal calls to discuss the processes involved. • Mortality tracing project due to complete by late May 2025. • Address tracing will be the next module to look at once the Mortality project is complete.

Slippage and Remedial Action

- There was a delay in commencing the Mortality tracing project due to a delay with the contract being signed off and the kick-off call being booked in. Contact was made with our Heywood CRM.

Key Risks and Issues

R/I	Detail	Rating	Open / Closed
R	Data quality is low, leading to poor matching criteria and members having to contact the fund to find their pension (rather than finding it directly through the dashboards)	Low	Open
R	Procurement of new tracing and mortality screening provider (gap in service as current provider current ends in September)	Very Low	Closed
R	ISP connection deadline not met	Low	Open
R	Having adequate resource to deal with any additional work created	Medium	Open

High Level Milestones

Action	Date Completed / Target Date	Status	Comments
Procure ISP	19/08/2024	Complete	ISP procured and approved.
Data Tools Procurement	February 2025	Complete	Provider chosen and contract to be signed
Implement ISP Phase 1	January 2025	Complete	Kick-off meeting booked in with Heywood
Mortality Tracing	May 2025	On Track	

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank