

Meeting: LPB Effectiveness Committee

Date: 19 May 2026

Agenda item 6: Targeted recruitment and awareness event for LPBs

Introduction

1. In their meeting on 4 March 2026, the committee reviewed their Operation of Local Pension Board guidance which is designed to assist scheme managers in operating and reviewing Local Pension Boards (LPBs) to deliver effective scrutiny, compliance and continuous improvement – the guidance included template role profiles and recruitment advert.
2. At the same meeting the committee also reviewed the discussions from the LPB Chairs forum where they had raised concerns over LPB recruitment.
3. Following these discussions the SAB secretariat asked the sector to share their recruitment issues for the committee to consider whether there was a need to hold a targeted recruitment and awareness event to help LPBs.
4. This paper sets out a summary of the responses received and the recommendations to the committee.
5. The LPB Effectiveness Committee is asked to determine whether to:
 - Approve the development of a targeted LPB recruitment and awareness event; and
 - Agree the proposed scope and audience for the event (subject to further detail being brought back to the Committee).

Key messages

- Responses were received from 14 Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs).
- Most respondents indicated a willingness to be contacted to discuss recruitment challenges in more detail, suggesting a high level of engagement and concern.
- While most LPBs are currently quorate, responses indicate that when vacancies do arise, they can take over 12 months to fill. This presents a resilience risk for LPBs where succession planning has not been embedded.

Current vacancies

6. Only one FRA reported current vacancies at the time of the poll:
 - Two vacancies, both for employee representative roles.

- Vacancies had been open for over 12 months, despite being advertised internally and externally.
7. This suggests that although vacancies may not be widespread at any single point in time, when they do arise, they can be prolonged and difficult to fill, particularly for employee roles.

Common Recruitment Challenges Identified

8. Across responses, several recurring issues emerged:

Difficulty Recruiting Employee Representatives

- Employee representative roles were consistently identified as the hardest to fill.
- FRAs reported limited success through open expressions of interest or intranet advertising.

Time Commitment and Complexity of the Role

- Several respondents highlighted that LPB roles are perceived as:
 - Highly technical
 - Time-consuming
 - Demanding to keep pace with legislative and scheme changes
- This perception can deter potential candidates who already hold substantive operational or managerial roles.

Limited Engagement from Certain Groups

- Challenges were noted in engaging:
 - Cabinet members or senior elected members (where applicable)
 - Active staff without prior pensions knowledge
- In some cases, boards resorted to retired members to achieve quoracy.

Narrow Recruitment Pools

- Some LPBs rely heavily on:
 - Trade union representatives
 - Existing internal staff
- While effective in some FRAs, this can limit diversity of representation and succession planning.

Successful Recruitment Approaches

9. Respondents identified several approaches that have been more effective:

- **Targeted, personal engagement**
 - Direct conversations with Area Managers or senior staff
 - Engagement with FBU Brigade Secretaries to encourage participation
- **Positioning the role as a development opportunity**
 - Emphasising learning, training provision, and professional growth
 - Framing LPB membership as governance and leadership experience
- **Broader engagement strategies**
 - Advertising across the whole service, not just via intranets
 - Actively engaging retired member associations for retired representative roles
 - Targeted outreach to on-call firefighters and volunteers

10. Despite these approaches, several FRAs noted that recruitment was still slow, taking 12–14 months in some cases to fully appoint board members.

Implications for a Targeted Recruitment and Awareness Event

11. The poll responses provide clear qualitative evidence that:

- Recruitment challenges are **widespread but uneven**, often becoming acute when vacancies arise.
- There is **limited understanding** among potential candidates of:
 - The purpose and value of LPBs
 - The support and training available
- Employee representative roles would benefit from **greater awareness and reassurance**.

12. A targeted recruitment and awareness event could therefore:

- Demystify the LPB role and its responsibilities
- Showcase available training, guidance, and peer support
- Share examples of good practice and successful recruitment approaches
- Encourage a broader and more diverse pool of potential board members

- Support succession planning rather than reactive recruitment
- Complement existing written guidance by providing practical insight, peer discussion, and reassurance to potential board members who may be deterred by the perceived complexity of the role.

Recommendation

13. It is recommended that the LPB Effectiveness Committee agrees in principle to the development of a targeted and proportionate recruitment and awareness event for Local Pension Boards, with a view to testing whether this improves understanding of LPB roles, supports succession planning, and reduces recruitment times, particularly for employee representative positions.