



Firefighters' Pensions England

Scheme Advisory Board

LPB EFFECTIVENESS COMMITTEE

ACTIONS AND AGREEMENTS

Tuesday 19 May 2026

MS Teams

PRESENT

Tony Curry (TC)	Chair
Alan Tranter (AT)	Independent member (LPB Experience)
Emma Scott (ES)	Human Resources Representative (Royal Berkshire)
James Clarkson (JC)	Practitioner Representative (West Yorkshire FRS)
Jill Swift (JS)	LGA – Board secretariat
Joanne Livingstone (JL)	SAB Chair
Paul Bennett (PB)	FRA/LPB Representative (West Midlands LPB)
Tara Atkins (TA)	LGA – Board secretariat
Suzanne Williams (SW)	LGA – Board secretariat (minutes)

APOLOGIES

Cllr Roger Phillips (RP)	Employer Representative
Claire Johnson (CJ)	LGA – Board secretariat

1. Introductions and apologies

- 1.1. Apologies were received from Cllr Roger Phillips.

2. Chair's welcome

- 2.1. Tony Curry (TC) opened the meeting and welcomed those present. He invited attendees to introduce themselves for the benefit of new member, Paul Bennett (PB). Board members briefly introduced themselves.
- 2.2. He moved to the first item of the [agenda](#).

3. Minutes and actions from last meeting.

- 3.1. Tara Atkins (TA) provided an update on the actions arising from the meeting held 4 March 2026.
- 3.2. *LGA to set dates for future LPB Effectiveness Committee meetings and circulate.* **COMPLETE**

3.3. *TA to update ToR to include wording regarding the frequency of meetings such as ‘the committee will meet at least three times per year’.*

3.3.1. TA advised that, although the terms of reference state that the committee will meet at least three times a year, it had been agreed both during and outside of the meeting to align the meeting cycle with the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB). This will enable the committee to provide updates at each Board meeting. **COMPLETE**

3.4. *TA to facilitate discussion with TC and JL regarding AT’s continued membership of the committee and the possibility of PB replacing him and report back to the committee.*

3.4.1. TA noted that Alan Tranter (AT) will remain part of the committee in the capacity of an independent member with Local Pension Board experience, recognising the value of his contribution. She also confirmed that PB has joined the committee, following AT’s recommendation, and welcomed him to the group. **COMPLETE**

3.5. *LGA to communicate practical value of LPB’s, particularly around governance, risk management and organisational benefit through wider engagement with scheme managers, including scheme manager training.*

3.5.1. TA confirmed that guidance documents relating to the operation of Local Pension Boards had been agreed, shared via the [monthly bulletin](#), and published on the website. **COMPLETE**

3.6. *LGA to report back to the committee regarding take-up of scheme manager training.*

3.6.1. TA stated that an update had been included in the Training Review, to be covered under item 6 of the agenda. **COMPLETE**

3.7. *LGA to strengthen EDI references in the LPB guidance.*

3.7.1. TA confirmed that Equity, Diversity and Inclusion considerations had been strengthened within the guidance prior to publication, in line with the SAB’s EDI policy. **COMPLETE**

3.8. *LGA to share feedback from the SAB on the deemed election guidance with the LPB Effectiveness Committee.*

3.8.1. TA advised conversation remained ongoing. **IN PROGRESS**

3.9. *Further consider the operation and interpretation of deemed elections, including any regulatory flexibility beyond the 12-month period, at the SAB.*

3.9.1. TA advised that the matter had been discussed during the March SAB meeting, and that it remained in progress. JL added that actuarial advice had been sought. **IN PROGRESS**

3.10. *TC to raise recruitment challenges affecting LPBs with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Executive to gather further insight. **AND** Committee to explore the feasibility of a targeted recruitment or awareness event, potentially hosted through the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), to promote the role and value of Local Pension Boards and encourage member engagement, including improving understanding of pensions*

3.10.1. TC explained that members of the FBU Executive Council, particularly those on the SAB, had discussed options for engagement, including the possibility of a targeted event or engagement day. TC noted that this approach would be difficult to deliver in practice, particularly due to challenges around identifying appropriate attendees and organising the logistics. Instead, it was agreed that a more effective approach would be to issue targeted communications through brigade secretary structures within each brigade.

3.10.2. TC also updated that he is compiling a list of representatives who sit on local pension boards to assess whether there is any disparity or variation in representation across areas. He reported that around half of responses had been received so far and initial findings suggest a decline in member representation on local pension boards. TC noted this was generally considered to be linked to the transition to the 2015 Scheme, with fewer live issues than at the time local pension boards were first established, alongside a loss of experienced representatives due to retirements.

3.10.3. TC confirmed that he would complete the review and share full findings in due course. He added that, if targeted communications are progressed, it would be helpful to collaborate on developing appropriate messaging that could be disseminated through existing structures, with support from the FBU. TC invited TA to provide any ideas to inform this work. It was agreed that the LGA would conduct a review of local pension board representation and report back on findings,

ACTION: LGA to conduct a review of local pension board representation, share the findings with the Committee, and consider any identified gaps or disparities to inform the development of targeted communications aimed at improving representation.

3.10.4. TA reported that feedback from the Chairs' Forum, including challenges relating to recruitment to Local Pension Boards, had informed a survey issued to Board Chairs. The results would be covered under a later agenda item (5).

COMPLETE

3.11. *LGA and JL to take forward discussion regarding alternative pension scheme options to support engagement among younger members to SAB.*

3.11.1. Discussions have taken place, with the issue to be brought to the June SAB meeting. COMPLETE

- 3.12. AT raised a matter arising regarding Councillor Roger Phillips (RP), noting that he is a long-standing and valued member of the Committee but has been unable to attend a number of recent meetings. AT highlighted the importance of employer representation at meetings to support engagement and communication on the effectiveness of local pension boards and asked whether there may be opportunities to improve attendance.
- 3.13. TC agreed with the importance of the point raised and enquired whether any discussions had taken place with RP regarding his availability.
- 3.14. TA confirmed that discussions are ongoing in relation to this matter, and the outcome is not yet confirmed, TA noted that this will help inform the position going forward and ensure that any next steps are considered appropriately.
- 3.15. Joanne Livingston (JL) added that the Cost Effectiveness Committee should also be taken into account, noting that although it meets less frequently, it forms part of the wider governance framework.
- 3.16. TA acknowledged this point and confirmed that representation and attendance across the various groups are being considered collectively.

ACTION: LGA to consider options for maintaining appropriate employer representation on the Committees, including reviewing potential alignment with SAB membership, and report back once discussions are concluded.

4. Finalisation of Terms of Reference and future meeting dates

- 4.1. TA confirmed that the [Terms of Reference](#) have now been finalised and published on the website following the agreed updates.
- 4.2. TA noted that AT will remain on the Committee as an independent representative, recognising his local pension board experience, and welcomed PB as the new local pension board representative. TA highlighted that this has enabled continuity by proactively filling the role.
- 4.3. TA advised that, as previously discussed, there may be a forthcoming vacancy in relation to the employer representative role, which will be taken forward as part of ongoing work.
- 4.4. TA emphasised the importance of maintaining appropriate and balanced representation on the Committee, particularly given its reinvigorated and formalised role within the SAB governance structure, and confirmed that this work is being progressed.

5. Targeted recruitment and awareness events for LPBs

- 5.1. TA introduced the item on a targeted recruitment and awareness event for Local Pension Boards (LPBs), referring to the relevant meeting [paper](#). She noted that feedback had been sought from LPB Chairs on the challenges they are experiencing. TA reported that 14 responses had been received, providing a useful cross-section of views. While only one authority reported a current vacancy at the time, the feedback indicated that where vacancies do arise, they can remain unfilled for extended periods.
- 5.2. AT highlighted the variation in recruitment approaches across authorities and the lack of consistency, noting the potential value in sharing best practice and strengthening engagement with scheme managers. AT suggested that improving how information is shared and communicated across the sector would support more effective recruitment.
- 5.3. TA confirmed that the issue had also been discussed at the recent LPB Chairs' Forum and noted that further vacancies had since been identified. TA emphasised the importance of continuing these discussions and exploring how recruitment and best practice messaging could be incorporated into future scheme manager training. TA also suggested that the role and format of the LPB Chairs' Forum could be reviewed, including whether a more structured approach or clearer feedback loop between the forum and the Committee would be beneficial.
- 5.4. AT and PB both expressed the view that recruitment responsibility should remain with scheme managers and LPBs, with the Committee supporting through guidance, sharing best practice and offering input where helpful. PB also highlighted challenges around visibility and engagement where LPB meetings are not open to observers.
- 5.5. TA and TC acknowledged the value of sharing successful approaches, including examples where potential members have been invited to observe LPB meetings prior to joining. TC noted that engagement through existing structures, such as brigade secretaries, may be an effective route, but raised concerns about the scale and practicality of delivering a centrally organised awareness event.
- 5.6. JL noted the importance of managing engagement carefully, including ensuring that potential recruits understand the role and expectations, and suggested that succession planning could form part of a structured approach to recruitment. JL also highlighted that challenges are not limited to member representatives, with some authorities experiencing difficulties recruiting employer representatives.
- 5.7. AT further raised the importance of considering engagement with retired members, noting that they represent a significant and experienced group who are often underutilised, although communication with this group can be limited.

- 5.8. In drawing the discussion together, TA concluded that there was not strong support for progressing a large-scale recruitment event at this stage. Instead, the Committee would focus on supporting LPBs and scheme managers through guidance, sharing best practice, and exploring how communication and engagement can be strengthened through existing channels and forums.

ACTION: Committee to share best practice outside of the existing guidance to support LPBs and scheme managers with recruitment and engagement, including options for improving visibility of LPB roles and encouraging potential candidates.

6. Training Review

- 6.1. TA introduced the [training review](#), explaining that the report provides an overview of both full and refresher training sessions delivered during the first quarter of the calendar year, as well as initial data from the revised two-day format introduced in May. TA noted that while the overall content remains largely unchanged, the structure has been adapted, with delivery now split across two days within the same week to support better engagement and focus from attendees
- 6.2. TA outlined that day one focuses on providing detail of how the schemes are structured and their historical development. This mirrors previous content but has been reframed in its delivery. Contributions are also included in the delivery from The Pensions Regulator (TPR) on governance, alongside updates from JL and TC on the work of the Committee and the SAB.
- 6.3. TA confirmed that day two focuses on current developments, including input from TPR on pensions dashboards and the Pensions Dashboards Programme, with Chris Curry (CC) attending to contribute. TA added that this day also includes updates on key “hot topics” delivered by the Fire pensions team.
- 6.4. TA reiterated that the changes relate primarily to the structure and timing of delivery rather than the substance of the content, with the intention of improving accessibility and engagement.
- 6.5. TA noted that attendance figures showed variation across sessions, reflecting ongoing fluctuations in demand between full and refresher training and highlighted the importance of regularly reviewing delivery patterns to ensure the right balance of sessions is maintained. TA reminded the Committee that previous adjustments had been made to reduce the number of full training sessions due to lower demand but indicated that this trend may now be shifting again.
- 6.6. Looking ahead, TA noted that upcoming sessions currently show 17 attendees registered for July and two for October, although the lower numbers for later sessions are likely due to the longer lead-in time.

6.7. TA confirmed that feedback is now consistently being collected across all training sessions to support continuous improvement, and that early feedback from the revised May sessions had been positive. However, TA highlighted a concern regarding engagement during virtual delivery, noting that participants did not have cameras on during sessions. TA advised that the team is therefore considering introducing clearer expectations around training etiquette, including camera use unless there is a valid reason, alongside incorporating more interactive elements to encourage participation.

6.8. AT emphasised the importance of developing a clearer understanding of training needs across Local Pension Boards, suggesting that a more structured approach to gathering this information would enable better planning and support assurance that members have the required knowledge and capability. AT noted that this would also provide confidence to the SAB regarding the effectiveness of training provision and governance standards.

6.9. TA agreed with this point and suggested that there may be value in developing a tailored Training Needs Analysis (TNA) template specifically for Local Pension Boards. TA noted that while a broader TNA framework exists within the wider training programme, a more focused approach for LPBs could support consistency in data collection and help align training provision with identified needs. TA indicated that this could be introduced as part of the annual planning cycle to inform future training delivery.

ACTION: LGA to develop a tailored Training Needs Analysis (TNA) template for Local Pension Boards to support consistent identification of training requirements and inform future training planning.

6.10. James Clarkson (JC) queried expectations around refresher training and whether there should be clearer direction or stronger encouragement for attendance. TA explained that refresher training is designed both to reinforce core responsibilities and to provide updates on current issues but sits alongside other forms of engagement such as bulletins and coffee mornings. TA indicated that attendance expectations would need to be considered within that broader context, noting that the value of regular attendance would depend on the extent of changes in the sector at any given time.

6.11. JL suggested that it may be helpful to introduce indicative guidance on expected levels of ongoing training, for example an annual commitment, to support both recruitment and continued development of members. JL also noted that training delivered within Local Pension Board meetings could be recognised as part of overall development activity, which may reduce the perceived burden on members.

ACTION: LGA to develop guidance on expected levels of ongoing training for LPB members, including indicative annual training commitments and

recognition of training undertaken within board meetings as part of overall development.

6.12. AT reinforced the importance of training from a governance perspective, noting that member capability should be considered as part of Local Pension Board risk management and assurance processes. AT highlighted that insufficient training could represent a risk to effective governance and should therefore be reflected appropriately within risk registers.

6.13. TA acknowledged these points and suggested that there is scope to strengthen the approach to training through improved data collection, clearer expectations, and enhanced guidance. TA noted that existing resources, including The Pensions Regulator's requirements and toolkit, provide a baseline standard, but that additional sector-specific guidance could help LPBs better understand expectations and implement effective training strategies.

ACTION: LGA to consider how LPB member training and capability can be incorporated into governance frameworks, including reflection within risk registers.

7. LPB Chairs forum update

7.1. TA introduced the [update](#) from the Local Pension Board (LPB) Chairs' Forum, noting that she would not cover it in detail given that more recent discussions had already been referenced earlier in the meeting. TA explained that the report reflects themes raised prior to the most recent forum, with the latest meeting largely reinforcing those same issues.

7.2. TA reported that a consistent theme across Chairs' discussions continues to be challenges relating to Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) cases, particularly in the context of the Sargeant and Matthews remedies. TA noted that concerns had also been raised in relevant areas regarding the West Yorkshire Pension Fund Oversight and Engagement Board and highlighted the importance of ensuring that LPBs are sighted on relevant developments.

7.3. TA reminded the Committee that regular updates are issued to Scheme Managers and emphasised the expectation that these updates should be shared appropriately with LPBs to support visibility and awareness.

7.4. TA referred to a specific issue raised regarding the contribution structure and the impact of London Weighting on firefighters. However, TA advised that subsequent correspondence from the relevant pensions contact indicated that this issue had not been raised as part of the formal consultation process. TA noted that, while the issue has now been flagged separately, meaningful consideration would require further information and supporting data before it could be progressed through the Committee and, if appropriate, to the SAB.

- 7.5. TA outlined a number of key themes emerging for consideration by the Committee. These included supporting and prioritising member self-service, which aligns with the SAB's communications strategy work programme. TA referenced recent engagement with software providers and confirmed that follow-up communications had been issued to LPBs. TA also highlighted the need to continue strengthening administration performance and scrutiny arrangements, improving visibility and communication, and considering policy-related concerns where they arise.
- 7.6. TA advised that further work is required to gather evidence, particularly in relation to the London-specific issue, and confirmed that this would be progressed with Claire Johnson (CJ) outside of the meeting before returning to the Committee if appropriate.
- 7.7. TC acknowledged the update and noted that he had also been made aware of concerns raised by the London LPB Chair, adding that he expects to attend a future meeting with the London Regional Committee to discuss these matters further.
- 7.8. AT suggested that the Committee should consider introducing an annual audit or review process for LPBs. AT emphasised that this should not be punitive but instead aimed at improving understanding of how effectively boards are operating, including areas such as responsiveness, timeliness, and compliance with statutory requirements. AT noted that greater visibility of performance would enable the Committee to better target its support and improve overall effectiveness.
- 7.9. TA sought clarification on whether AT's proposal was focused on gathering data to inform discussions or whether it extended to a more structured peer review or support model. TA referenced existing approaches within the LGPS, including peer support arrangements, and highlighted the need for a staged and proportionate approach if such a model were to be considered.
- 7.10. AT confirmed that his primary intention was to establish a clearer evidence base through data collection, recognising that Local Pension Boards operate at varying levels of maturity. AT emphasised that understanding these differences would help the Committee identify where support is most needed and improve outcomes across the sector.
- ACTION:** LGA to explore options for gathering consistent data from LPBs on performance and effectiveness, including consideration of an annual return or audit-style approach to inform Committee understanding and support.
- 7.11. JL queried whether similar information is already being collected through The Pensions Regulator (TPR) survey on governance and administration. JL suggested that, where data is already being gathered, efforts should be made to avoid duplication and instead seek access to that information.

7.12. TA acknowledged this point and confirmed that engagement with TPR would be undertaken to better understand their current approach to data collection, including the frequency and scope of surveys, and to explore whether relevant data could be shared. TA also noted that, as part of wider work on data and reporting to SAB, consideration is being given to what information is most useful to collect and how it will be utilised. TA emphasised the importance of clearly demonstrating the value of any data requests to encourage meaningful responses from Local Pension Boards.

7.13. JC reflected on his experience of completing the TPR survey, noting that the timescales for responses can be challenging given governance cycles and resource constraints. JC also highlighted that limited feedback is typically received following submission, which may reduce perceived value.

7.14. JL reiterated that, where TPR is already collecting relevant data, steps should be taken to align rather than duplicate requests and suggested that SAB may wish to engage further with TPR on this point.

7.15. TA agreed and confirmed that this would be taken forward as part of ongoing discussions with TPR and wider data considerations.

ACTION: LGA to engage with The Pensions Regulator (TPR) to understand current arrangements for governance and administration surveys, including frequency and scope, and to explore opportunities to utilise existing data to support Committee oversight.

8. AOB

8.1. There were no AOB items raised.

8.2. TC thanked members for their contributions.

8.3. TC confirmed that the next meeting will take place on Tuesday 14 July at 10:00 and invited any apologies. JL and PB provided their apologies in advance due to prior commitments.

TC closed the meeting at 14:20.

LPB EFFECTIVENESS COMMITTEE: ACTION SUMMARY

Date	Action	Comments	Priority	Owner
04/03/2026	LGA to share feedback from the SAB on the deemed election guidance with the LPB Effectiveness Committee.	Ongoing	High	CJ
04/03/2026	Further consider the operation and interpretation of deemed elections, including any regulatory flexibility beyond the 12 month period, at the SAB.	Ongoing	High	CJ
19/05/2026	LGA to conduct a review of local pension board representation, share the findings with the Committee, and consider any identified gaps or disparities to inform the development of targeted communications aimed at improving representation.		High	TA, SW
19/05/2026	LGA to consider options for maintaining appropriate employer representation on the Committees, including reviewing potential alignment with SAB membership, and report back once discussions are concluded.		Medium	TA
19/05/2026	Committee to share best practice outside of the existing guidance to support LPBs and scheme managers with recruitment and engagement, including options for improving visibility of LPB roles and encouraging potential candidates.		Low	TA
19/05/2026	LGA to develop a tailored Training Needs Analysis (TNA) template for Local Pension Boards to support consistent identification of training requirements and inform future training planning.		Medium	TA
19/05/2026	LGA to develop guidance on expected levels of ongoing training for LPB members, including indicative annual training commitments and recognition of training undertaken within board meetings as part of overall development.		Medium	TA

19/05/2026	LGA to consider how LPB member training and capability can be incorporated into governance frameworks, including reflection within risk registers.		Medium	TA
19/05/2026	LGA to explore options for gathering consistent data from LPBs on performance and effectiveness, including consideration of an annual return or audit-style approach to inform Committee understanding and support.		Medium	TA
19/05/2026	LGA to engage with The Pensions Regulator (TPR) to understand current arrangements for governance and administration surveys, including frequency and scope, and to explore opportunities to utilise existing data to support Committee oversight.		Medium	TA