

Royal Borough of Kingston Pension Fund

Governance Compliance Statement

(Approved Pensions Panel - 21 September 2022)



Pension Fund Governance Compliance Statement

Introduction

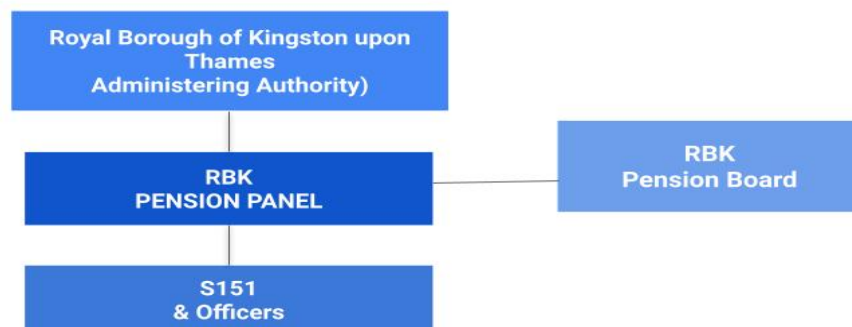
Regulation 55(1) of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (SI2014-1146) requires the Administering Authority (Royal Borough of Kingston) to maintain a statement, which assesses the pension fund governance arrangements against guidance from the Secretary of State, and to make revisions to the statement following a material change in the arrangements:

- Part 1 of this statement relates to the arrangements for pension fund administration.
- Part 2 relates to the arrangements for the Local Pension Board, a stand-alone body.

By producing such a statement the Administering Authority is fully compliant with the legislation from the Secretary of State.

Governance Framework

Royal Borough of Kingston (“the Council”) is the Administering Authority for Royal Borough of Kingston Pension Fund. The Council has delegated responsibility for the management and administration of the Pension fund to the Pension Fund Panel which is assisted by the Pension Board. The governance framework for the Fund is set out in the chart below:



The Pension Board has been established under regulation 106 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013. The purpose of the Board is to assist the Administering Authority in its role as a scheme manager of the Scheme. Such assistance is to:

- secure compliance with the Regulations, any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the Scheme, and requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator in relation to the Scheme and;

- to ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Scheme.

Governance Compliance - Pension Fund Panel

In accordance with Statutory Guidance, the following table sets out the extent to which the Royal Borough of Kingston Pension Fund is compliant with the statutory guidance.

Requirement	Compliance	Comment
Structure		
The management of the administration of benefits and strategic management of fund assets clearly rests with the main committee established by the appointing council.	Compliant	The Council Constitution clearly sets out that responsibility for the management of the Pension Fund which is discharged through a formal decision-making Panel: The RBK Pension Fund Panel. The Panel also have a separate governance working document which contains great details on the roles and responsibilities of the Panel
Representatives of participating LGPS employers, and scheme members (including pensioner and deferred members) are members of either the main or secondary committee established to underpin the work of the main committee.	Compliant	The Panel approved representatives of both employers and scheme members to be members of the Pension Panel
Where a secondary committee or panel has been established, the structure ensures effective communication across both levels.	Compliant	The Council does not have a secondary Committee or panel
Where a secondary Panel or panel has been established, at least one seat on the main Panel is allocated for a member from the secondary Panel or panel.	Compliant	The Council does not have a secondary committee or panel
Representation		
All key stakeholders are afforded the opportunity to be represented within the main or secondary Panel structure. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employing authorities (e.g. scheme employers), • scheme members (including deferred and pensioner 	Compliant	The Panel approved representatives of both employers and scheme members to be members of the Pension Panel. The Panel has appointed an independent professional observer and has appointed

<p>scheme members),</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> independent professional observers, expert advisors (on an ad-hoc basis). 		expert advisors who can attend Panel meetings when required.
Where lay members sit on a main or secondary Panel, they are treated equally in terms of access to papers and meetings, training and are given full opportunity to contribute to the decision making process, with or without voting rights.	Compliant	All members are treated equally regarding access to papers, meetings and training. They are given full opportunity and encouragement to contribute to the decision making process.
That committee or panel members are made fully aware of the status, role and function they are required to perform on either a main or secondary Panel.	Compliant	Members receive induction training and further training to enable them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. An annual training plan ensures that any knowledge and skill gaps are filled.
Voting		
The policy of individual administering authorities on voting rights is clear and transparent, including the justification for not extending voting rights to each body or group represented on main LGPS committees.	Compliant	The policy on voting rights is clear and transparent. All elected members and stakeholder representatives on the Pension Fund Panel have equal voting rights.
Training / Facility Time / Expenses		
In relation to the way in which statutory and related decisions are taken by the administering authority, there is a clear policy on training, facility time and reimbursement of expenses in respect of members involved in the decision-making process.	Compliant	The Panel and the Board have adopted the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework and an annual training plan for each body exists. Members have equal access to training and reimbursement of expenses to enable them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.
Where such a policy exists, it applies equally to all members of Panels, sub-committees, advisory panels or any other form of secondary forum.	Compliant	The Fund's Training Policy applies equally to all members of the Pension Fund Panel and Pension Board

Meetings (Frequency / Quorum)		
An administering authority's main committee or panels meet at least quarterly.	Compliant	The Pension Fund Panel meets with a quorum at quarterly intervals as required by its terms of reference.
An administering authority's secondary committee or panel meet at least twice a year and is synchronised with the dates when the main Panel sits.	Compliant	The Council does not have a secondary committee I
An administering authority who do not include lay members in their formal governance arrangements, provide a forum outside of those arrangements by which the interests of key stakeholders can be represented.	Compliant	There are stakeholder representatives on the Panel. Consultation with key stakeholders takes place
Access		
Subject to any rules in the Council's constitution, all members of main and secondary committees or panels have equal access to committee papers, documents and advice that falls to be considered at meetings of the main committee.	Compliant	All members have equal access to papers, documents and advice.
Scope		
That administering authorities have taken steps to bring wider scheme issues within the scope of their governance arrangements.	Compliant	The Pension Panel's terms of reference enable it to consider any matter relevant to the Pension Fund. Wider scheme issues are evident in policy statements
Publicity		
Administering authorities have published details of their governance arrangements in such a way that stakeholders with an interest in the way in which the scheme is governed can express an interest in wanting to be part of those arrangements.	Compliant	The Governance Policy and Communications Policy are published on the Council's website along with details of planned meetings of the Pension Fund Panel that are open to stakeholders

Governance Compliance - Pension Board

Requirement	Compliance	Comment
Functions of the Board		
The terms should set out the function of the Board i.e. to assist the Administering Authority to secure compliance and ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the LGPS.	Compliant	This is clearly set out in the Pension Board Terms of Reference within the Council's Constitution. The Board also has a separate governance working document which contains great details on the roles and responsibilities of the Panel
Membership		
The terms should include the number of each category of Board member (including other representatives), the appointment and selection process, term of office and procedures for termination of office.	Compliant	<p>The Pension Board consists of 6 members and is constituted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 3 Scheme employer representatives ● 3 scheme member representatives <p>Vacancies are publicised. Officers from the Administering Authority assess each candidate's statement against the Person Specification and form a shortlist of suitable candidates. If there are more than 3 suitable candidates for each vacancy then a ballot will be held. Representatives serve for a fixed two year term which can be extended subject to re-nomination. Termination occurs automatically at the expiry of a term. Other than ceasing to be eligible a Board member may only be removed from office during a term by the unanimous agreement of all of the other Board members. The removal of the independent member requires the consent of the Scheme Manager.</p>

Code of Conduct		
The terms should refer to the requirement for the Local Pension Board to have a code of conduct for its members and that members of the Board should abide by the code	Compliant	Board members are subject to the code of conduct for Board members.
Voting Rights		
The terms should set out that employer and member representatives of the Board have equal voting rights; indicate where the Chair is from either the employer or member representatives whether the Chair has a casting vote; and note that other member do not have voting rights on the Board	Compliant	The Board consists of 6 voting members, (3 employer and 3 scheme member representatives) and an independent Chair who is not entitled to vote. Other members do not have voting rights on the Board.
Conflicts of Interest		
The terms should refer to the requirement for the Board to always act within the terms of reference. The Local Pension Board should have a conflicts policy for its members and that members should abide by the policy and provide information that the Administering Authority may reasonably require from time to time to ensure that members do not have a conflict of interest.	Compliant	The terms provides the purpose, scope and administrative procedures for the Board and requires the Board at all times to act in a reasonable manner in the conduct of its purpose and abide by the conflicts policy and code of conduct. All members of the Board must declare on appointment and at any such time as their circumstances change, any potential conflict of interest arising as a result of their position on the Board.
Appointment of a Chair / Vice Chair		
The terms should specify whether the Board is to have a chair and/or vice-chair and if so specify the roles, including administrative and leadership responsibilities, and how they are appointed.	Compliant	The terms cover the appointment of an independent chair and a vice chair and their responsibilities
Role of Advisers		
The terms should set out the role of	Compliant	The Board may be supported

<p>professional advisers, or other advisors to the Board and the process for their appointment and agreeing their fees. In addition the process for the Board accessing existing advisors to the Administering Authority should also be set out.</p>		<p>through the appointment of advisers and can consult with such advisers to the Board and on such terms as it shall see fit within the budget for the Board that is met from the Fund. The Chair is required to notify the Administering Authority of any proposed use of the existing advisors to the Pensions Panel or of the intention to consult with other advisers.</p>
<p>Role of Officers</p>		
<p>The terms should set out the role of officers of the Administering Authority to the Board, for example in the provision of secretariat services to the Board or providing pension fund information to the Board.</p>	<p>Compliant</p>	<p>The role of officers is to provide support to the Board. This support includes finance, pension administration and secretarial support.</p>
<p>Administration of meetings including data protection</p>		
<p>The terms should include the notice period of Board meetings, the circulation of papers in advance of meetings, the decision making process, recording minutes of meetings, a procedure for dealing with urgent items of business and the publication of information.</p>	<p>Compliant</p>	<p>The Board meets a minimum 4 times each year. The chair of the Board with the consent of the Board membership may call additional meetings. The agenda notice and supporting papers must be issued at least 5 clear working days in advance of a meeting except in the case of matters of urgency. Any urgent items of business must be agreed by the Chair and be of such matter that cannot wait until the next ordinary meeting. The Board seeks to reach consensus and decisions are put to a vote when it cannot be reached. Draft minutes of each meeting must be circulated to all Board members within 10 working days after the meeting. Draft minutes are then subject to formal agreement by the Board at their next meeting. The minutes may, with the agreement of the Board, be edited to exclude items on the</p>

		grounds that they would either involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 or it being confidential for the purposes of Section 100A(2) of that Act and/or they represent data covered by the Data Protection Act 1998.
Quorum		
The terms should specify a quorum for meetings and in particular whether the quorum should include a minimum number of employer and member representatives.	Compliant	A meeting is only quorate when at least one employer member representative and one employer representative are present. Substitute members are included within the quorum. A meeting that becomes inquorate may continue but any decisions will be non-binding.
Attendance Requirements		
The terms should specify the requirements for attending meetings and the consequences of continued failure to attend Board meetings.	Compliant	Representatives should endeavour to attend all meetings and are required to attend at least 2 out of 4 meetings each year. Board membership may be terminated prior to the end of the term of office due to a Board member no longer being able to demonstrate their capacity to attend and prepare for meetings or to participate in required training.
Role of Substitutes		
The terms should specify whether members are allowed to send substitutes to meetings where they are unable to attend themselves. Training requirements should also be considered where substitutes are permitted.	Compliant	Substitutes can be appointed by Member representatives. Where appointed, substitutes should be named and must undertake the same training as full members. Substitutes are allowed to attend on behalf of absent representatives if sufficient notice is given.
Creation of Working Groups / Sub-Panels		

The terms should specify whether the Board has the power to set up working groups or sub-Panels	Compliant	The Board may establish sub-Panels.
Allowances / Expenses		
The terms should specify the policy in relation to the payment of allowances and expenses to Board members.	Compliant	The Administering Authority does not pay allowances for Board members. Expenses are paid to Board members in line with the Administering Authority's policy on expenses.
Budget		
The terms should set out a process for the Board to have access to a budget for specified purposes.	Compliant	The Board is to be provided with adequate resources to fulfil its role set out in the terms. The budget is met from the Fund and determined by the Executive Director, Corporate & Communities
Knowledge & Understanding		
The terms should refer to the requirement for the Board to have a policy and framework to meet the knowledge and understanding requirements of the 2004 Act.	Compliant	The Board has adopted the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework and has an annual training plan for the Board. The Fund's Training Policy covers Board members.
Reporting		
The terms should include arrangements for the reporting of information to the Administering Authority including direct reporting arrangements where the Board has material concern. In addition the methods used to communicate to scheme members and employers should be included.	Compliant	<p>The Board is required to report its requests, recommendations or concerns to the Pension Panel.</p> <p>The Board should report any concerns over a decision made by the Pension Fund Panel to the Panel subject to the agreement of at least 50% of voting Board members provided that all voting members are present. If not all voting members are present then the agreement should be of all voting members who are present, where the meeting remains quorate.</p>

		<p>Where the Board is satisfied that there has been a breach of regulation which has been reported to the Panel and has not been rectified within a for a reasonable period of time it is under an obligation to escalate the breach. The appropriate internal route for escalation is to the Monitoring Officer and / or the Section 151 Officer.</p> <p>The Board may report concerns to the LGPS Scheme Advisory Board for consideration subsequent to, but not instead of, using the appropriate internal route for escalation. Board members are also subject to requirements to report breaches of law under the Act and the Code [and the whistleblowing provisions set out in the Administering Authority's whistleblowing policy].</p> <p>Where the Board is not satisfied with the response received it may request that a notice of its concern be placed on the website and in the Fund's annual report.</p> <p>Board agendas and minutes and training and attendance logs may be published using the following means: on the Fund's website, as part of the Fund's own annual report; as part of the Governance Compliance Statement.</p>
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