

Northamptonshire Firefighters' Pension Scheme Local Pension Board



Terms of Reference

(Reviewed September 2025)

Background

The Public Services Pensions Act 2013 requires all Public Service Pension Scheme to establish a Local Pension Board. In the case of the Firefighters' Pensions Scheme, the role of the Board is to assist the Authority (Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority) and the Scheme Manager (Currently the Chief Fire Officer on behalf of the Authority):

- to secure compliance with:
 - the relevant regulations
 - any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the Scheme (and any Connected Scheme); and
 - the requirements imposed by the Regulator in relation to the Scheme (and any Connected Scheme), and
- to ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Scheme (and any Connected Scheme).

Role and Remit

The Local Pension Board is expected to complement and enhance the Authority's existing arrangements for managing the scheme. It does not replace the existing arrangements, and it is not a decision making body. Rather, it is designed to act as a critical friend to the Authority and of the Scheme Manager.

The Local Pension Board assists the Authority and Scheme Manager to administer the Pension Scheme effectively and efficiently and in line with relevant laws and regulations. The Board does this by reviewing adopted policies and practices, checking them against the applicable regulations, and comparing them to best practice elsewhere.

This is a slightly different role compared to the (separate) Board charged with overseeing the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) arrangements, as the Firefighters' Pension Scheme is an unfunded scheme with no investment aspect.

Membership

The Board is made up of three Employer Representatives, three Employee representatives, a representative for the West Yorkshire Pension Fund and an administrative assistant.

The term of appointment for all members is four years or until qualification for membership ceases.

Employer and Employee Representatives should be asked to assign authorised substitutes to deputise where possible.

The Chair and Vice Chair are reviewed annually and voted in by other members of the board.

The list of current members will be maintained by the administrator and shared as part of the agenda pack to ensure there is clarity at each meeting in terms of representation and quorum.

Voting

Only Employer and Employee Representatives shall have the right to vote in meetings. The independent Chair shall not have the right to vote except in the advent of a tie, in which case the Chair will have the deciding vote.

Frequency of Meetings

The Local Pension Board shall meet four times a year. The date, hour and place of meetings shall be fixed by the Board. The Chair may call additional meetings if necessary.

Quorum

Quorum shall be four Local Pension Board Members, provided that the employer and member sides are both represented.

No business requiring a formal resolution shall be transacted at any meeting of the Local Pension Board unless the meeting is quorate. However, general updates and oversight can still continue at a non-quorate meeting if deemed appropriate by the Chair. If it arises during the course of a meeting that a quorum is no longer present, the Chair shall either suspend business until a quorum is re-established or declare the meeting at an end and arrange for the completion of the agenda at the next meeting or at a special meeting. Substitutes shall be permitted.

Training and Knowledge of Members

Board members must:

- Be conversant with the scheme rules – meaning they should have a working knowledge of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) regulations.
- Understand governance and administration policies – including those currently in force within their administering authority.
- Have knowledge of pension law and related legislation – to a degree appropriate for their role and responsibilities.

These requirements are personal to each board member, meaning each individual must meet the standards rather than relying on collective board knowledge.

Members may not be permitted to take part in meetings of the Local Pension Board unless they have complied with any training requirements for Board members as set out in the Public Services Pensions Act.

Code of Conduct and Conflicts Policy

The Scheme Manager is required to prepare and approve a code of conduct for the Board to adopt. This code has to set out the standards of behaviour expected of members, incorporating the 'Seven Principles of Public Life' (known as the Nolan Principles).

The Board agrees to adopt the Fire Service Standard Code of Ethics and will be made aware if this

is changed by the Service or nationally.

It is not anticipated that significant conflicts of interest will arise, particularly as the Firefighters' Pension Scheme has no investment aspect. However, officers will take steps to identify, monitor and manage conflicts in accordance with ethical practice.

Reporting Breaches of the Law to the Pensions Regulator Policy

In accordance with section 70 of the Pensions Act 2004, certain individuals must report to the Pensions Regulator as soon as reasonably practicable where that individual has reasonable cause to believe that:

- a duty which is relevant to the administration of the LGPS, and is imposed by or by virtue of an enactment or rule of law, has not been or is not being complied with; and
- the failure to comply is likely to be of material significance to the Regulator in the exercise of any its functions.

This obligation directly applies to each individual who is a member of the Local Pension Board. The Local Pension Board must therefore have effective arrangements in place to meet its duty to report breaches of law.

 At its meeting in December 2015, the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Local Pension Board was informed that, in line with the Pensions Regulator's Code of Practice number 14 (Governance and administration of public service pension schemes), a policy had been developed which set out the mechanism for reporting breaches of the law. The policy ensures that those with a responsibility to report breaches of the law are able to meet their legal obligations, by analysing situations effectively in order to make an informed decision on whether a breach has been made.

https://cmis.northamptonshire.gov.uk/cmis5live/Committees/tabid/110/ctl/ViewCMIS_CommitteeDetails/mid/558/id/449/Default.aspx

Key Officers supporting the Local Pension Board

The Board will be supported by representatives from the Pensions Administrator.

Pension Board Secretariat arrangements will be provided to the Board as appropriate.

Publication and Transparency

The Meetings of the Pension Board will be published on the OPFCC Website together with and agendas, meeting papers and minutes of the meetings.