



Governance Compliance Statement

March 2020

South Yorkshire Pension Fund

Governance Compliance Statement – Effective March 2020

1. Introduction

1.1 As a statutory public service pension scheme the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) has a different legal status compared to trust based schemes and therefore, the governance arrangements are different as well. This is especially true given the interface with local democracy since it is elected councillors who ultimately bear responsibility for the stewardship and management of local authority pension funds. Publication of this Statement is a statutory requirement under s 55(1) of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013, which requires:

An administering authority must prepare a written statement setting out—

(a) whether the authority delegates its functions, or part of its functions under these Regulations to a committee, a sub-committee or an officer of the authority;

(b) if the authority does so—

- (i) the terms, structure and operational procedures of the delegation,
- (ii) the frequency of any committee or sub-committee meetings,
- (iii) whether such a committee or sub-committee includes representatives of Scheme employers or members, and if so, whether those representatives have voting rights;

(c) the extent to which a delegation, or the absence of a delegation, complies with guidance given by the Secretary of State and, to the extent that it does not so comply, the reasons for not complying; and

(d) details of the terms, structure and operational procedures relating to the local pension board established under regulation 53(4) (Scheme managers).

An administering authority must keep a statement prepared under paragraph (1) under review, and make such revisions as are appropriate, following a material change to any of the matters mentioned in that paragraph.

Before preparing or revising a statement under this regulation, an administering authority must consult such persons as it considers appropriate.

An administering authority must publish its statement under this regulation, and any revised statement.

1.2 This statement has been revised as part of an annual process of review supporting the preparation of the Authority's Annual Governance Statement.

2. Governance of the South Yorkshire Pension Fund

- 2.1 South Yorkshire Pensions Authority was created by the Local Government Reorganisation (Pensions etc.) (South Yorkshire) Order 1987 made under the Local Government Act 1985. The Authority has a unique place within the LGPS as the only democratically accountable single purpose pension organisation.
- 2.2 The Authority does not operate under a cabinet structure. The Chair and Vice-Chair are nominated from and elected by its own membership but the Authority as a whole carries the strategic responsibilities of an administering authority. While elected members are party politicians political groups have not been formed on the Authority.
- 2.3 Under Section 41 of the Local Government Act 1985 arrangements are made enabling members of the four constituent district councils to raise questions at council meetings. The Authority is required to nominate a member or members to answer questions on the discharge of the Authority's functions. One member from each district has been nominated as the Section 41 spokesperson.
- 2.4 The Authority has created two committee's to support it in its work:
- 2.5 The **Audit Committee** which is responsible for fulfilling the following core audit committee functions:
- a) Consider the effectiveness of the Authority's risk management arrangements, the control environment and associated anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements.
 - b) Seek assurances that action is being taken on risk related issues identified by auditors and inspectors.
 - c) Be satisfied that the Authority's assurance statements, including the Annual Governance Statement, properly reflect the risk environment and any actions required to improve it.
 - d) Approve (but not direct) internal audit's Charter and annual plan.
 - e) Monitor performance against internal audit's Charter and annual plan.
 - f) Review summary internal audit reports and the main issues arising, and seek assurance that action had been taken where necessary.
 - g) Receive the annual report of the Head of Internal Audit.
 - h) Consider the annual reports of external audit and inspection agencies.
 - i) Ensure that there are effective relationships between internal audit and external audit, inspection agencies and other relevant bodies, and that the value of the process is actively promoted.
 - j) Review financial statements, external auditor's opinion and reports to Members, and monitor management action in response to the issues raised by external audit.
 - k) To oversee the production of and approve the Authority's Annual Governance Statement.
 - l) To review and approve the annual Statement of Accounts and the Authority's Annual Report, focusing on:

- the suitability of, and any changes in accounting policies;
- major judgemental issues e.g. provisions.

- m) To receive and agree the response to the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts, focusing on significant adjustments and material weaknesses in internal control reported by the external auditor.
- n) Monitor the Authority's risk register and annual governance action plan, reporting issues of concern to the full Authority.

2.6 The **Staffing Appointments and Appeals Committee** which is responsible for the following functions.

- (1) To exercise all the Authority's functions in respect of:
 - a) Appeals by staff (where a right of appeal exists).
 - b) Complaints against senior officers.
- (2) To exercise the Authority's functions in relation to the appointment of Statutory Officers and Chief Officers, subject to legislative requirements regarding the approval of statutory officer appointments by the Authority.
- (3) To approve proposals for changes to the organisation of the Authority's staffing where more than 5 posts are affected.
- (4) Determining appeals and requests under the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations not otherwise delegated to officers.
- (5) To make appointments of Independent Investment Adviser (s) on behalf of the Authority.
- (6) To approve arrangements for the procurement of external fund managers, the Fund Actuary and Custodian.

2.7 The Authority meets five times a year, the Audit Committee meets three times a year and the Staffing, Appointments and Appeals Committee meets as and when required.

2.8 The Authority has established a Local Pension Board made up of 10 members (5 employers and 5 scheme members) which meets in public at least 4 times per year. The Board has its own constitution and terms of reference and these together with details of the Board's membership and papers for its meetings are available through the Authority's website.

3. Representation

- 3.1 Unlike other Administering Authorities within the Local Government Pension Scheme the Authority's constitution is laid down in the Local Government Reorganisation (Pensions etc.) (South Yorkshire) Order 1987 made under the Local Government Act 1985. The four district councils in South Yorkshire nominate members to the Authority, from their own elected members, in the specified proportion –

Constituent Council	Number of Members
Barnsley	2
Doncaster	3
Rotherham	2
Sheffield	5

- 3.2 In addition, 3 non-voting observers nominated by the Regional Secretaries of the three largest trade unions recognised by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (Unison, the GMB and Unite) are provided with the facility to attend and participate in meetings of the Authority and its committees, other than in matters concerned with staffing and labour relations.
- 3.3 The Audit Committee is chaired by the Authority's Vice-Chair and contains 4 other Authority Members (including the Chair). Representatives from the trade unions, who are nominated by their regional Secretaries/Organisers, attend as observers.
- 3.4 The Staffing Appointments and Appeals Committee is chaired by the Authority's Chair and contains 4 other Authority members (including the Vice Chair). Representatives from the trades unions, who are nominated by their regional Secretaries/Organisers, attend as observers, other than for matters concerning staffing and labour relations.
- 3.5 Both Committees have full delegated powers but only the Elected Members have voting rights.

4. Reasons for Current Representation

- 4.1 Myners' first Principle states that decisions should only be taken by persons or organisations with the skills, information and resources necessary to take them effectively. Where trustees elect to take investment decisions, they must have sufficient expertise and appropriate training to be able to evaluate critically any advice they take. All members of the Authority are required to undertake the LGA fundamentals training and the Pensions Regulator's Public Sector Toolkit and are exposed, on the occasions that they review investment performance and strategy, to presentations on topical issues and differing types of investment. In addition, a Learning and Development Strategy is in place which identifies individual learning needs and aims to address them through both internal and external means.

- 4.2 Formal statutory responsibility for the LGPS and fund investment remains with the administering authority that is answerable for the effective and prudent management of the scheme. Current representation on the Authority provides the appropriate balance between accountability and inclusion.
- 4.3 Changes in the way in which the local public sector operates have led to a very significant increase in the number of employers within the Fund. These employers are not directly represented on the Authority for the following reasons:
- i. They represent a relatively small proportion of the membership when compared with the constituent councils;
 - ii. Achieving a logical framework for representation of an extremely diverse group would create an Authority so large it would effectively be unmanageable, and there is no means in such a situation to ensure accountability to those employers an individual represents, which is different to the case for councillors and those appointed by the Trade Unions.
 - iii. The interests of employers as a group are essentially the same (broadly to achieve stable and affordable contributions) and therefore the representation provided by Councillors who are democratically accountable will be looking to achieve the same objectives.
 - iv. In addition the employer membership of the Local Pension Board specifically includes a wider range of employer interests.
- 4.4 In addition to the above there has been no request for representation by scheme employers on the Authority.

5. Arrangements Outside of Formal Governance

- 5.1 The Authority is committed to inclusion of all stakeholders in consultation and communication outside of the formal governance arrangements. A separate Communications Policy Statement can be viewed on our website, and is included with the Annual Report as required by the relevant regulations.
- 5.2 The Authority holds an annual meeting, usually in October, to which members and employers are invited. Members attending receive presentations on the financial position of the Fund, a review of investment and administration performance together with information about topical issues. Occasionally, a guest speaker will be invited to address national issues or pension related subjects. Attendees are encouraged to raise questions.
- 5.3 The Authority has established, with effect from 1 April 2015, a Local Pension Board in accordance with Regulatory requirements comprising equal numbers of employer and scheme member representatives.
- 5.4 The Authority provides each participating organisation with an employer's guide to the Scheme. In addition, regular newsletters are produced to keep employers up to date with scheme developments and administration issues. These are provided via our dedicated employers' website and can also be made available in hard copy. Employers' attention is drawn to relevant Circulars from National Bodies whenever these are published so that they can view the national perspective as well as the local view.

- 5.5 A variety of meetings are used to communicate with employers. In addition to the Annual Fund Meeting described earlier, the Authority normally holds an annual employers' forum. This is primarily aimed at topical and administrative issues but is also valuable in providing an opportunity for employer representatives to raise questions and discussion points. Further to these, ad-hoc meetings are called to consider specific issues as and when appropriate. Every employer is offered at least one annual meeting with the Authority's officers on a one-to-one basis to discuss any topic either side wishes to raise, although experience shows that very few take advantage of this facility.
- 5.6 Officers attend the quarterly meeting of finance department representatives from the four district councils and the other South Yorkshire joint authorities as and when required and provide an annual update to the South Yorkshire Leaders' Meeting.

6. Comparison with "Best Practice" Principles

- 6.1 The Authority is required to make a statement as to the extent to which a delegation, or the absence of a delegation, complies with guidance given by the Secretary of State and, to the extent that it does not so comply, the reasons for not complying.
- 6.2 The appendix to this document provides that statement, setting out against each of the principles the extent of compliance supported by further explanation or comments where further action is to be considered.

Principle A – Structure

		Compliant*
a)	The management of the administration of benefits and strategic management of fund assets clearly rests with the main committee established by the appointing council.	Yes
b)	That representatives of participating LGPS employers, admitted bodies 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.	Mainly
c)	That where a secondary committee or panel has been established, the structure ensures effective communication across both levels.	Yes
d)	That where a secondary committee or panel has been established, at least one seat on the main committee is allocated for a member from the secondary committee or panel.	Yes

* Please use this space to explain the reason for non-compliance (regulation 73A(1)(c)/1997 Regulations)

Please use this space if you wish to add anything to explain or expand on the ratings given above :-

The Authority's separate legal status ensures that a), c) and d) are complied with and ensure representation (proportionate to size) of the major local authority employers. It is not practical for the many non-local authority employers, whose activities are diverse, to be separately represented, and for the reasons set out in para 4.3 it is not felt appropriate to extend employer representation on the Authority. Trade union representatives attend meetings of the Authority and Committees. For this reason the Authority mainly complies in relation to b).

The Local Pension Board as required by regulations operates alongside the formal Authority structure but is intrinsically linked with it, and the membership of the Board includes a wider range of employer interests.

Principle B – Representation

		Compliant*
a)	That all key stakeholders are afforded the opportunity to be represented within the main or secondary committee structure. These include :- i) employing authorities (including non-scheme employers, eg, admitted bodies); ii) scheme members (including deferred and pensioner scheme members), iii) independent professional observers, and iv) expert advisors (on an ad-hoc basis).	Mainly
b)	That where lay members sit on a main or secondary committee, they are treated equally in terms of access to papers, meetings and training and are given full opportunity to contribute to the decision making process, with or without voting rights.	Yes

* Please use this space to explain the reason for non-compliance (regulation 73A(1)(c)/1997 Regulations)

Please see the answer to A b) and para 4.4 above with regard to the wider representation of employers.

Please use this space if you wish to add anything to explain or expand on the ratings given above :-

The Authority appoints 2 independent investment advisers who attend meetings of the Authority and give advice to members during discussion of investment related matters in line with both the Myners principles and the requirements of the LGPS regulations to take proper advice.

Principle C - Selection and role of lay members

		Compliant*
a)	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 committee.	Yes

* Please use this space to explain the reason for non-compliance (regulation 73A(1)(c)/1997 Regulations)

Please use this space if you wish to add anything to explain or expand on the ratings given above :-

Induction courses are held for all new members who are also required to attend initial basic training via the LGA 3-day programme and the Pensions Regulator's Public Sector Toolkit.

A series of member seminars to address new topics or cyclical issues such as the actuarial valuation are included in the programme of meetings and members (whether elected or Trade Union observers) are able to attend approved conferences and external seminars details of which are circulated to all members at the beginning of the year.

Principle D – Voting

		Compliant*
a)	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.	Yes

* Please use this space to explain the reason for non-compliance (regulation 73A(1)(c)/1997 Regulations)

Please use this space if you wish to add anything to explain or expand on the ratings given above :-

The Order creating the Authority and its constitution provides full voting rights to all elected Members. TU representatives do not have voting rights. However, the Authority operates by consensus and formal votes are rare, thus it is not considered that this limitation has any practical impact on the effectiveness of the TU representatives.

Principle E – Training/Facility time/Expenses

		Compliant*
a)	That 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.	Yes
b)	That where such a policy exists, it applies equally to all members of committees, sub-committees, advisory panels or any other form of secondary forum.	Yes
c)	That the administering authority considers the adoption of training plans for committee members and maintains a log of all such training undertaken.	Yes

* Please use this space to explain the reason for non-compliance (regulation 73A(1)(c)/1997 Regulations)

Please use this space if you wish to add anything to explain or expand on the ratings given above :-

Induction and in-house training events are made available to all members of the Authority, and Committees, including Trade Union Observers. In addition, all Authority members are required to undertake the Fundamentals course provided by the LGA and the Pensions Regulators Public Service Toolkit within the first year of their appointment.

Members are offered individual training plans. Records of training received are logged and published.

Principle F – Meetings (frequency/quorum)

		Compliant*
a)	That an administering authority's main committee or committees meet at least quarterly.	Yes
b)	That an administering authority's secondary committee or panel meet at least twice a year and is synchronised with the dates when the main committee sits.	Yes
c)	That administering authorities 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	Yes

* Please use this space to explain the reason for non-compliance (regulation 73A(1)(c)/1997 Regulations)

Please use this space if you wish to add anything to explain or expand on the ratings given above :-

The Authority meets five times per year, the Audit Committee three times and the Staffing Appointments and Appeals Committee as required. In addition annual forums are held for both fund employers and Scheme members

Principle G - Access

		Compliant*
a)	That 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.	Yes

* Please use this space to explain the reason for non-compliance (regulation 73A(1)(c)/1997 Regulations)

The only exception to this general principle is that Trade Union Observers are not permitted access to papers concerned with individual staffing matters, such as the appraisal for the Head of Paid Service.

Please use this space if you wish to add anything to explain or expand on the ratings given above :-

Principle H Scope

		Compliant*
a)	That administering authorities have taken steps to bring wider scheme issues within the scope of their governance arrangements	Yes

* Please use this space to explain the reason for non-compliance (regulation 73A(1)(c)/1997 Regulations)

Please use this space if you wish to add anything to explain or expand on the ratings given above :-

Principle I – Publicity

		Compliant*
a)	That 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.	Yes

* Please use this space to explain the reason for non-compliance (regulation 73A(1)(c)/1997 Regulations)

Please use this space if you wish to add anything to explain or expand on the ratings given above :-

Details of the Authority's governance arrangements are published both on its website and in its annual report. The details of the Authority's meetings are publicised both on the website and social media and the public parts of meetings of the full Authority are webcast.

The Authority maintains a specific policy that the number of items to be considered in private is minimised thus opening up the maximum amount of its business to scrutiny by scheme members and the wider public.