

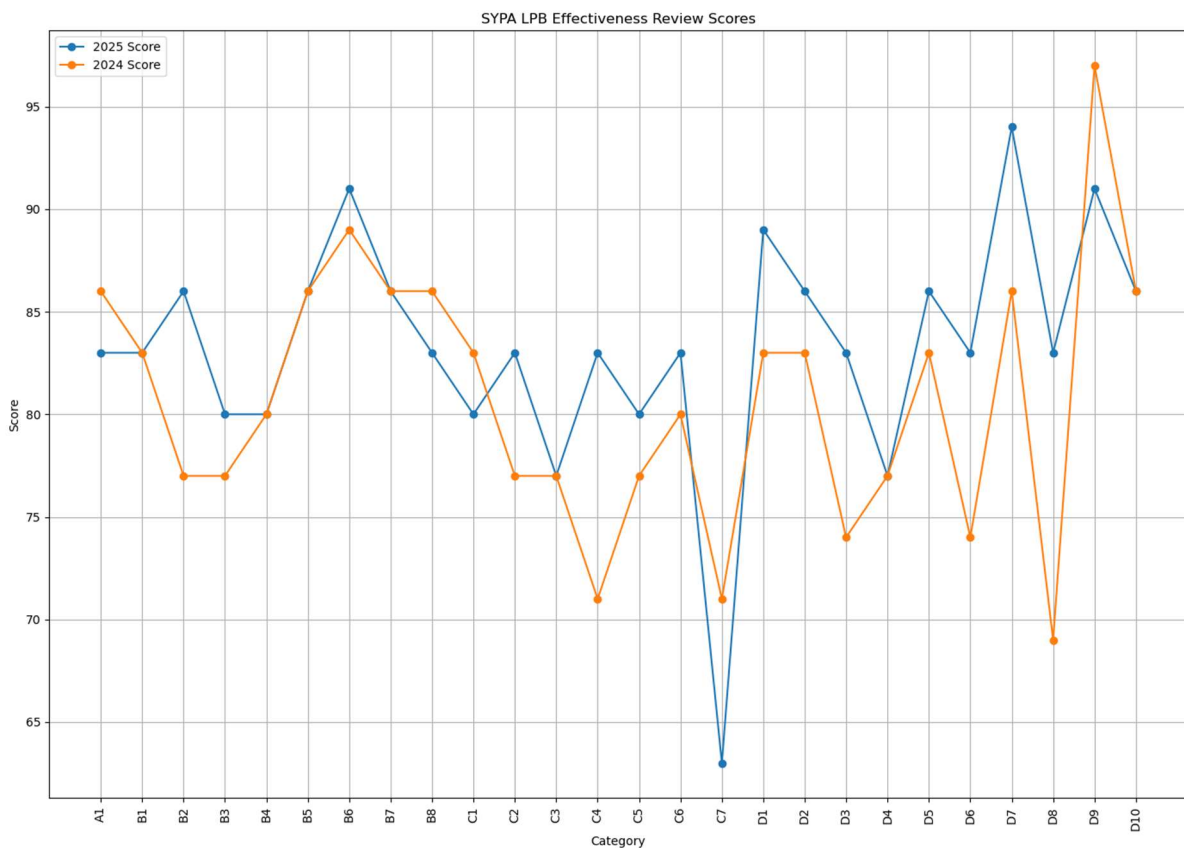
## Local Pension Board (Board) – Review of Effectiveness – March 2025

### Introduction

In March 2025, members of the Board independently conducted an annual effectiveness survey and attended a workshop to discuss potential improvements in its effectiveness. This was concentrated on five areas:

- 1) Progress on previous actions.
- 2) Board meetings.
- 3) Knowledge, skills and capacity.
- 4) General.
- 5) Continuous improvement.

The graph below shows a broadly positive trend in survey results compared to the 2024 effectiveness survey.



This report summarises the survey results and the future improvements discussed at the workshop.

**Recommendation:**

*The Board is asked to agree to close, carry over and add actions to improve its effectiveness as outlined in this document.*

**1. Actions from previous Reviews of Effectiveness**

The LPB discussed the actions from previous reviews, including updates from officers, and were generally pleased with the progress made.

*A summary of discussions regarding carried over actions from the 2023 review were as follows:*

1. Provide a shorter, more succinct reports on pensions administration for Board meetings.
<b>Propose to close action</b>
2. Develop plan to improve succession planning for Board membership.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This remains an issue.</li><li>• The short rotations of elected members was considered unhelpful, with knowledge often wasted after having just been built up.</li><li>• The Board questioned the need to limit the numbers of elected members. An alternative suggested was for a representative from each council.</li></ul>
<b>Propose to carry over action</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visibility of the succession plan.</li><li>• Review the Board's Terms of Reference.</li></ul>
3. Communications between the Board and the Authority.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The meetings between Chairs and Vice chairs of Authority and Boards have been a success.</li><li>• It was questioned as to whether the Authority has an interest in the activities of the Board and if the way Board activity is reported to the Authority could be improved. One possibility considered was for a Board update paper being presented to the Authority at their meetings by a member of the Board.</li><li>• It was noted that attendance at Authority meetings was easier when on same.</li></ul>
<b>Propose to carry over actions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore bringing a Board paper to Authority meetings.</li><li>• Further promote Board and Authority member attendance at each other's meetings.</li></ul>

- Revisit the possibility of holding Board and Authority meetings on the same day.

*A summary of discussions regarding actions from the 2024 review were as follows:*

4. The Authority to ensure the training plan is linked to the needs highlighted by knowledge assessments and ensure Board members have advance notice of all events.
5. The Authority to provide training/briefings on the issues facing the LGPS at a national level and awareness of the priorities for the Scheme Advisory Board.

**Propose to close actions**

6. The Authority to assess the effectiveness of the on-line knowledge library.
  - There continues to be issues with the on-line knowledge library. These are addressed further in this report.

**Propose to carry over action**

7. Board to discuss with the Authority ways in which the Board could have greater input with Authority matters before decisions are made.
8. Request the Authority to confirm voting arrangements for chair and vice-chair.

**Propose to close actions**

9. Develop plan to improve the profile of the Board with members and employers.
  - A number of suggestions on increasing the profile of the Board were made for consideration by officers:
    - Board report to the Authority.
    - Contact details on website – include photos and bio.
    - The need for a plan from officers as to how SYPA are 'promoting' the Board.
    - Add details/ calendar of the Board to the employer newsletter and explain role of the Board to employers. Check circulation of employer newsletter and that employers circulate to employees.
    - Presentation regarding the Board at the Employer Forum.

**Propose to carry over action**

10. Request the Authority considers its policy in relation to reimbursing care expenses incurred by members undertaking Board business.

## Propose to close action

11. Request the Authority considers its policy in relation to paying remuneration to a member's employer.
  - Remuneration of employer not considered appropriate.
  - Outcome of remuneration issue to be share with members/member employers.

## Propose to close action

### 2. Board Meetings

Scoring by respondents was consistent with last year and overall good.

There was discussion over whether papers/ reports are the right/only method to assess Authority performance. The Board suggest it would be good practice for officers to reflect on how best to demonstrate performance.

Newer Board members thought that discussion was encouraged in meetings.

It was agreed to circulate draft agenda/minutes to all members rather than just the Chair and Vice chair. Members to then give comments to Chair who will inform officers.

Actions from this section:

1. Officers to reflect on how best to demonstrate performance.
2. Circulate draft agenda/minutes to all members.

### 3. Knowledge, Skills and Capacity

There were some excellent scores in this area, and it is pleasing to see a continuing improvement trend. It is noted that respondents have increased confidence that they have "the right skills, knowledge and expertise".

LOLA was seen as useful tool to ensure all modules are in one place so that progress can be more easily tracked. Also, prompts and deadlines to complete and make mandatory were supported.

Scoring and associated comments regarding the knowledge library were down. There are continuing problems with access/navigating, the library not being user friendly and not accessible (link confusing). All of which puts members off attempting to access material.

A number of respondents also expressed doubts over their ability to commit sufficient time to the role. It was considered important to accurately represent the scope, time commitment and responsibility of the role in the recruitment process (e.g. expected days per annum).

The Board felt there would be value in understanding how officers viewed its effectiveness in challenging and questioning them.

Actions from this section:

1. See Action 6.
2. Survey officers for feedback on the performance of the Board as members and as a functional Board.

#### **4. General**

This area showed improvements across nearly all sub-categories. There is a continuing wish to encourage members from more diverse backgrounds. It would be helpful to understand how the Authority's EDI policy could be incorporated by the Board.

Barriers to recruitment were discussed and it was agreed that being a member was a relatively low reward/high responsibility mix.

Actions from this section:

1. Officers to consider how the Authority's EDI policy could be incorporated by the Board.

#### **5. Continuous improvement**

A new area considering continuous improvements was introduced in the review this year. It's single sub-category concerned the interplay between the Board's effectiveness review and the effectiveness review recently introduced by the Authority. There was a general sentiment that collaboration between the two could be of benefit and should be explored further.

There was further discussion over other areas for potential improvement:

- A desire to be kept informed of membership of the Board in advance of meetings and updated on any changes between meetings.
- Need to prioritise time for member questions/discussion over time for officers to present reports. Members expected to have read reports in advance and prepare questions.
- Access to Modgov was difficult. Could this be improved.

Actions from this section:

1. Collaborate with Authority on their effectiveness review to find commonalities. Compare results – feedback.
2. Offices to inform the Board of changes to membership of the Board in advance of meetings.
3. Prioritise time for member questions/discussion over time for officers to present reports.
4. Consider improvements to Modgov access.

#### **Summary of actions 2025**

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. Develop plan to improve succession planning for Board membership.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visibility of the succession plan.</li></ul>Review the Board's Terms of Reference.</li></ol> |
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3. Communications between the Board and the Authority. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore bringing a Board paper to Authority meetings.</li> <li>• Further promote Board and Authority member attendance at each other's meetings.</li> <li>• Revisit the possibility of holding Board and Authority meetings on the same day.</li> </ul>
6. The Authority to assess the effectiveness of the on-line knowledge library.
9. Develop plan to improve the profile of the Board with members and employers.
12. Officers to reflect on how best to demonstrate performance.
13. Circulate draft agenda/minutes to all members.
14. Survey officers for feedback on the performance of the Board as members and as a functional Board.
15. Officers to consider how the Board could incorporate the Authority's EDI policy.
16. Collaborate with Authority on their effectiveness review to find commonalities. Compare results – feedback.
17. Offices to inform the Board of changes to membership of the Board in advance of meetings.
18. Prioritise time for member questions/discussion over time for officers to present reports.
19. Consider improvements to Modgov access.

**Neil Mason**

**Independent Adviser**

**April 2025**