



Fife Pension Board Annual Report 2024-25

FIFE PENSION BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

Introduction

This annual report provides a review of the membership and activity of the Fife Pension Board for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

The Role of the Fife Pension Board

The Fife Pension Board is required by The Public Service Pensions Act 2013. The role of the Board is to assist the ‘Scheme Manager’ (i.e. Fife Council as the administering authority) in:-

- securing compliance with the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) 2018 regulations, other regulations and codes of practice relating to the governance and administration of the Scheme and any statutory pension scheme that is connected with it; and
- securing compliance with requirements imposed in relation to the Scheme and any connected scheme by the Pensions Regulator (tPR).

The Pension Board has a monitoring, assisting and reviewing purpose rather than being a decision-making body. Where the Board and Pensions Committee cannot reach a joint agreement on any decision made by the committee, the Pension Board can refer a decision back to the committee for further consideration, as set out in the [Fife Pension Board Constitution | Fife Pension Fund](#)

The Scottish Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Advisory Board may also consider and take a view on the matter and if appropriate provide advice to the Scheme Manager or the Pension Board in relation to the matter, which shall be shared with the committee.

The Fife Pension Fund Pension Board

The Terms of Reference for the Fife Pension Board can be found at **Appendix 1**.

Membership

The Fife Pension Board is made up of eight members, with an equal number of member (trade union) and employer representatives.

Following the resignation of the Scheduled body representative in June 2024, all Scheduled body employers in the Fife Pension Fund were contacted to request nominations to fill the vacancy. Despite contacting the employer bodies over a five-month period, no nominations for the vacancy were received. The Board requested a change to its Constitution to change the membership allocation from one representative from the Scheduled body employers and one from Admitted body employers to two representatives from either of the employer bodies. The Board’s constitution was amended and agreed by the Pensions Committee at its meeting on 13 December 2024. The table below shows the updated membership requirements for the Board:-

<u>Employer (4)</u>		<u>Member (Trade Unions) (4)</u>	
Fife Council	(2)	GMB	(1)
Scheduled or Admitted bodies	(2)	Unison	(2)
		Unite	(1)

In line with the Terms of Reference and Constitution for the Pension Board, representatives are appointed for a four-year term, with the option of re-appointment for further terms.

Appointing bodies can appoint a named substitute for their representative. Such substitutes must undertake the same training as Pensions Committee and Pension Board members and will be invited to attend all training events.

Details of the membership throughout the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 is listed in the table below:

NAME	MEMBERSHIP	ORGANISATION	DATE APPOINTED	DATE OF RE-APPOINTMENT
Councillor Tom Adams	Employer representative	Fife Council	20 June 2022	Serve until Local Government Elections in May 2027
Councillor Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw	Employer representative	Fife Council	20 June 2022	Serve until Local Government Elections in May 2027
Gail Dunn	Employer Representative - Scheduled Body	Fife College	26 October 2022	Resigned 30 June 2024
Vicki Wyse	Employer representative - Admitted Body	Fife Sports and Leisure Trust	9 June 2023	9 June 2027
Robert Graham	Member representative – Trade Union	GMB	12 December 2021	12 December 2025
Ross Hugh	Member representative – Trade Union	Unite	26 April 2021	26 April 2025 / Re appointed until 26 April 2029
Colin Paterson	Member representative – Trade Union	Unison	16 December 2021	16 December 2025
Thomas Templeman	Member representative – Trade Union	Unison	6 October 2023	6 October 2027
Vacancy	Employer Representative – Scheduled or Admitted Body		Vacancy following resignation of Gail Dunn in June 2024	
Debbie Fyfe	Substitute member representative – Trade Union	Unison (substitute for both Unison members)	24 January 2024	24 January 2028

In compliance with the Local Government Pension Scheme (Governance)(Scotland) Regulations 2015, the Chair of the Pension Board is rotated on an annual basis between the trade union and employer sides of the Pension Board.

Councillor Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw (Employer representative – Fife Council) served as Board Chair from December 2023 until December 2024. Ross Hugh (Member representative, Trade Union) replaced Councillor Ballantyne-Wardlaw and will serve as Board Chair until December 2025.

When amended the Board's Constitution also included provision to allow the creation of the position for a Board Depute Chair. Councillor Lynn Ballantyne Wardlaw was duly appointed as Depute Chair and will serve until December 2025.

Member Representative Unison have one substitute member to substitute for both Unison members. The substitute, Debbie Fyfe, has completed all mandatory introductory training and can attend both Board or Committee meetings on behalf of either Unison member.

Meeting Attendance

In compliance with the LGPS Governance Scotland Regulations 2015, the Pension Board:

- is required to meet with the Pensions Committee of the Scheme Manager to consider the committee agenda; and
- may meet separately from the Pensions Committee.

During the period 2024-25, the Board was represented at all Pensions Committee meetings. The Board also met separately both before and after each committee meeting.

Participation during meetings and the requirement to undertake training, clearly demonstrate the commitment of the Board members to the continued effectiveness of the Fife Pension Board. Attendance of Board members at training events is reported regularly to the Pensions Committee.

A table showing Pension Board members attendance at Pensions Committee and Pension Board Pre and Post meetings can be found at **Appendix 2 (a) and 2 (b)**.

Meeting Content

The Pension Board receive the Pensions Committee agenda for each meeting, which includes reports covering the main areas of work for the Pensions Fund, including investment, accounting, governance and administration.

A separate agenda is prepared for meetings of the Pension Board which can include items such as, the process for nominations and appointments to the Board, conflicts of interest guidance and any requests for a review of decisions of the Pensions Committee.

Pension Board Outcomes

During the reporting period of 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 the Board achieved the following outcomes :-.

- (1) campaigned a change to the composition of the Employer membership representation on the Constitution, to remove the distinction of one Scheduled body and one Admitted body employer representative on the Board to two from either of the Scheduled or Admitted body employers;
- (2) raised awareness at a Pensions Committee meeting as follows:-
 - (a) encouraging members of the Pension Scheme to consider the option to pay back gaps in National Insurance contributions to avoid any impact on their State Pension entitlement. The Head of Finance raised awareness of the matter with Fife Council as an employer and reached out to other employers in the fund to suggest they may wish to take similar action; and

- (b) on the Gender Pension Gap. The Head of Finance and Pensions Services Manager acknowledged this and requested a report from the Actuary. The Gender Pensions Gap was discussed at the Employers' Forum. A training event for members of the Pensions Committee and Board was also provided.
- (3) acknowledged only two Schemes in Scotland had an Independent Professional Observer (IPO). The Board felt the support from the IPO had been beneficial, assisting with improvements to the scrutiny function of the Board and providing valuable direction during meetings for Board members;
- (4) recognised the approach by Legal and Democratic Services in the production of minutes and notes of action from pre and post Board meetings, providing an avenue for the Board's queries and concerns to be fed back to officers for clarification and action;
- (5) the Board has continued to exercise its principal responsibilities of assisting the administering authority, including helping the Pensions Committee to scrutinise advice, to ensure compliance with legislation and regulation. Board members have acknowledged the positive progression of confidence in their role when attending committee meetings and have been given full opportunity to provide their input on matters. Board members have been encouraged to have open discussions when requesting clarification on topics and suggesting improvements to operational functions; and
- (6) the Board has not had to ask the Pensions Committee to review any of its decisions which is an indication that the Scheme's governance and administration is working effectively.

The following reports were included as standard in the Pensions Committee agendas during 2024 - 25 and therefore also considered by the Pension Board:-

- Fife Pension Fund – Business Plan Update
- Risk Management Quarterly Review
- Fife Pension Fund Investment Update
- Pensions Committee Workplan

In addition, the committee also received reports and updates on:-

Governance

- Pension Fund Budgetary Control and Final Outturn
- Pension Fund Annual Governance Statement
- Annual Report and Accounts
- Whistleblowing and Reporting Breaches of the Law and Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure
- Pension Fund Training and Development
- Internal Audit Plans and Audit Reports
- External Quality Assessment (EQA) of Fife Council's Audit Services
- External Audit plan
- National Fraud Initiative
- The Pensions Regulator General Code of Practice Assessment of Compliance
- Revised Pension Board Constitution

Investment

- Statement of Investment Principles
- Statement of Responsible Investment Principles
- Annual Review of Shared Services Agreement
- Cost Transparency and CEM Benchmarking

Training Requirements

The Public Service Pensions Act 2013 requires that members of local pension boards have an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding to carry out their role. These responsibilities begin from the date the member takes up their role on the pension board. A member of the pension board of a public service pension scheme must be conversant with the rules of the scheme and any document recording policy about its administration which is, for the time being, adopted in relation to the scheme.

The Pensions Regulator General Code of Practice sets out the regulatory requirements for the knowledge and understanding requirements of pension board members. The Pension Fund must be able to demonstrate compliance with the code.

Fife Pension Board's training plan is subject to regular review and an annual training report is presented to the Pensions Committee. A minimum training requirement for members of the Pensions Committee and Fife Pension Board, of 14 hours per annum was approved by the then Superannuation Fund and Pensions Committee on 22 May 2019. The policy has subsequently been updated and was approved by the Pensions Committee on 30 June 2022. The training policy is available here [Training Policy | Fife Pension Fund](#).

Fife Pension Fund is committed to supporting Board members to achieve the level of knowledge and understanding they require by providing the appropriate level of training and assistance. Training is provided in line with the approved Training Policy and covers a number of areas including Investment, Administration and Governance.

As detailed above, Board members are expected to attend meetings and undertake a minimum of 14 hours training per year. This is to ensure they maintain the prescribed knowledge and understanding levels required to be able to fulfil the responsibilities of the role. Where a member fails to meet the minimum requirements set out in the Training Policy, and in the absence of mitigating factors, the member will be given a reasonable period to improve their attendance level. Non-compliance of training will be reported to the body who nominated the representative and may be highlighted in a report and considered by the Pensions Committee.

Tables summarising Board members mandatory training records and attendance at training events for the period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025 can be found at **Appendix 3 (a) and 3 (b)**

tPR Toolkit

The approved Training Policy for Pensions Committee and Pension Board members states:

'To undertake the online E-Learning Public Service Toolkit produced by the Pensions Regulator within six months of appointment and provide evidence of completion to the Pension Fund's governance manager' (available at <http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/publicservice-schemes.aspx>)

As at 31 March 2025, all seven members and the substitute member of the Fife Pension Board had completed the mandatory E-Learning modules.

Conflicts of Interest

The Pensions Committee agreed a Nominations and Appointments Process and Conflicts of Interest Guidance document for Board members on 14 December 2023. The documents are available to view on the Fife Pension Fund website - [Fife Pension Board - Nominations and Appointments Process | Fife Pension Fund](#) [Fife Pension Board - Conflicts of Interest Guidance | Fife Pension Fund](#)

As a standing item at each Pension Board meeting, members are given the opportunity to declare their interest in any of the agenda items and any declared interests will be recorded in the formal minutes of the meeting. Register of interest declaration forms will be issued by Fife Pension Fund on appointment to the Board and thereafter annually. Responses will be recorded on the 'Register of Interests' for Pension Board members to facilitate ongoing monitoring and review by the Governance Team during the term of appointment.

The Register of Interests is published and can be viewed on the Pension Fund Website:- [Fife Pension Board Register of Interests 2025 | Fife Pension Fund](#)

Compliance with the Pensions Regulator (tPR) General Code of Practice

The Pension Fund considers compliance with various regulations and the General Code of Practice on a regular basis at its Pension Governance Group meeting. An assessment is made in terms of compliance with tPR General Code of Practice.

The most recent review was carried out throughout 2024 and reported to the Pensions Committee and Fife Pension Board on 13 December 2024. The report identified that there were areas of partial compliance and that an action plan be put in place to move to full compliance, where appropriate.

The Pension Governance Group is chaired by the Head of Finance, Fife Council. Group membership consists of officers from across the organisation who work on and have responsibility for pension related matters, in particular governance. The group meets quarterly in advance of the Pensions Committee to consider, amongst other things, compliance with the regulators code of practice, risk management arrangements, progress on business plan activities, progress on audit points, updates to regulations/guidance and a review of the risk register to ensure it reflects the discussions and any other relevant business.

The Group carried out the assessment of compliance with the regulators new code of practice, prepared a gap analysis and action plan, is monitoring progress against that action plan and reporting to the Pensions Committee.

Risk Management

The fund has its own detailed and specific risk register in accordance with the Pensions Regulator code of practice. A Risk Management Manual was approved by the Superannuation Fund and Pensions Committee on 22 May 2019. The risk register for the Pension Fund identifies the significant risks that could have a material impact in terms of value, reputation, compliance or provision of service and sets out the action taken to mitigate these risks.

The register is reviewed regularly by the Pensions Governance Group and reported quarterly to the Pensions Committee and Pension Board.

Programme of Work for 2025-26

The following areas will be considered by both the Committee and Board in the next 12 months (subject to review):-

Pensions Committee

Administration

- Review of Administration Strategy

Governance

- Business Plan and updates
- Fife Pension Fund – Budgetary Control – Projected Outturn
- Annual Governance Statement
- Fife Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts
- Fife Pension Fund Annual Audit Report
- Internal/External Audit Plan and updates
- The Pensions Regulator - General Code of Practice review
- Communication Policy
- Breaches of Law
- Conflicts of Interest Declarations
- Training Plan

Investment

- Statement of Investment Principles
- Statement of Responsible Investment Principles ‘
- Annual Review of Shared Services Agreement
- CEM Benchmarking and Cost Transparency
- Annual investment update

Valuation

- Fife Pension Fund Actuarial Valuation – 31 March 2026

Risk

- Risk Management and Risk Register

In addition, the Pension Board will also consider the following items of business (subject to review):-

Pension Board

Administration

- Key Achievements 2025/26
- Scheme Advisory Bulletin

Governance

- Appointment of Chair
- Appointment of Depute Chair
- Appointment of Joint Secretaries
- Re-appointment of members
- Recruitment/advertising vacancies
- Fife Pension Board - Conflicts of Interest Declarations (issued pre-appointment)
- Fife Pension Board – published Register of Interests
- Review of Decisions made by the Pensions Committee
- Fife Pension Board Annual Report 2025/26
- The Pensions Regulator Toolkit
- Training Plan

Further Information

If you have any further queries or questions regarding this report, please contact the Chair of Fife Pension Board:-

Ross Hugh – ross.hugh@fife.gov.uk

30 June 2025

FIFE PENSION BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE**(Extract from Fife Council Committee Powers)**

The Council has appointed a Pension Board under the Pensions Act 2013. Its membership consists of four trade union representatives, and four employer representatives, the latter comprising two elected members (one each from the Administration and Opposition) and two members from either the scheduled or admitted bodies.

The Pension Board is the body responsible for assisting the Scheme Manager in relation to compliance with scheme regulations and the requirements of the Pensions Regulator.

The Pension Board will determine the areas they wish to consider including, amongst others:-

- reports produced for the Pensions Committee;
- seek reports from the scheme managers on any aspect of the fund;
- monitor investments and the investment principles/strategy/guidance;
- the fund annual report;
- external voting and engagement provisions;
- fund performance and administration;
- actuarial reports and valuations;
- funding strategy; and
- any other matter that the Pension Board deem appropriate.

**Fife Pension Board Members -
Pensions Committee Meeting Attendance Record
1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025**

Members (8)	DATES OF PENSIONS COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
	2024				2025
NAME	28.06.24	24.09.24	30.09.24	13.12.24	31.03.25
Cllr Tom Adams	✓		Apol	✓	✓
Cllr Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
*Gail Dunn (Resigned 30.06.24)	✓				
Robert Graham	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ross Hugh	Apol	✓	✓	✓	✓
Colin Paterson	Apol	✓	✓	Apol	Apol
Thomas Templeman	Apol	✓	N/A	Apol	✓
Vicki Wyse	✓	✓	Apol	Apol	✓
Debbie Fyfe (substitute for Unison)	✓ (sub for Colin Paterson)				✓ (sub for Colin Paterson)

*Gail Dunn resigned from post in June 2024, the vacancy has been advertised but remains vacant.

**Fife Pension Board Members -
Pension Board Pre and Post Meeting Attendance Record
1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025**

DATES OF PENSION BOARD MEETINGS											
*Members (8)	2024									2025	
NAME	29/05 Pre (No Post Meeting held)	27/06 Pre	28/06 Post	23/09 Pre	24/09 Post	25/09 Pre	30/09 Post	10/12 Pre	13/12 Post	27/03 Pre	31/03 Post
Cllr Tom Adams	Apol	✓	✓		Apol		✓	✓	✓	Apol	✓
Cllr Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gail Dunn (resigned 30.06.24)	✓	✓									
Robert Graham	Apol	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Ross Hugh	Apol	✓	Apol	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Colin Paterson	✓	Apol	Apol	✓	✓	✓	Apol	✓	✓	✓	Apol
Thomas Templeman	Apol	✓	Apol	✓	✓	✓	Apol	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vicki Wyse	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apol	✓	✓	Apol	✓
Debbie Fyfe (Unison Substitute)			✓							Apol	✓

NB - *7 active members, 1 vacancy (Gail Dunn), 1 substitute member (Debbie Fyfe).

**Fife Pension Board Members –
Training Record**

	Completed 01.04.24 – 31.03.25		Completed since joining Fife Pension Board		
NAME	All Mandatory training Complete (Introductory Training/ tPR Toolkit /14 Training hours) Y/N	Number of Mandatory Training Hours Complete (14 Hours required)	Mandatory Introductory Training Complete Y/N	Mandatory Training Complete (tPR Toolkit – 7 Modules) Y/N	Additional tPR Module required (Pension Scams) Y/N
Cllr Tom Adams	Y	29.00	Y	Y	Y
Cllr Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw	Y	23.00	Y	Y	Y
Gail Dunn (resigned 30.06.24)	N/A	3.00	Y	Y	Y
Robert Graham	Y	29.00	Y	Y	Y
Ross Hugh	Y	34.50	Y	Y	Y
Colin Paterson	Y	23.00	Y	Y	Y
Thomas Templeman	Y	19.00	Y	Y	Y
Vicki Wyse	Y	15.50	Y	Y	Y
Substitute – TU – Debbie Fyfe	Y	28.00	Y	Y	Y

Fife Pension Board

Record of Members Attendance at Training Events

1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

NAME	No of training sessions completed		Training sessions (see below for details)													
		A*	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L**	M	N*	
Cllr Tom Adams	8		✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓ (1)			
Cllr Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw	8	✓ (1)	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓ (1)			
Gail Dunn	1		✓													
Robert Graham	6		✓		✓		✓	✓				✓		✓		
Ross Hugh	7		✓					✓				✓	✓ (3)	✓		
Colin Paterson	10	✓ (1)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓			✓ (2)	
Thomas Templeman	7		✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓			✓ (1)	
Vicki Wyse	6			✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓				
Substitute – TU – Debbie Fyfe (joined 2024)	8			✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓			✓ (2)	

- A.* Webinars, reading material, watching recordings of other training events not listed
- B. Pensions Committee and Board Training (in-house), 2 May 2024
- C. Pensions Committee and Board Training (in-house), 30 August 2024
- D. Joint Investment Training Lothian – Real Assets – 28 August 2024
- E. Joint Investment Training Lothian – 30 October 2024
- F. LGC Investment Seminar, Kimpton Charlotte Square, Edinburgh – 31 October – 1 November 2024
- G. Pensions Committee and Board Training (in-house), 18 November 2024
- H. SLGPS Gender Pensions Gap – remote session – 26 November 2024
- I. LGC Seminar, London – In person event – 28 November 2024
- J. LGPS – Good Governance Seminar - 26 February 2025 –
- K. Pensions Committee and Board Training (in-house), 3 March 2025
- L.** PLSA Seminar – Investment Conference – EICC Edinburgh – 11-13 March 2025
- M. Scottish LGPS – Creating a Sustainable Future – Old Course Hotel, St Andrews – 25 March 2025
- N.* Other training - Unison Pension Board Representatives meetings (Colin Paterson - 30.05.24 and 26.09.24) (Thomas Templeman – 06.03.25) (Debbie Fyfe – 26.09.24 and 28.11.24)

NB:- *number in brackets in columns A and N indicate number of events attended/recordings watched etc.

**number in brackets in column L indicate number of days attended by delegate (duration of conference – 3 days).