

Business Plan and Medium Term Strategy

2025/26 to 2027/28

**Introduction**

This is the business plan for the Northamptonshire Pension Fund (“the Fund”) which is managed and administered by West Northamptonshire Council. The business plan details the priorities and areas of key focus in relation to the Fund for 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28. The business plan was approved at the Pension Committee meeting on 19 March 2025. The business plan is monitored throughout the year and the Pension Committee may be asked to agree changes to it.

The purpose of the business plan is to:

* Explain the background and objectives of West Northamptonshire Council in respect of the management of the Fund;
* Document the priorities and improvements to be implemented during the next three years to help achieve those objectives;
* Enable progress and performance to be monitored in relation to those priorities; and
* Provide a clear vision for the next three years.

In addition, the business plan includes a budget for expected payments to and from the Fund during 2025/26 including the resources required to manage the Fund.

**Further information**

If you require further information about anything included or related to this business plan please contact:

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**Background to the Northamptonshire Pension Fund**

The Northamptonshire Pension Fund is a £3.6bn\* Local Government Pension Fund which provides retirement and death benefits for local government employees (other than teachers) in Northamptonshire and employees of other qualifying bodies which provide similar services.

The Fund manages 82,312\* scheme member records of which 24,595 relate to active members from over 327\* scheme employers and57,717 relate to retired, survivor, deferred and other members.

*\*As at 31 March 2024*

**Governance and management of the Fund**

The key decision-making and management of the Fund has been delegated by West Northamptonshire Council (the administering authority) to a Pension Committee, supported by an Investment Sub-Committee that manages the operational governance of investments.

West Northamptonshire Council’s Section 151 Officer has a statutory responsibility for the proper financial affairs of the Council including Fund matters.

Eleven authorities, including West Northamptonshire Council, are members of the ACCESS asset pool. A Joint Committee with representation from each authority has been formed to oversee the governance of the pool.

A Local Pension Board is in place to assist in securing compliance of Fund matters and ensuring the efficient and effective governance and administration of the Fund.

The Northamptonshire Pension Fund governance structure is shown below.

West Northamptonshire Council

(the Administering Authority)

Investment Sub Committee

Access Joint Committee

Monitoring Officer

Local Pension

Board

Head of Pensions

Exec Director of Finance/

s151 Officer

Pension Committee

**Administration of the Fund**

The Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Pension Funds are administered under a lead authority shared service model with the lead authority being West Northamptonshire Council working in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council. The Funds remain two distinct entities.

Management and administration of both Funds is based at One Angel Square in Northampton. The Funds have benefited from cost savings through the ability to procure services such as custodian, actuarial, benefits, governance and investment consultancy on a joint basis as well as streamlining the provision of the management, governance and administration functions.

The day-to-day operations of the Fund are managed by the Head of Pensions who is supported by five teams:

* The Governance and Regulations Team is responsible for managing agendas, producing reports and delivering training to the Pension Committee and Local Pension Board. The team takes the lead in the development of the Fund’s strategic policies and monitors regulatory compliance. The team specialises in information governance and pension taxation.
* The Investments and Fund Accounting Team provides governance over the Fund’s investments whether held directly or by the ACCESS pool. The team provides the financial control function to the Fund, managing and accounting for the receipt of contributions, processing the Fund’s financial transactions, and overseeing the production and audit of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts.
* The Operations Team is responsible for providing the full range of casework administration. The team delivers a service that includes the calculation of retirement, deferred, death and survivor benefits, transfers in and out, refunds and member record maintenance.
* The Systems & Projects Team is responsible for a wide range of projects including data quality improvements, the McCloud remedy, pension dashboards and targeted areas of casework. The team is also responsible for maintaining and developing the pension administration, payroll, and member self-service systems, reconciling membership data received from employers, and the production of annual benefit statements.
* The Employer Services and Communications Team manages the entry and exit of employers to and from the Fund. The team acts as employer liaison, providing support to employers throughout their life cycle in the Fund, including ensuring employers are aware of and able to carry out their responsibilities. The team also manages the triennial actuarial valuation process and employer risk. Communications form a significant part of the team’s function, including the Fund’s website, presentations, workshops, newsletters and written communications.

The structure of the Pensions Service which provides administration services to both the Cambridgeshire Pension Fund and the Northamptonshire Pension Fund, as at 31 March 2025 is illustrated below in simplified form:

Head of Pensions

Governance & Regulations

Manager

Operations Manager

Systems & Projects Manager

Employer & Comms Manager

Investments & Accounting Manager

The full Pensions Service structure is at Appendix A. Approximately 48 full-time equivalent (fte) staff undertake Northamptonshire Fund administration.

**Objectives for the management of the Fund**

The Fund’s agreed objectives are detailed as follows;

**Governance**

* To ensure compliance with the LGPS Regulations and other legislation and guidance, including the Pensions Regulator’s Code of Practice.
* To ensure individuals responsible for managing the Fund and delivering its services have the appropriate knowledge and expertise.
* To manage the Fund in a fair and equitable manner, and be accountable to the Fund’s stakeholders.
* To ensure robust processes, controls and risk management are in place.
* To continually measure and monitor success against the Fund’s objectives.

**Funding**

* To ensure the long-term solvency of the Fund, so that sufficient funds are available to meet benefit payments as they fall due.
* To ensure an appropriate cash management strategy is in place and cash flows are timely and of the correct amount.
* To prudently set employer contributions that are as stable as possible whilst recognising the characteristics, circumstances and affordability constraints of each employer.
* To manage employer liabilities effectively, taking account of employer covenant, putting in place mitigations of adequate strength to protect the Fund.

**Investment**

* To ensure an appropriate cash management strategy is in place.
* To ensure benefit payments and other cashflows are timely and of the correct amount.
* To maximise investment returns over the long term within agreed risk tolerances.
* To invest sustainably to achieve better long-term outcomes for the Fund and its stakeholders.

**Administration**

* To put in place performance standards for the Fund and its employers and ensure these are monitored and developed as necessary.
* To administer the Fund in a professional, effective and cost-efficient manner, utilising technological solutions and collaboration.
* To maintain accurate records and ensure data is protected and used for authorised purposes only.

**Communication**

* To promote the scheme and ensure members understand the benefits provided.
* To deliver clear, inclusive, accessible communications to stakeholders, including up-to-date information in order that informed decisions can be made.
* To seek regular feedback from stakeholders and use that feedback to help shape Fund administration.

**Business as usual**

The appendix to the business plan highlights the key priorities for the next three years and focuses on areas of change and projects which are in addition to day to day “business as usual” duties. On a day-to-day basis the focus is on the following key elements of Fund management:

* Paying pension benefits to beneficiaries as prescribed by the LGPS Regulations.
* Ensuring employers provide monthly membership data by the required deadline.
* Communicating with scheme members about their membership of the Fund.
* Ensuring all pension contributions that are paid by active members are received as prescribed by the LGPS.
* Ensuring all employers pay their pension contributions.
* Safeguarding the money in the Fund (the Fund’s assets).
* Investing any Fund assets that are in excess of those needed to pay immediate benefits.
* Working with the Fund Actuary to ensure that the amount employers pay into the Fund is sufficient to pay future pension benefits.

Managing this on a day-to-day basis involves a wide range of processes and procedures designed around achieving the Fund’s objectives. The Fund is large, complex, and highly regulated. As such these processes and procedures require expert knowledge and experience as illustrated in Appendix B.

**Challenges and influences over the next three years**

The current environment is such that there is an unprecedented volume of external factors that could impact the management of the Fund:

* Changes arising from the Government’s Pensions Review/Fit for the Future consultation, including to asset pooling and fund governance.
* The increased oversight by the Pensions Regulator following the release of the general code of practice.
* Implementation of Pension Dashboards.
* Implementing the remedy resulting from the McCloud high court ruling.
* Maintaining the skills and knowledge of officers and Committee and Board members to comply with the requirements of MIFIDII, CIPFA’s skills and knowledge framework, TPR’s general code of practice and best practice and guidance stemming from the Scheme Advisory Board’s Good Governance Review.
* The number and diversity of scheme employers due to alternative provision models within the local government universe.
* Finding innovative and digital ways of working for the benefit of the Fund, the member and the scheme employer to achieve the Fund’s strategies on administration, communication and employer engagement.
* The increasing scrutiny and transparency on data quality.
* To stay ahead of the increasingly sophisticated challenges presented by cyber-crime.
* The risk of members being exposed to potential scams and the increasing requirements of the Fund to provide protection against this.
* The need to manage the climate risk within the Fund’s investment portfolio as well as meet future statutory reporting requirements including those related to the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD).

These and other priorities for the next three years are articulated in more detail in the activities section below, split into six sections:

* Procurement of services.
* Core governance activities.
* Scheme member and data projects.
* Scheme employer projects.
* Investment related activities.
* Scheme employer projects.

**Budget**

All the costs associated with the management of the Fund are charged to the Fund and not West Northamptonshire Council. The following shows the expected income and expenditure (cash flow) of the Fund as well as the anticipated operating costs.

**Cash flow projection 2025/26 to 2027/28**

The following tables provide estimates of the Fund account, investment and administration income and expenditure for the next three years.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2024/25 Estimate** | **2024/25 Forecast** | **2025/26 Estimate** | **2026/27 Estimate** | **2027/28 Estimate** |
|  | **£000** | **£000** | **£000** | **£000** | **£000** |
| Contributions | (135,000) | (149,000) | (153,000) | (147,000) | (152,000) |
| Transfers in from other pension funds2 | (17,500) | (9,000) | (13,000) | (14,000) | (14,000) |
| **TOTAL INCOME** | **(152,500)** | **(158,700)** | **(166,000)** | **(161,000)** | **(166,000)** |
| Benefits payable3 | 128,000 | 130,000 | 136,000 | 142,000 | 149,000 |
| Payments to and on account of leavers2 | 12,500 | 16,700 | 14,000 | 14,000 | 15,000 |
| **TOTAL PAYMENTS** | **140,500** | **146,700** | **150,000** | **156,000** | **164,000** |
| **Net (additions)/withdrawals from dealings with members** | **(12,000)** | **(12,000)** | **(16,000)** | **(5,000)** | **(2,000)** |
| Management expenses (Invoiced) | 4,652 | 5,055 | 5,530 | 5,806 | 6,045 |
| Management expenses (Non-invoiced) 4 | 13,500 | 10,800 | 12,400 | 13,000 | 13,600 |
| **TOTAL MANAGEMENT EXPENSES** | **18,152** | **15,855** | **17,930** | **18,806** | **19,645** |
| **TOTAL INCOME LESS EXPENDITURE** | **6,152** | **3,855** | **1,930** | **13,806** | **17,645** |
| Investment income5 | (32,000) | (50,600) | (53,000) | (55,000) | (57,000) |
| Taxes on income |  | 43 | - | - | - |
| (Profit) and losses on disposal of investments and changes in the market value of investments6 | (151,000) | (145,500) | (162,000) | (170,000) | (177,000) |
| **NET RETURN ON INVESTMENTS** | **(183,000)** | **(196,057)** | **(215,000)** | **(225,000)** | **(234,000)** |
| **Net (increase)/decrease in net assets available for benefits during the year** | **(176,848)** | **(192,202)** | **(213,070)** | **(211,194)** | **(216,355)** |

Management Expenses

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2024/25 Estimate** | **2024/25 Forecast** | **2025/26 Estimate** | **2026/27 Estimate** | **2027/28 Estimate** |
|  | **£000** | **£000** | **£000** | **£000** | **£000** |
| Total administration expenses | 2,847 | 3,065 | 3,369 | 3,542 | 3,674 |
| Total governance expenses | 988 | 1,082 | 1,247 | 1,309 | 1,375 |
| Total investment expenses | 817 | 908 | 914 | 954 | 996 |
| **TOTAL MANAGEMENT EXPENSES** | **4,652** | **5,055** | **5,530** | **5,806** | **6,045** |

Administration Expenses

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2024/25 Estimate** | **2024/25 Forecast** | **2025/26 Estimate** | **2026/27 Estimate** | **2027/28 Estimate** |
|  | **£000** | **£000** | **£000** | **£000** | **£000** |
| Staff related | 2,145 | 2,134 | 2,428 | 2,506 | 2,586 |
| Altair administration and payroll system | 338 | 353 | 400 | 414 | 428 |
| Data Assurance | 21 | 17 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| Communications | 86 | 75 | 34 | 36 | 37 |
| Other non-pay and income | (233) | (4) | (90) | (40) | (36) |
| County Council overhead recovery | 490 | 490 | 582 | 611 | 642 |
| **TOTAL ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES** | **2,847** | **3,065** | **3,369** | **3,542** | **3,674** |

Contributions have been calculated using the Employer contribution rate and salary increase assumptions of 3.2% set by the actuary at the 2022 Valuation. Contributions in 2026/27 and 2027/28 are subject to change due to the 2025 valuation. However, 2% reduction p.a. in ER’s contributions is included for prudence with anticipation of reductions in rate from 2025 valuation. The 2024/25 forecasted variance is due to actual salary increases being much higher than the actuarial salary increase assumption used from the 2022 valuation.

2 Transfers in/out have been calculated using an average of 3-5 years (excluding group transfers).

3 2025/26 benefits payable have been calculated using average membership increases, estimated PI of 1.7% and pension increases assumptions of 2.7% set by the actuary in subsequent years.

4 Management expenses (non-invoiced) have been calculated using investment managers actual fees plus the actuarial assumption of investment growth +4.4% per annum.

5 Investment income have been calculated based on the 2024/25 forecast by applying the actuarial assumption of investment growth +4.4% per annum.

6 Return on Investments have been calculated by applying the actuarial assumption of investment growth +4.4% per annum.

**Delivering the business plan**

**Monitoring and reporting**

To identify whether the agreed business plan is being met progress on the key priorities and budgets will be monitored by the Fund management team and reported to the Pension Committee and Local Pension Board at every meeting.

The updates will:

* Highlight any areas where the target is exceeded or where the target has not been achieved and the reasons why and identify any changes in response to the planned priorities because of this.
* Highlight any significant additional spend or underspend in relation to the agreed budget as it becomes apparent.

**Risk Management**

Risk management is embedded in the governance of the Fund. The Pension Committee has approved a Risk Strategy and a detailed Risk Register is maintained and reviewed by the Pension Committee and Local Pension Board at every meeting. Changes to the level of risk are reported more frequently if necessary in consultation with the Committee and Board Chairs.

The table below lists the Fund’s highest rated risks as of December 2024 and the executive summary risk register can be found on the Fund’s website:

| **Risk** | **Residual risk rating** |
| --- | --- |
| Geopolitical risks may adversely affect global markets in which the Pension Fund invests. | Amber |
| The operations of the Pension Fund and that of its suppliers are interrupted as a result of a cyber-attack. | Amber |
| Failure to respond to changes in economic conditions. | Amber |
| The ACCESS asset pool does not have the sub-fund choices available to enable the Fund to fulfil its strategic and tactical asset allocation requirements in a timely manner. | Amber |
| The Pension Fund and its members may become a target for fraudsters and criminals. | Amber |
| Pension Fund systems and data may not be secure and appropriately maintained, whether in situ or in transit. | Amber |

**2025/26 Business Plan activities**

Procurement of Services

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Background** | **Key Milestones** |
| Review the National LGPS Framework for Overseas Address Tracing and Mortality Screening Services. | The Fund has a contract in place for UK address tracing and mortality screening but uses an internal proof of existence check for overseas pensioners.  A contracted solution is needed. | Consider framework offerings (April – June 2025).  Develop approach for procurement of overseas address and mortality screening services if appropriate (June 2025 onwards). |
| Review the National LGPS Framework for Additional Voluntary Contribution Services (AVC). | The Fund has two Additional Voluntary Contribution (AVC) providers, Standard Life and Prudential, which were reviewed for administration and investment performance in 2023 and deemed adequate.  A full review is needed, to include evolving Pension Dashboard requirements. | Register to access national LGPS Frameworks (July 2025).  Consider framework offerings against arrangements already in place (August-September 2025).  Develop approach for procurement if required (October – November 2025).  Present findings to the Pension Fund Committee (December 2025) and Pension Fund Board (January 2026). |
| **Activity** | **Background** | **Key Milestones** |
| Consider an extension for Global Custody Services | The Fund’s current supplier for Global Custody Services is Northern Trust, with the existing contract ending 31 July 2026 with an optional 5 year extension up to 31 July 2031. | Make a decision on whether to extend the existing contract and any required extension period (October 2025).  Implement contract extension or undertake procurement as applicable (November 2025 to July 2026). |
| Consider an extension for Legal Services | The Fund’s current supplier of specialist pensions legal services is Squire Patton Boggs. The initial contract period is due to end on 4 February 2026 with an optional 2 year extension to 4 February 2028. | Make a decision on whether to extend the existing contract (June 2025).  Implement contract extension or undertake procurement as applicable (July 2025 to February 2026) |
| Procure an Independent Investment advisor | NPF’s Independent Adviser (IA), David Crum is contracted to provide independent investment advice to the Fund.  The original contract was for a period of 3 years from 22 February 2021 to 31 January 2024, then extended for further 2-years to 31 January 2026. | Draft specification of services required and associated documentation (June – August 2025).  Issue invitation to tender (August 2025).  Evaluate tender responses (October - November 2025).  Award contract (December 2025). |

Core governance activities

| **Activity** | **Background** | **Key Milestones** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Implement recommendations from the LGPS Scheme Advisory Board’s ‘Good Governance Project’ | The Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) published their final findings of the good governance review in 2021 and there were several recommendations established as a result.  Since this time, the industry has been awaiting the government release of the standards and once they are released the Fund will work towards compliance of the recommendations. | Develop an action plan to implement the best practice activities (TBC).  Present update on progress against the action plan to the Pension Committee (TBC) and Pension Board (TBC).  Implementation of activities requiring SAB and MHCLG guidance (TBC). |
| Implement actions identified in the Pension Regulator’s General Code of Practice Review. | During 2024/25 the Fund reviewed its compliance against the General Code of Practice and as a result some actions were required to be fully compliant. | Enact the previously identified actions (April 2025 – September 2025).  Present update on progress against the actions to the Pension Committee and Pension Board (October 2025). |
| Continue to prepare for the implementation of Pension Dashboards. | All LGPS Funds must be connected to the Pensions Dashboard infrastructure by 31 October 2025.  Project plan activities will continue to be undertaken to ensure compliance these include activities such as data cleansing, preparing workflows for receiving matching requests and making decisions.  Testing will continue between connecting to the ISP and the Dashboard Available Point and record keeping will continue to be a pertinent part of the project. | Undertake project plan activities to enable connection to the Dashboard (April 2025 – October 2025).  Connect to the Pensions Dashboard Infrastructure (by 31 October 2025)  Continue to undertake project plan activities post connection (November 2025 - March 2026).  Update the Committee and Board with progress against the project plan and statutory deadlines at each meeting. |
| Continue to implement equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) best practices. | The Pensions Regulator published guidance to help improve pension schemes’ equality, diversity and inclusion. Pension schemes have legal duties to scheme members, and good decision making is key to ensuring those duties are met.  The Fund will be continuing to improve its equality, diversity and inclusion via these best practices. | Enact the activities in the previously approved EDI action plan (April 2025 – March 2026.  Present progress against the plan to the Pension Board (January 2026 and Pension Committee March 2026) |
| Rectify survivor benefit cases. | A ministerial statement was made on 20 July 2020 confirming that in public service schemes, surviving male same-sex spouses, female same-sex spouses and civil partners of public service pension schemes, will, in certain cases, receive benefits equivalent to those received by widows of opposite sex marriages.  Scheme rules are in the process of being changed and MHCLG have confirmed their plans to put this into legislation during 2025 and appropriate key milestones will be added at that time. | TBC |

Scheme member and data projects

| **Activity** | **Background** | **Key Milestones** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| McCloud remedy rectification. | Following the implementation of the age discrimination remedy on 1 October 2023 the records of scheme members within scope of the McCloud ruling must be reviewed to determine if any rectification of benefits is required in line with the remedy and statutory guidance. | Recalculation and award of benefits requiring remediation (except Club transfer cases). (April 2025 to August 2025).  Remediation of Club transfer cases. (TBC)  Identification and remediation of further cases as further PSPS unaggregated service disclosed.  (April 2025 to March 2026).  Preparation for McCloud compliant annual benefit statements. (April 2025 to June 2025)  Processing of teachers’ excess service cases (TBC by Department of Education and Local Government Association) |
| Processing of undecided leaver records | The Fund has a backlog of approximately 6,200 unprocessed leaver records where a member has left a period of pensionable employment and is not entitled to immediate payment of benefits.  The number of cases has been steadily decreasing since November 2022 from 8,909 to 6,163 at February 2025. The intention is to reduce this backlog by 5,000 further cases over the next 3 years.  This has been extended by a further year from last year’s Business Plan due to the number of competing statutory projects that are taking place in 2025.  *(Cases that are older than six months since date of notification from the employer are considered backlog).* | Reduce the backlog by 1,000 (April 2025 – March 2026)  Reduce the backlog by 2,000 (April 2026 – March 2027)  Reduce the backlog by 2,000 (April 2027 – March 2028) |
| Implement the upgraded member self-service portal, Heywood Engage. | The Fund’s current member self-service portal (MSS) reaches its end of life on 31 January 2026. The upgraded member self-service portal, Engage, has many enhanced features to provide scheme members with a better understanding of their future pension entitlement, including additional security features, SMS MFA and electronic identity verification (EIDV).  A contract has been signed to commence implementation with an expected go-live date of November 2025. | Complete fact-finding documentation to inform project documentation and Implementation Study  (May 2025 – June 2025)  Installation of Engage and user acceptance testing  (July 2025 – September 2025)  Engage to made available to scheme members  (November 2025) |

Investment related activities

| **Activity** | **Background** | **Key Milestones** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Support the build of the ACCESS FCA regulated entity. | The fund is a member of the ACCESS asset pool, contracting with Waystone, an FCA-regulated operator, with a small support function.    Based on the LGPS Fit for the Future consultation published in November 2024, all pools must be established as FCA-regulated investment management companies, possessing the expertise and capacity to implement investment strategies.    The government encourages all pools to carefully consider all options, including establishing a new pool company, merging with another pool, or becoming a client of another pool company for some or all required services.  The pool is required to achieve the pooling requirements by March 2026. | Support the pool to:  Identify the cost/performance benefits of different models. (Q1 2025)    Approval from Government of submitted transition plan for build option (Q1 2025).  Implementation planning & regulatory applications (Q2 2025)  Approval of shareholder agreement by Council (Q2 2025)  Transition to new structure (Build or Merge) (March 2026) |
| Implement the governance structure to support local investment decisions. | The LGPS Fit for the Future consultation outlines detailed local investment proposals, requiring funds to define their approach to local investment within their Investment Strategy Statement (ISS), including setting a target percentage of the fund.    It mandates collaboration with combined authorities and similar bodies to identify local investment opportunities, conducting due diligence on potential investments, and reporting annually on the extent and impact of local investments. | Develop an approach to local investments within the ISS, including target % range (Q1 2026)  Develop an approach to ensure local investment opportunities can be:   * reviewed by each ACCESS Fund; * submitted to ACCESS for due diligence; and * invested in equitably in accordance with each Fund’s local investment allocation. (Q1 2026)   ACCESS to develop the capability to conduct suitable due diligence on local investment opportunities (Q2 2026) |
| Finalise the transfer of legacy assets into the ACCESS pool. | The key asset pooling proposals outlined in the LGPS Fit for the Future consultation require the Fund to transfer legacy assets to the management of the pool.  The Fund currently holds investments outside of the pool, the consultation ask pools to transfer these “legacy” assets to the pool by March 2026. | Review final legacy asset proposals arising from consultation (Q1 2025)  Share details of the Fund’s legacy assets with ACCESS. (Q2 2025)  Undertake due diligence on proposed ACCESS legacy assets management arrangements (Q3 2025)  Transfer management of the Fund’s legacy assets to ACCESS. (March 2026) |
| Survey members and employers to identify the sustainability issues they consider most important in relation to Fund investments and responsible investment practices. | To ensure the Fund’s investment strategy is developed with knowledge of stakeholder priorities, the Fund will identify key sustainability issues through a member and employer survey. Investment consultants may be engaged to support this process, ensuring robust analysis and alignment with responsible investment trends.  The findings will inform the Fund’s broader investment strategy, integrating sustainability considerations to meet long-term goals and stakeholder expectations. | Discuss scope with Consultants (February 2025)  Agree timeline and questions (February 2025)  Issue Survey to scheme members and employers (March 2025)  Review survey responses and discuss findings with consultants. (April 2025)  Develop investment strategy (Q1 2026) |

Scheme employer projects

| **Activity** | **Background** | **Key Milestones** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Complete the 2025 Fund Valuation. | Work with the Fund’s actuarial advisors to complete the 2025 valuation of the Pension Fund. The valuation date is 31 March 2025 but the work is carried out during 2025/26 with results to be published by 31 March 2026 and new employer contribution rates effective from 1 April 2026. | Develop and seek approval for Funding Strategy Statement and associated funding policies. (April to June 2025)  Provision, validation and sign-off of valuation data. (June to August 2025)  Whole Fund valuation results provided by the Fund Actuary. (October 2025)  Issue draft employer results and Funding Strategy Statement for consultation. (October to November 2025)  Seek final approval for Funding Strategy Statement. (December 2025)  Consultation and discussions with employers to agree contribution strategies. (November 2025 to January 2026)  Publication of final valuation report and rates and adjustments certificate. (March 2026) |
| Undertake specific modelling of potential options for implementing multiple investment strategies. | Work together with the Fund Actuary and the Fund’s investment advisors to develop and model specific alternative employer investment strategies and agree a process for implementation of such strategies. | Initial meeting with Fund Actuary and investment advisors to agree scope and strategies to be modelled. (Apr - May 2025)  Agreed strategies to be modelled (May – June 2025)  Consultation with appropriate employer types. ( June to July 2025)  Seek approval from the Pension Committee over proposed investment strategies . (October 2025)  Agree and start implementation process. (March 2026)  Implement agreed strategies for all employer types. (April 2026) |

Appendix A: Pensions Service structure