

TEESSIDE PENSION BOARD

A meeting of the Teesside Pension Board was held on Monday 17 November 2025.

PRESENT: Councillor N Walker, J Bell and J Stubbs

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: H Chambers (South Tyneside) and P McCann (South Tyneside)

OFFICERS: C Jones, A Lister and A Prior

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors C Massey and P Thompson

25/43 WELCOME AND FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and read out the Building Evacuation Procedure.

25/44 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Name of Member	Type of Interest	Item/Nature of Interest
J Bell	Non pecuniary	Member of Teesside Pension Fund
Councillor N Walker	Non pecuniary	Deferred Member of Teesside Pension Fund

25/45 MINUTES - TEESSIDE PENSION BOARD - 7 JULY 2025

The minutes of the meeting of the Teesside Pension Board held on 7 July 2025 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

25/46 MINUTES - TEESSIDE PENSION FUND COMMITTEE - 18 JUNE 2025

A copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Teesside Pension Fund Committee held on 18 June 2025 was submitted for information.

25/47 MINUTES - TEESSIDE PENSION FUND COMMITTEE - 23 JULY 2025

A copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Teesside Pension Fund Committee held on 23 July 2025 was submitted for information.

25/48 TEESSIDE PENSION FUND COMMITTEE - 24 SEPTEMBER 2025

The Head of Pensions, Governance and Investments provided a verbal update on agenda items considered at a meeting of the Teesside Pension Fund Committee held on 24 September 2025. Items included:

- Presentation from Border to Coast with an update on Real Estate.
- Investment Activity Report.
- Investment Advisors Reports
- Pooling Governance
- Administration Report.
- Draft Annual Pension Fund Report
- Presentation from the actuary re various contributions.

AGREED that the information provided was received and noted.

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

A report of the Director of Finance and Transformation was presented to provide Members of the Teesside Pension Board with an update on the Board Membership.

The purpose of the report was to

- appoint a Deputy Chair from the scheme-member representatives;
- update the Members of the Teesside Pension Board on progress and proposals to fill vacancies on the Board;
- remind the Board Members of their terms of office and that the Deputy Chair will become the Chair (by rotation).

Proposed Change in Board Composition

The Head of Pensions, Governance and Investments advised the Board of a request to amend the terms of reference to enable each of the four main councils to have representation on the Board. This would require increasing the number of employer-nominated Board members by two to allow each council to appoint a representative.

The Board discussed the implications of increasing its size, including the potential impact on the quorum requirements, the importance of ensuring Members possess the necessary training and expertise and the historic difficulty in recruiting new Members to the Board. A Member noted that Board Members do not represent their individual Local Authorities, but rather the interests of the Fund as a whole. Following discussion, it was agreed that the current Board structure should remain unchanged, as it provided continuity and ensured the necessary competency to support effective decision-making.

Board Vacancies

Members were advised that following the last meeting, there were two vacancies on the Teesside Pension Board;

- A vacancy for a scheme-member Board representatives drawn from the recognised trade unions representing employees who were scheme members of the Fund and;
- A vacancy for an employer-member Board representatives drawn from an employer other than the four main Councils (Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton Councils).

A request was made to the trade unions to nominate a scheme member representative to the Board with a closing date for nominations of 7th November 2025. The trade unions that could nominate employer representatives were GMB, UNISON and UNITE. Previous scheme member representatives were able to apply. If there was more than one nomination the candidates would have been invited to interview, which would have been conducted by a selection panel consisting of Middlesbrough Council's Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer and Head of Pensions Governance and Investments. Only one nomination was received from the trade unions for Mr Paul Thompson of Unison whose nomination was also supported by GMB. Paul was therefore welcomed back onto the Board with a new four-year term.

As Members had agreed to retain the current Board structure, the Head of Pensions Governance and Investments would now coordinate the recruitment process for the employer-member Board representative and report back on progress to the next Board meeting.

Extension to Terms of Office

The Board were advised that the term of office for the member representative, Mr Jeff Bell would expire in February 2026. Extensions to terms of office up to a maximum of two years may be made by the Appointment Panel with the agreement of the Board or a Board member may be appointed for further terms of office using the usual appointment process.

Mr Jeff Bell had agreed to extend his term of membership and the Board confirmed their agreement.

Board Chair

The Board were advised that term of office of the previous Board Chair expired following the last meeting. This created a vacancy, which, in accordance with the Board's Terms of

Reference, was to be filled by the Vice Chair, Councillor Massey. As Councillor Massey had submitted his apologies for this meeting, it was agreed that he should be contacted to confirm his acceptance of the role.

Following discussion, the Board agreed that Mr Jeff Bell would assume the role of Vice Chair, which he accepted.

AGREED that:

- The information provided was received and noted.
- The current Board structure should remain unchanged.
- Mr Paul Thompson was reappointed to the Board on a new four-year term.
- The Head of Pensions Governance and Investments would coordinate the recruitment process for the employer-member Board representative and report back on progress to the next Board meeting.
- An extension be put in place to the terms of office of Jeff Bell for two years following agreement by the Board.
- Councillor Massey is to confirm his acceptance of his position as Chair. Mr J Bell is to become Vice Chair.

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GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION LGPS ACCESS AND PROTECTIONS

At this point in the meeting, Cllr Walker declared a further interest, given that the agenda item pertained to proposals to reinstate LGPS eligibility for Councillors.

A report of the Director of Finance and Transformation was presented to inform Members of the consultation issued by the Government the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in England and Wales: Scheme improvements (access and protections) and to outline some key points from the consultation and how the Teesside Fund could be impacted by the eventual outcome.

The Board were advised that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) were consulting on restoring access to the Local Government Pension Scheme for Councillors in England and extending it to Mayors. The consultation comes off the back of the Access and Fairness consultation earlier this year and covers further administration and benefits related issues, some of which have long been in the offing (like Fair Deal) and some which are more recent proposals (the readmission of councillors into the scheme).

The proposed reforms would align England with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland where elected members already had access. MHCLG stated that "The proposals would show locally elected leaders the respect they deserved as dedicated public servants. This comes as local government reorganisation and devolution continued to reshape councils across England, the responsibilities held by Mayors and Councillors were expanding significantly."

Other measures being consulted on included making it simpler for Multi-Academy Trusts to apply for their staff from different schools to be in the same pension fund and the implementation of new Fair Deal protections ensuring workers outsourced from local government keep seamless access to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

A Member queried whether there was a process through which all four Local Authorities could seek the views of their Councillors regarding the readmission of Councillors to the scheme. It was suggested that the Monitoring Officers be contacted, to explore whether they could facilitate this.

It was noted that there was a nine-week deadline for consultation responses. The Head of Pensions Governance and Investments would continue to work with colleagues in Border to Coast and its Partner Funds to produce a response for discussion.

AGREED that the information provided was received and noted.

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DRAFT TEESSIDE PENSION BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

A report of the Director of Finance and Transformation was presented to provide Members with a draft Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts for the Teesside Pension Fund.

The recommendation of the report was that Members noted the draft Teesside Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25, at Appendix A.

The Annual Report included;

- Overall Fund Management
- Governance and Training
- Financial Performance
- Fund account, net assets statement and notes
- Investments and Funding
- Administration

The Draft Pension Fund Annual Report 2024/25 would be published prior to the 1st December deadline. A final version of the Annual Report would be produced and published once the audit of the 2024/25 accounts was complete.

AGREED that the Teesside Pension Fund draft Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25 was received and noted.

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UPDATE ON WORK PLAN ITEMS

A report of the Director of Finance was presented to provide Members of the Teesside Pension Board with information on items scheduled in the work plan for consideration at the current meeting and to present the Board with an updated work plan covering the next two calendar years.

The items scheduled for consideration in the work plan for this meeting were a review of administration reports in relation to any late payment of contributions and the annual review of Board training.

The work plan at Appendix A of the report, set out the planned activity for the Board. This was brought to each Board meeting and would be updated in line with suggestions from the Board and to take account of any changes to best practice or the regulations and guidance for the Scheme.

AGREED that the information provided be noted.

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ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED

None.

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EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

In relation to the Pension Administration Report and appendices at Agenda Item 14, the Monitoring Officer had determined that the report did not meet the criteria to be exempt from press and public. Therefore, the Chair recommended that Members of the Board agreed that the report could be heard in public.

ORDERED that;

- The report for Agenda Item 14, previously marked as exempt, be heard in public;
- In respect of Appendix A and Appendix B, the Board passed a Resolution Pursuant to Section 100A (4) Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 excluding the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the grounds that if present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information falling within paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

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PENSION ADMINISTRATION REPORT

A report was presented by representatives of Tyne and Wear Pension Fund to provide Members with an update on the Fund's administration since the change in contract.

From 1 June 2025, the administration of the Teesside Pension Fund successfully transitioned

from XPS Group to the Tyne and Wear Pension Fund (TWPF) under a shared service arrangement. The initial success of this transition was measured by two critical milestones:

- The complete migration of member and employer data and documents as held on the previous provider's pensions administration system to Tyne and Wear Pension Fund's system.
- The timely payment of pensions to all pensioner members on 30 June 2025, ensuring continuity of service without disruption. Both of the initial objectives were achieved. Notwithstanding this, it was accepted by both TWPF and TPF that 1 June marked an extremely challenging go-live date; falling in the middle of the delivery timetables for year-end contribution posting, annual benefit statement production and the 2025 Triennial Valuation.

The report included:

- Annual Benefit Statement Production
- Online Member Services Registration
- Member Data for the 2025 Triennial Valuation
- Service Delivery
- Performance Against Statutory requirements and Key Performance Indicators
- Pensions Dashboard
- McCloud Remedy
- GMP Rectification

In conclusion, representatives advised that the transition to TWPF administration had been successfully completed with additional tasks delivered, exceeding initial expectations. It was acknowledged that there had been some short-term disruption to service delivery, but this was very much an improving picture.

AGREED that the information provided be noted.