

Governance Action Plan

The Croydon Pension Board commissioned Aon to carry out a Governance Review for the London Borough of Croydon Pension Fund which concluded in September 2019. Aon also undertook an independent review of the Fund's compliance with the Pension Regulator's (TPR's) Code of Practice No.14 which was completed in February 2019. Findings on both have been shared with senior officers of the Pension Fund and the Chair of the Pension Board.

This action plan relies heavily on work done by Aon on the Review. The table below sets out the areas which are recommended that the Fund consider in an action plan to address highlighted areas from the Governance Review and the review of compliance with TPR Code of Practice No.14. It includes timescales for action and aligns with the meeting schedule for both the Pensions Committee and Pension Board. These will be incorporated into the Fund's business plan.

The following action plan is set out in three overarching areas (i) Direction - which focuses on policies/strategies and the Fund's Annual Report and Accounts, (ii) Delivery - which focuses on how the Fund's implements its strategies and policies, together with appropriate monitoring as to whether they are being achieved, and good risk management to ensure effective and efficient delivery and (iii) Decisions - which focuses on the governance structure, approach to training and the overall ability of decisions makers to make appropriate decisions.

Direction – What is the Fund trying to achieve?

Having clear strategies and policies that also meet legislative requirements are fundamental. The following actions are drawn from the Aon Governance Report and TPR compliance review.

Reference	Title	Action	Officer Responsible	Due Date	Comments	Pension Board Review	Pensions Committee Decision	Date Completed
1	Policies							
1.1	Knowledge and Skills Policy	<p>Introduce a Pension Fund Knowledge and Skills Policy clarifying expectations for all those involved with the governance of the Fund (i.e. the Pensions Committee, Pension Board and Senior Officers). It should also have regard to the work with the London CIV.</p> <p>This needs to be supported by training, with reference to the CIPFA Guidance</p>	Director of Finance, Investment & Risk (Section S151) responsibility	Q4 2019/20	<p>This recommendation was also made in the 2016 Governance review and not progressed. Local Pension Board Policy in place should be incorporated into one policy covering all areas. This policy should include details of the designated person, it is recommended this should be the S151 officer. If this is not achieved the shortfall can be reflected in individual training plans.</p> <p>Add list of documents that Board and Committee members should be conversant with to this policy.</p> <p>Links with training needs assessment and monitoring. It was also not clear if all Pension Board members have completed the TPR toolkit during the review.</p>	Pension Board 2 APRIL 2020	Pension Committee September 2020	

1.2	Conflicts of Interest	Review Pension Board Conflict Policy and then expand to cover all of those involved with the management of the Fund (i.e. Pension Committee and senior officers) in a Fund wide Conflicts of Interest Policy . It should also have regard to the work with the London CIV		Q4 2019/20	Completed.			
1.3	Funding Strategy Statement	Some minor amendments could be made to this to incorporate the London CIV as part as the 2019 valuation.	Head of Pensions and Treasury - Nigel Cook	Q4 2019/20	This will be reviewed as part of the 2019 valuation and these minor changes should be reflected there	N/A	Pension Committee 17 March 2020	
1.4	Governance Policy and Compliance Statement	Review overall policy and update Statutory Compliance Statement to ensure includes all required areas. Update to reflect the delegated responsibilities and governance structure relating to LGPS pooling through the London CIV. For example there is no mention in the current policy of asset pooling, such as changes to delegated responsibilities or the new governance bodies (Shareholder Committee).	Governance & Compliance Manager	Q4 2019/20	This needs to be reviewed again in March 2020. The policy refers to two appendices. Appendix B states the extent to which it complies with points in the Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance however not all points from the 2008 guidance are included. The appendices to the Policy are not available on the Fund website and we have not seen evidence that it has been updated since 2017 (currently annual but moving to three yearly). Also must be approved by Committee. Note links with 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3.	Agreed by Pension Board on 17 October 2019 – If necessary to comply with "decisions 10.1-10.3" will be reported to the Pension Board on 16 January 2020.	Agreed by Pension Committee 17 September 2019 - If necessary to comply with "Decisions 10.1-10.3" will be reported to Pension Committee on 17 March 2020	
1.5	Investment Strategy Statement	On next review once the 2019 valuation is concluding, re-introduce the Myners Compliance Statement.	Head of Pensions and Treasury - Nigel Cook	Q1 2020/21	This will be reviewed as part of the 2019 valuation and these changes should be reflected there	N/A	In accordance with decision of Pension Committee on 5 November 2019 the revised statement will be produced by officers under delegated powers by 31 March 2020	

1.6	Breaches of the Law Policy	Review current Pension Board breaches procedure but in doing so, expand to cover all of those involved with the management of the Fund (i.e. Committee and senior officers).	Governance & Compliance Manager	Q1 2020/21	There appears to have been no updates or changes since the previous review. See breaches monitoring and recording (6.1)	Pension Board July 2020	Pension Committee June 2020	
1.7	Communications Policy	Consider whether Policy should be updated to include mention of London CIV. Reference to risks relating to the policy and how they are managed should be added.	Governance & Compliance Manager	Q1 2020/21	This was last reviewed in June 2017 and currently due annual review but move to three yearly so review no later than June 2020.	Agreed by Pension Board On 17 October 2019.	Agreed by Pension Committee On 17 September 2019.	
1.8	Administering Authority Discretionary Policy	Introduce a Pension Fund Administering Authority Discretionary Policy to provide clarity on these areas.	Governance & Compliance Manager	Q1 2020/21	There have been no changes since the previous review. In a Board paper (January 2019) reference was made to a list of policies which are required, and this included a Policy Statement of Exercise of Discretionary Powers. It is not known if the Board agreed to focus on this policy. This is legally required.	Pension Board July 2020	Pension Committee June 2020	
1.9	Employer (admission / cessation / bulk transfer) Policy	Consider whether to introduce admission and bulk transfer policies, to provide greater detail and expand on some of the areas in the FSS. Update the "Policy for Employer leaving the Fund" in line with exit credit legislation (and review when further amendment regulations are made).	Head of Pensions and Treasury - Nigel Cook	TBC	Although not legally required, many administering authorities have now put admission and bulk transfer policies in place to provide greater detail and expand on some of the areas in the FSS.	N/A	TBC	

1.10	General points relating to policies	<p>As each policy/strategy is reviewed, ensure it includes all the key areas of aims/objectives, measures, risks, who was consulted, when/how approved, when it is due for next review.</p> <p>Ensure that all relevant policies are updated to reflect pooling through the London CIV Ltd.</p> <p>Ensure all policies/strategies and key documents are on the Fund's website (and a process is in place to update them as new versions are agreed).</p>	Governance & Compliance Manager	Ongoing				
2	Annual Report and Accounts							
2.1	Approval	Ensure all future years' annual report are formally approved by the Committee.	Head of Pensions and Treasury - Nigel Cook	Q2 2020/21	The Annual Report and Accounts was considered at the September 2018 Committee meeting, including the associated audit report. However, the report was noted rather than approved by the Committee.		The 2018/2019 Annual Report and Accounts have been published. The 2019/2020 versions will be considered by Pension Committee September 2020	
2.2	Adherence with CIPFA Guidance	Review content of annual report to ensure it adheres to CIPFA guidance.	Head of Pensions and Treasury - Nigel Cook	Q2 2020/21	The 2017/18 annual report again do not appear to include the elements of the CIPFA annual guidance that were missing in the previous years. Note more recent guidance has been issued so a review against that will be required. Officers set out an explanation for departures from the guidance – these departures were largely due to lack of data collected for new reporting requirements. These explanations were accepted by the auditor.		The 2018/2019 Annual Report and Accounts have been published. The 2019/2020 versions will be considered by Pension Committee September 2020	

Delivery

Having a clear plan for implementing the Fund's strategies and policies, together with appropriate monitoring as to whether they are being achieved, and good risk management ensure effective and efficient delivery. The following actions are drawn from the Aon Governance Report and TPR compliance review.

Reference	Title	Action	Officer Responsible	Due Date	Comments	Pension Board Review	Pensions Committee Decision	Date Completed
3	Business Planning							
3.1	Develop a Fund Business Plan	<p>Introduce a three-year rolling business plan incorporating the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - legislation (e.g. valuation, implementation of a forthcoming legislative changes), - performance monitoring (e.g. the review of an area of a service that is failing to meet the agreed service standard) - standard practice (e.g. review of advisers, review of strategies and policies), - the evolving environment (e.g. new investment vehicles, a greater focus on information technology efficiencies) - risk management (e.g. reviewing staffing structure due to increasing manpower risk). <p>Ensure the Fund's Business Plan aligns with the London CIV Business Plan and that London CIV are aware of LB of Croydon Pension Fund's requirements.</p>	Governance & Compliance Manager	Q2 2020/2021.	<p>CIPFA guidance set out the requirement to have a business plan in place for the Fund.</p> <p>There is no explicit business plan for the Fund. However, some elements that would make up a business plan are undertaken, including a forward plan of both Pension Committee and Pension Board business.</p> <p>The current practice should be improved and made more transparent with the development of a central business plan incorporating or summarising all of these elements in a single place of reference. It should include (or be agreed at the same time) as the Fund's budget, including London CIV costs, and should be approved by the Pension Committee.</p>	Pension Board 2 April 2020	Pension Committee September 2020.	
4	Performance Measurement							

4.1	Build on Key Performance Indicator (KPI) information/measures provided to Pension Committee	<p>Introduce additional performance measures including funding, governance, administration and communications matters ensuring measures are aligned to the objectives within the Fund's policies and strategies. Key measures should be referenced in strategies and policies.</p> <p>Ensure Administration and Communication updates, including these performance measures, are a standing item on Committee agendas.</p> <p>Review the objectives of the London CIV and elements that were highlighted as part of the initial business case, to identify any further matters that can be more scientifically measured and reported to the Fund as key performance indicators, including in relation to costs.</p>	Head of Service	Q4 2020/21 (likely to have multiple stages)	<p>In the 2016 report Aon noted that investment activity is covered in detail in the Committee papers. Aon recommend that other areas including funding, governance, administration and communications matters are also covered during Committee meetings. There is evidence of improvement with regular inclusion of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) covering mainly administration as well as updates on funding and governance matters.</p> <p>Note that CIPFA Annual Report guidance issued in March 2019 sets out requirements for KPIs relating to administration to be reported on annually.</p>	Additional KPIs to be included at Pension Board 2 April 2020. Initial results have already been presented to the Board and Committee.	Additional KPIs to be included At Pension Committee 17 March 2020.	
4.2	Data Improvement Plan	Given TPR focus on data quality the Fund should develop a data improvement plan which should be subject to regular review. This should include regular measuring of and improving conditional and scheme specific data.	Governance & Compliance Manager	December 2020.		Pension Board July 2020	Pension Committee December 2020.	
5	Risk Management							

5.1	Risk Register	Risk register should be updated regularly and a standing item at the Pensions Committee and Local Pension Board meetings. TPR guidance states that a scheme manager "must establish and operate internal controls". LB of Croydon should ensure it full meets the requirements of this guidance.	Governance & Compliance Manager	Q4 2019/0	Completed. A 6-monthly review of the risk register happens. The Committee considers risks rated as amber or red.	Full Register to be provided to alternate Pension Boards, i.e. 2 April 2020, September 2020, March 2021 and subsequent alternate .	Full register to be provided to alternating Pension Committees, i.e. 17 March 2020, September 2020, March 2021 and subsequent alternate meetings.	
5.2	Formal review of risk management and time spent on risk management	Suggest that activity to consider risk management and internal controls are undertaken and documented in addition to monitoring the risk register.	Governance & Compliance Manager	Completed.	Internal and external audit reviews meet this requirement.	Pension Board 2 April 2020	Pension Committee 17 March 2020	
6	Breaches							
6.1	Breaches recording and monitoring	Introduce a system to record and monitor breaches and introduce reporting of these to Committee and Board via a clear and regularly updates breaches log.	Head of Service / Governance & Compliance Manager	Q2 2020/21	Should include but not be restricted to legal timescales for administration tasks (many of which are now in CIPFA annual report requirements).	Report to each meeting	Report to each meeting	
7	Resources							
7.1	Adequate resources and succession planning	Review appropriateness of staffing levels and consider succession planning	Head of Service	Ongoing	A number of senior officers involved in the management of the Fund have left the Administering Authority. Consider whether some of the areas for improvement identified in this report have been impacted by a lack of resource, and perhaps a gap in expertise, as result of these departures. If so, review the appropriateness of the staffing levels and also consider succession planning. This will be added to the administration KPI report.	Monitored annually by the Pension Board.	The Chair of the Board reports annually to the Pensions Committee.	

Decisions

Having an appropriate governance structure, involving the right people, with the right attitude and the appropriate skills and knowledge is key. The following actions are drawn from the Aon Governance Report and TPR compliance review.

Reference	Title	Action	Officer Responsible	Due Date	Comments	Pension Board Review	Pensions Committee Decision
8	Conflict of Interest						
8.1	Conflict of Interest declarations and approach for implementing Fund wide policy	<p>This should involve implementing the requirements of the Fund wide Conflict of Interest Policy including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it should clearly set out who conflicts should be reported to - require all parties to complete a declaration and allow for an annual exercise to reaffirm declarations - implement conflict register 	Governance & Compliance Manager	Completed.	Covered by Council's Constitution. .	Interests disclosed at every meeting.	Interests disclosed at every meeting; there is a reference to the member's entry in the Register of Interests.
9	Knowledge and Skills						
9.1	Training plan implemented, assessed and managed	<p>Implement training plan as part of Knowledge and Skills Policy including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - training needs assessment of the Committee and Board annually. - introduce induction training and ongoing regular training on conflicts of interest and pension fund responsibilities (including fiduciary responsibility), and consider further training requirements relating to the London CIV and asset pooling. - consider further training opportunities including access to external training events to expand the knowledge of members. - an up to date training log should be maintained for the Board and Committee. 	Governance & Compliance Manager	<p>Q2 2020/21.</p> <p>Delivery is linked to 1.1 above.</p>			
10	Governance Structure						
10.1	Governance Structure – Functions of the Pensions Board	Update Part 3 of the Constitution is updated to be consistent to avoid any confusion around the responsibilities of the Pension Board.	Governance & Compliance Manager	June 2020.	Part of overall constitutional role	June 2020	June 2020
10.2	Governance Structure - Scheme of Delegation	<p>Consider officer delegations (within Constitution and more generally) and ensure they are clearly documented.</p> <p>Given some concerns that have been raised about who makes decisions, consider review of the Committee terms of reference.</p>	Governance & Compliance Manager	Q1 2020/21	Completed.		

10.3	Governance Structure - London CIV	<p>Update Constitution as required to reflect new London CIV governance arrangements.</p> <p>Review information sharing with and from the London CIV and its governance bodies to ensure appropriate information is being provided to the officers, Pension Committee and Pension Board, and there is appropriate engagement.</p> <p>Ensure that the new client engagement approach to be provided by the London CIV is agreed and put in place.</p>	Governance & Compliance Manager	Ongoing	Now in place.		
11	Meeting Administration						
11.1	Meeting Minutes	Review minutes to ensure appropriate level of detail and all comments and concerns raised at meetings are captured.	Democratic Services		Complete. Minutes are taken in the standard LB Croydon format. Members are able to request comments are noted in minutes.		

Additional items

These are additional areas that arose from the review of compliance with the Pension Regulator's code of practice No. 14 and the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) guidance.

Reference	Title	Action	Officer Responsible	Due Date	Comments	Pension Board Review	Pensions Committee Decision
12	TPR Survey						
12.1	Annual Survey	Ensure Response provided to TPR annual survey request - normally November each year	Pensions Administration Manager.	Done.			
13	Publishing information about the Board						
13.1	Website	Consider adding additional information from Code of Practice paragraph 96 about the Pension Board and Pension Committee members onto the Fund website.	Hymans, as provider of website.	In progress.			
14	Maintaining accurate member data						
14.1	Record Management Policy	It is recommended that a Record Management Policy is implemented setting out how records are maintained and the future deletion policy.	Pensions Administration Manager.	December 2020		Jan-21	NA
14.2	AVC providers	Consider checking with AVC providers regarding data held.	Pension Administration Manager.	Done	Done	Done	
15	Maintaining contributions						
15.1	Formalise procedure regarding reporting and monitoring contributions	Suggest the Fund formalise reporting and monitoring requirements for receipt of contributions in formal process notes and refer to in administration strategy.	Governance and Compliance Manager	December 2020.		Dec-20	NA
16	Providing information to members and others						
16.1	ABS - Active	Ensure accompanying notes to ABS statement are fully compliant with requirements	Pensions Administration Manager.	Q1/2 2020/21	Active ABS and notes independently reviewed by Aon & not fully compliant. To be addressed by reporting KPIs.		
16.2	ABS - Deferred	Ensure accompanying notes to ABS statement are fully compliant with requirements	Pensions Administration Manager.	Q1/2 2020/21	Deferred 2018 ABS and notes independently reviewed by Aon & not fully compliant.	Engage with Board to complete - Officers to lead.	Share confirmation with Pensions Committee for information.

16.2	Benefit Statements - requested by member	We suggest that KPI/SLA statistics are held on whether benefit statements following a request by an active, deferred or pension credit member are provided no more than two months after the date the request is made.	Pensions Administration Manager.	Ongoing	To be included in the KPI reporting process.	NA	NA
17	Internal Dispute Resolution						
17.1	IDRP	Next update to this guide to include details on what is exempt (as per section 50(9) of the 1995 Pensions Act. Officers also confirmed they would check approach of non-administering authority employers relating to stage 1 IDRPs. It is recommended that the Fund maintain a log of IDRP cases is maintained including receipt and issuing of letters to monitor timescales.	Head of Pensions Administration.	December 2020.		Engage with Board to complete	Committee to sign off PENSION COMMITTEE SEPTEMBER 2020 December 2020
17.2	TPAS role - amend guidance	Update to include details on what is TPAS role now is.	Head of Pensions Administration.	June 2020.	The signposting requirements have changed as a result of the disputes arm of TPAS moving to the Ombudsman. The guide needs to be updated to reflect this as it still refers to TPAS offering support for disputes. TPAS is now only available for general guidance.	June	NA
18	SAB requirements						
18.1	Freedom of Information	Suggest report to Pension Board on FOI compliance is issued by officers, this should be accompanied by appropriate guidance and or training (as required).		TBC	Will follow the same process as the Council.		Done - Council FOI process
18.2	Board Annual Report	Consider producing an annual report for the Board (which could form part of the Fund's annual report).	Governance and Compliance Manager.	Done	We would expect this to be prepared by the Board itself, probably initial draft by the Chair.		Done and keep separate. Check guidance.