



Firefighters' Pensions England

Scheme Advisory Board

LPB EFFECTIVENESS COMMITTEE

ACTIONS AND AGREEMENTS

Tuesday 23 January 2024

MS Teams

PRESENT

Tony Curry (TC)	Chair
Joanne Livingstone (JL)	SAB Chair
Alan Tranter (AT)	FRA/LPB Representative (West Midlands LPB)
James Clarkson (JC)	Practitioner Representative (West Yorkshire FRS)
Claire Johnson (CJ)	LGA – Board secretariat
Tara Atkins (TA)	LGA – Board secretariat (minutes)
Sandra Sedgwick (SS)	LGA – current working for Cumbria FRS

APOLOGIES

Becky Smeathers (BS)	Finance Representative (Nottinghamshire FRS)
Debbie Yeates (DY)	Human Resources Representative (Lincolnshire FRS)
Cllr Roger Phillips (RP)	Employer Representative

1. Introductions and apologies

- 1.1. Apologies were received from Debbie Yeates, Becky Smeathers, and Cllr Roger Phillips.

2. Chair's welcome

- 2.1. Tony Curry (TC) welcomed all to the committee in his first meeting as chair. TC noted that the committee had not met in some time and the agenda provided useful context for the committee's objectives. Introductions were made around the virtual room.
- 2.2. Joanne Livingstone (JL) reflected on the fact the sector is in the implementation phase of two major projects for Sargeant and Matthews and JL is bemused that Local Pension Boards (LPBs) are still using guidance that was provided years ago, and do not appear to be reflective of the pensions landscape moving on.
- 2.3. TC has been reflecting on the LPBs in his regional FBU area and how they work and the agenda items that are covered.

- 2.4. JL then asked how does the committee support the Scheme Advisory Board in their role?
- 2.5. Alan Tranter (AT) reflected on when West Midlands FRS came under scrutiny from the Pensions Regulator (TPR) and have had to make changes to, and within their LPB. They have implemented the review of information that comes from LGA in their bulletins, what questions are the LPB prepared to ask the scheme manager and what is the organisation doing to work effectively and economically. AT reflected that this has not resolved all of the problems, but it has put them on the front foot

3. LPB Effectiveness Committee Constitution

- 3.1. The first area that was discussed was whether there was enough resource to administer the Committee?
- 3.2. AT reflected on previous meetings and attendance to LPBs where peer review, regional approach to boost the region and work towards a common approach were discussed.
- 3.3. JL reflected on the power of the region and trying to make sure that LPB representatives are attending the regional meetings and how can this committee input into those meetings?
- 3.4. Claire Johnson (CJ) gave a brief summary of the regions and confirmed that that committees are split as follows:
- Northwest
 - Northeast
 - Southwest
 - Southeast
 - Eastern
 - Midlands
- 3.5. CJ confirmed that LPBs are a recurring agenda item for the regional committee meetings, however there is not always a lot of engagement in this discussion, but this could be due to the wrong representation attending the meeting. CJ then suggested that it may be an idea to set up a regional LPB committee so that they can share knowledge and experience.
- 3.6. AT mentioned that not all the LPB members are aware of SAB and what they do, and suggested that engagement with LPB members to try to ensure that they understand what their role is, and that they need to ask scheme managers difficult questions and ensuring that they know that they have the permission to do so. AT also suggested they LPB members also

need to ask how things are happening, and how decisions are made, rather than just being told it is happening.

- 3.7. JL mentioned that she doesn't currently have a list of the LPB Chairs, and asked how we could keep a list of the Chairs?
- 3.8. CJ mentioned that at West Yorkshire they used to rotate the Chair every 12 months, however some independent chairs may have a 4-year term, so the expiration date for each LPB Chair could be different.
- 3.9. Tara Atkins (TA) confirmed that following a recent exercise to obtain up to date contacts at each FRA, we now hold a list of LPB Chairs, which we ask to be updated accordingly.
- 3.10. TC mentioned that we are not aware of who Debbie and Becky are and who they represent. **ACTION** to establish if they are happy to remain on the committee and then if needed, the Committee will take to SAB and ask for new representatives.
- 3.11. TC then asked the committee whether a draft agenda is needed so that everyone is following the same agenda. Examples of the agendas as part of this meeting's agenda items. TC said that he has minutes from his region. FBU represent 13 FRAs (8 standalone) and therefore they can ensure through the FBU that they are asking the right questions in the LPB meetings.
- 3.12. AT spoke about the way that their LPB asked for the areas of business that they would want to hear about and the items that impact pensions. AT then reflected that there are certain items that should be on as standing items, so that it encourages the right questions. LPBs need to be on the front foot, rather than being reactive.
- 3.13. TC suggested that moving forward the committee need to ensure that they are asking the right questions, should members of this committee attend LPB meetings.
- 3.14. AT asked whether this committee has the authority to attend LPB meetings on behalf of the SAB.
- 3.15. CJ raised concern that FRAs are in implementation month 4, 14 months to go to finalise for both Sargeant and Matthews remedies. In terms of timings this committee need to react quickly. Referenced West Midlands and TPR supervision and understanding that they targeted the largest FRAs not because they had concerns. It sounds like TPR highlighted some things that the LPB wouldn't necessarily have known what was wrong but that it was a proactive discussion. CJ suggested that it may be an idea to look at the TPR feedback to see if this helps educate LPBs.
- 3.16. AT suggested that the committee contact a named person at TPR to discuss with them.

- 3.17. JL hoped that the TPR's feedback isn't just that the FRA has not done things correctly, and that they have been working towards any actions that need to be made. Who is on the LPB and how it is made up is an important piece to consider but may not have been something that TPR had thought about.
- 3.18. AT reflected that people fear the pension scheme, and there is a lot of technical and finance information. You do not need to know the full technicalities of pensions, but you do need to understand the scheme, and know what the right questions are to ask.
- 3.19. JL commented that what struck her was that they only sought advice from their own advisers and not from the regional committees or others.
- 3.20. TA mentioned that at a recent conference that was attended TPR held a workshop about engaging with them about improvement, and that they may be happy to come and have a discussion with the committee.
- 3.21. CJ asked about the structure of the LPB and whether Councillor members were on them.
- 3.22. AT mentioned that it may be different depending on the nature of the FRA, as some Councillors have a greater drive to be involved in the LPB, whereas others do not.
- 3.23. TC asked what do Councillors bring to the board.? Are they just there to represent the council but does not add any benefit? This is a good place to discuss what the LPB structure should look like.
- 3.24. CJ suggested reminding FRAs the purpose of the LPB and asking do they have the right structure on the board, so they think about it.
- 3.25. TA reflected that at her previous FRA they did not have Councillors on the LPB, even though they were an FRA that was part of a council.
- 3.26. JL said that a councillor is not necessarily always a bad person on the LPB, as they are used to representing in this type of forum.
- 3.27. CJ commented that it is quite common for LPB members to think that once they have completed their training once that is the end of it, it should be a refresher item where the training is reviewed.
- 3.28. TA reflected that training was an agenda item on their LPB at each meeting, then every year members would complete a training analysis and the training for the coming year was then tailored around the needs of the LPB analysis.
- 3.29. AT agreed that this is what happened at West Midlands LPB.
- 3.30. JL agreed that these are good ideas, but they need to get them out to other LPBs to use.

- 3.31. CJ confirmed that there is a template agenda already on the [FPS Board website](#), but needs refreshing. The committee is looking at the agendas to see whether there is anything that they think can be added to a standard agenda, or where the gaps are lacking.
- 3.32. AT reflected that at one of the TPR supervision sessions they indicated that they wanted an incident log, to keep record of what comes into the inbox e.g. LGA bulletin, and someone had to do something with it. This should be a standard agenda item.
- 3.33. AT also reflected that their LPB has pushed for KPIs with the administrator, and they report back for each meeting, including complaints. A report is provided to the LPB by the HR manager, state of finances, administration. It is then owned through the FRA. Risk register review, 5 matrix as the FRA moved to a 5 matrix from a 4 by 4 matrix. Noted that risk registers are different across the sector. If it is the same risk, it is being rated differently depending on which FRA it is and what risk matrix they are using.
- 3.34. CJ asked more about the incident log. AT confirmed that it does not just cover the bulletin, it also includes the actions that are needed and who is responsible for it, and when it needs to be completed by.
- 3.35. JL reflected that it almost acts as informing to a business plan.
- 3.36. AT confirmed that they break down their business plan for risks, actions etc
- 3.37. Sandra Sedgwick (SS) agreed and reflected that they have similar at Cumbria to West Midlands but said that that this may not be shared wide enough and thinks that it should be sent to all LPB members.
- 3.38. TC confirmed that the FBU sends the bulletin out to all members (firefighters).
- 3.39. AT asked how you effectively get information out to the firefighters, but that is another question. It is important that the information is given out to LPB members, but it is also for members to be proactive about it.
- 3.40. JL thinks that the action plan should be an item on the standard agenda.
- 3.41. TC recommended that to take this forward a review of what has changed needs to take place, and then a suggested LPB agenda template is produced, rather than dictating to LPBs that they must use it.
- 3.42. AT agreed.
- 3.43. JL suggested adding some ideas of what may be asked under each agenda item, as it is equally about educating LPB members about what they should be asking. **ACTION**

4. LPB Training

- 4.1. CJ introduced the LPB training paper and summarised that currently the training is offered to all 44 LPBs, who are entitled to one free training session a year. There are pros and cons to this, and not all LPBs ask for the training, but if they did this could mean that the LGA team are carrying out 44 sets of training, whilst it is acknowledged that some regions have joined up for training sessions. If a new LPB members joins they may have to wait up to 12 months before they can receive this training.
- 4.2. Changing the training to 4 times a year, mainly on MS teams, with one in person session, on the same day at the governance session of the AGM held at Smith Square in London, which allows for more flexibility for LPB members to book on to a session that suits them.
- 4.3. At the moment it is the LGA team that provides the training session, talking for 2-3 hours, however adding in guest speakers on relevant topics will mean that it adds variety and will help with engagement. The intended agenda is as follows:
- LGA – scheme overview, contributions review, dashboards
 - SAB Chair - overview of the work that the SAB do
 - LPB Effectiveness Committee Chair – overview of the work they do.
 - TPR – hot topics on what is happening i.e. General Code
 - Pensions Dashboard Programme to provide a joint session with TPR on where they are and what tools are available to scheme managers.
 - AT expressed that it was felt this is a good idea, particularly including the in-person session on the same day at the AGM, as this helps to provide the justification for LPB members to attend. Broadening the SAB involvement is also a good idea to get the message out.
- 4.4. TC said that his only concern is whether the content can fit into 4 hrs. and the first day of the AGM is an excellent idea and gets the buy in and justifies a full day.
- 4.5. CJ picked up on the diluting what we do, we are still happy to attend LPB's for half an hour to give an update is a better use of our time and puts the training into its own bracket.
- 4.6. JC agreed and said that it allows for flexibility for those who can't attend. Having the input from the SAB will help get engagement.
- 4.7. TC confirmed that the dates need to be out ASAP and ask for the information to be shared with the LPBs. **ACTION** to include within the next bulletin.

4.8. CJ suggested including what work the SAB are involved in, and how influential they can be, and what they have been involved in e.g. the PDDs and consultations. Is there anything that the LPBs should be aware of and on their agendas. Sense check of content with the committee.

4.9. JL agreed.

5. Future meeting dates and venues

5.1. The Committee agreed that they would continue to meet via MS Teams

5.2. CJ that the LGA team will take forward updating the LPB agenda template and bring to the next meeting. **ACTION**

5.3. TC reflected that we need to ensure that we have Cllr Phillips and 2 other representatives to be an effectiveness committee.

6. AOB

6.1. There were no AOB items raised.

LPB EFFECTIVENESS COMMITTEE: ACTION SUMMARY

Date/ Number	Action	Comments	Priority	Owner
08 07 2021 (i)	Committee to suggest redraft of questions on knowledge and understanding to TPR for a future survey.		Medium	All
08 07 2021 (ii)	Committee to consider data gathering exercise on risk management procedures.		Low	All
08 07 2021 (iii)	LGA to invite TPR to a future meeting to discuss the G&A survey results and how the committee could effectively benchmark Fire schemes.		High	LGA
08 07 2021 (iv)	LGA to draft commentary on the key survey highlights and areas for development to include in a future bulletin.		High	LGA
08 07 2021 (v)	Committee to consider requirements and practicalities of committee members delivering standard LPB training.		High	All