
PENSIONS COMMITTEE 15-09-25

Attendance: Councillor Elin Hywel (Chair)
Councillor John Pughe Roberts (Vice Chair)

Councillors: Stephen Churchman, Goronwy Edwards (Conwy County Borough Council), John Brynmor Hughes, R Medwyn Hughes, Ioan Thomas and Robin Williams (Isle of Anglesey County Council)

Officers: Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance), Delyth Jones-Thomas (Investment Manager), Meirion Jones (Pensions Manager) and Lowri Haf Evans (Democracy Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Iwan Huws

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note

4. MINUTES

The Chair accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2025 as a true record.

5. WALES PENSION PARTNERSHIP (WPP) UPDATE

The Investment Manager highlighted that this report was regularly submitted to the Members noting the latest information on WPP's work, as well as the decisions of the March meeting of the Governance Joint Committee (the decision-making body on behalf of the Partnership made up of the Chairs of each fund).

It was confirmed that the audit and the Annual Form had been approved, and no issues had arisen. It was reiterated that the 'Snowdon Project' work, which involved the establishment of an Investment Company for LGPS pension fund investments in Wales, was progressing well, and the next step would be to register with the FCA, (Financial Conduct Authority) by the end of September.

An update was also provided on the training plan, the business plan and the risk register and the responsible investment, climate and stewardship policies had also been reviewed. Reference was made to the detail of the operator's work over the period and to any market conditions that had been monitored by them. The analysis and performance of the sub-funds was mentioned, highlighting that private market investments had been launched and that the Gwynedd Pension Fund had investments in infrastructure, private credit and private equity, with work continuing to seek to launch property investments, later in the autumn. With several new areas, it was reported that information on each individual area was submitted to the joint committee and that private equity had been discussed in July.

Gratitude was expressed for the report.

In response to a comment that WPP continued to refer to the project as the Snowdon Project and not Yr Wyddfa Project, it was noted that the observation had been submitted to WPP, and at every possible opportunity thereafter, the officers had attempted to convey the correct name. It was accepted that the rest of the UK now used the name Yr Wyddfa and the disappointment that WPP, of all organisations, was unable to recognise this. Although phase 1 (the Snowdon Project) had now come to an end, it was accepted that the Chair, at the next meeting of the Joint Committee, should once again press on WPP to refer to the Snowdon Project as Yr Wyddfa Project.

RESOLVED

To accept the report and note the information

Note: Put pressure on WPP once again to refer to the Snowdon Project as Yr Wyddfa Project.

6. TREASURY MANAGEMENT

Submitted - a report by the Investment Manager reporting on the actual results of the Council's treasury management during 2024/25, against the Strategy approved by the Full Council on 7 March 2024. It was reported that it had been a very busy and prosperous year for the Council's treasury management activity as the activity had remained within the constraints originally set. It was confirmed that there had been no defaults by institutions in which the Council had invested money with.

It was reported that £2.5m in interest had been received on investments, which was lower than the £2.7m included in the budget and this was reasonable given the base rate had fallen from 5.25% to 4.5%. It was noted that this interest income was shared with the Pension Fund on a daily balance basis and the Pension Fund received £1.09 million in income for the year in question.

It was reported that, in the context of investment activities, the Council had continued to invest with Banks and Building Societies, Money Market Funds, Pooled Funds, Local Authorities and the Debt Management Office. It was noted that the funds were consistent with the type of investments made for several years by now.

In the context of the compliance and indicators report, it was reported that all activities had fully complied with the CIPFA code of practice and the Council's treasury management strategy – that was good news and demonstrated that there was firm control over the funds.

The members thanked the officer for the report

RESOLVED

To accept the report and note the information

7. PENSIONS COMMITTEE CHAIR DRAFT REPORT FOR THE FUND'S ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT

The Pensions Manager highlighted that the Pension Board was now required to submit an annual report as part of the Pension Fund's annual report and as part of the Fund's annual meeting. It was noted that the report followed the layout of the annual report of the Chair of the Pension Board and included information on the core functions of the Committee, training, work plan, priorities and a summary of the topics discussed during the year.

It was reported that the final report needed to be submitted to the Investment Manager by 30/9/2025 for inclusion as part of the Fund's Annual Report and as part of the Fund's Annual Meeting in November 2025.

Gratitude was expressed for the report and to the staff involved with preparing the work. A suggestion was made to include more detail about how the Committee approached performance challenge and quality assurance – not just discussing investments but trying to drive change.

RESOLVED to accept the report and note the information.

Note: Suggestion to include in paragraph 3 'Committee Work', the Committee's responsibility to challenge, encourage change and seek quality assurance

8. GWYNEDD PENSION FUND RISK REGISTER

Submitted to the Committee - a revised risk register as a means of identifying and understanding the relevant risks to the Pension Fund. Attention was draw to the new risks that had been added – compliance with the Pensions Regulator's General Code (1.4), meeting the dashboard requirements (6.12), introducing a new payroll system (6.13) and responding to a 'Fit for the Future' consultation (9.1-9.3). Reference was also made to the increase in the risk score level of cyber-attacks as a result of recent incidents to large institutions.

It was reiterated that the document was a live document and that further modifications, such as when Fit for Purpose came into force, would be added.

Gratitude was expressed for the report.

RESOLVED

To accept the report and note the information

Note: Correct the wording of Risk 2:12 in English to '*... are not received or are NOT processed or recorded completely and accurately*'

9. PENSION FUND ADMINISTRATION POLICIES

Submitted - the Pensions Manager's report which set out three key administrative policies for the Committee to approve. It was noted that the policies were essential for the effective management and administration of the Pension Fund and were a significant step towards good governance. It was noted that the policies had been reviewed by the Pension Board, and their comments had been included in the final versions.

The Policies were discussed individually, providing the background and context for each one of the Members.

1. Policy on Making Advanced Payments from the Pensioner Payroll
2. Distribution of Death Grant Payment Policy
3. Education Break Policy for LGPS Dependent Child Pension

Members expressed their thanks for the report and for the work of formalising the policies.

DECISION

To accept the report and approve the following policies to be operational as of 1 October 2025

- 1. Policy on Making Advanced Payments from the Pensioner Payroll**
- 2. Distribution of Death Grant Payment Policy**
- 3. Education Break Policy for LGPS Dependent Child Pension**

10. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the meeting during the discussion on the following items due to the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 - Information about the financial or business transactions of any specific person (including the authority that retains that information).

There is an acknowledged public benefit in being open about the use of public resources and related financial issues. However, it was also acknowledged that there were occasions, in order to protect public financial interests, where commercial information must be discussed without being published. The reports related specifically to a proposed procurement process. Publishing such commercially sensitive information could be detrimental to the interests of the Council and its partners by undermining competition. This would be contrary to the wider public interest of securing the best overall outcome. For these reasons, the matter was closed in the public interest.

11. INITIAL RESULTS OF THE 2025 VALUATION

Submitted - a report for information by the Investment Manager formally presenting the initial results of the 2025 actuarial valuation of the Gwynedd Pension Fund. It was highlighted that Members had received training from Hymans Robertson (15-09-25), where the key findings, assumptions, risks and next steps were discussed.

RESOLVED

To accept the report and note the information

12. ROBECO ENGAGEMENT SERVICE – ENGAGEMENT REPORT 01.01.2025 – 31.03.25

Submitted - a quarterly report summarising the work Robeco (WPP Voting and Engagement Provider) was carrying out on behalf of the Pension Fund on responsible investment issues. Reference was made to the areas covered by Robeco during the quarter in question and the information included details of the number of activities and engagements completed which included large companies of international importance. It was also noted that the engagement theme of the quarter in question was Good Governance.

Gratitude was expressed for the report.

RESOLVED

To accept and note the information.

The meeting commenced at 14:30 and concluded at 15:15