



R H O N D D A C Y N O N T A F

PENSIONS

ANNUAL REPORT

WATCH YOUR MONEY GROW



2024

lgps | Local Government
Pension Scheme

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Chairman's Foreword

It is my pleasure, as Chairman of the RCT Pension Fund Committee, to present this year's Pension Fund Annual Report. I would firstly like to extend my thanks to the Committee, Pension Board and Officers who have been involved across the Fund's comprehensive governance arrangements, including most importantly the staff who have continued to ensure that Fund Members receive an excellent service throughout the year.

It was with great sadness that we heard of the passing of Ms Sindy Absalom, a valued colleague and former member of our Pension Board. On behalf of the entire RCT Pension Fund Team, I extend our sincere condolences.

The Pension Committee and Board discharged their respective responsibilities through the year, providing appropriate assurance with regard to the continued high standards of Fund governance and compliance. Members continue to engage in appropriate training, national forums, discussion on inherent risks and opportunity to help inform the Fund's strategy and policy requirements.

It was a volatile year for investment performance, financial markets were impacted by uncertainty around inflation estimates, slowdown in growth and global tensions due to conflict. Despite this, the Fund has continued to meet its objectives, with an improved overall funding level at the end of March'24 of 110%.

The Committee remain resolute in ensuring 'Responsible Investment', including climate risk, is factored into all our investment decisions. The Fund is also a member of the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF) that engage on corporate governance matters.

The Pension Fund Committee are fully aware of the additional workloads associated with the implementation of the McCloud remedy, the Pensions Dashboards programme and wider Fund Administration challenges and continue to receive regular updates in this regard.

The Pensions Team continue to develop and encourage use of the Fund's online membership portal, enhancing the self-service tools and self-help videos to support pension understanding. I would encourage colleagues to ensure that messaging continues to urge members to take maximum advantage of this valuable functionality.

The Wales Pension Partnership (WPP) collaboration continues to make good progress against key milestones. Since I reported last year the 'Pooled Investments' delivered by solutions offered through WPP on behalf of the 8 Welsh LGPS funds has grown to 74%. During 2023/24 WPP concluded the procurement exercise and re-appointed the 'WPP Operator', effective from December 2024. Regular training sessions arranged by WPP have been provided throughout 2023/24 to those charged with the Fund's governance responsibilities.

The Fund's 'active' participating membership remained consistent in overall numbers during the year, with over 23,000 pensioner members / dependants now benefiting from this much valued scheme, with a total of £166.7m of pension benefits paid out during the year.

In conclusion, whilst it has been a difficult year for investment performance against the Fund's benchmark, the overall funding level has continued to improve and we remain committed to the long-term nature of the Fund which our strategies fully reflect. The Pensions Team continue to deliver excellence against an increasingly challenging backdrop and their efforts and performance are duly recognised and appreciated.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report.

Councillor Mark Norris
Chair of the RCT Pension Fund Committee



Introduction

Welcome to this year's Pension Fund Annual Report, which provides an overview of the Fund's Performance and key activities during 2023/24.

Despite the backdrop of uncertainty in financial markets and tightened monetary policy, the Fund achieved a positive return of 11.1% for the year 2023/24. This was behind our fund specific custom benchmark of 13.6%, with inflation remaining a significant challenge throughout the year, with mixed global growth opportunity and gains made in equity returns.

During the year, the market value of the Fund increased from £4.25bn to £4.7bn at the 31st March 2024. Long term investment stability and maintaining our strong overall 'funding position' remain the priority objectives for the Fund. Longer term returns are comfortably ahead of benchmark over 10, 20 and 30 year periods ranking in 10th, 4th and 22nd percentile respectively.

The Wales Pension Partnership (WPP) continues to evolve and by the end of the financial year had assets under management amounting to £18.5bn, which represents 74% of the aggregate investment assets of the 8 LGPS Funds in Wales. The RCT Fund had 83% of its assets managed through the WPP at the end of the financial year. Significant work continues with regard to Responsible Investment. Further details on the work, governance arrangements, policies, annual report and business plan of the WPP can be found at the website (www.walespensionpartnership.org).

Looking ahead...

Sentiment in investment markets remain challenging over the short term, attributable to geopolitical and macroeconomics risks, with events like the UK and US elections during 2024; inflation improvements creating some expectation for interest rate relief; and conflict and increased tensions in the middle east, adding to the existing geopolitical tensions arising from the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. The Fund's diverse portfolio aims to provide resilience over the longer term and smooth those broader investment impact risks over time.

Initial planning discussions have now been held with the Fund Actuary (AON) regarding the 2025 Valuation, with a number of exercises underway to support the process. I am aware that many of our Employers continue to face financial pressures and I will ensure that we maintain effective dialogue through the forthcoming period as our discussions with AON evolve and we begin to see any early signs of likely positions.

The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) have published their review of the 2022 LGPS valuations under section 13 of the Public Service Pensions Act. The Fund has been flagged green on all of the solvency and long-term cost efficiency metrics, indicating there are no material issues.

Barrie Davies, C.P.F.A

CPFA, Deputy Chief Executive / Group Director – Finance, Digital and Frontline Service (Section 151 Officer)

The new McCloud remedy regulations to remove the scheme discrimination, came into force from October 2023 and the GAD published further McCloud guidance for the LGPS in July covering the application of actuarial guidance on the McCloud remedy to retrospective cases. The Pension Administration Team and Fund Employers continue to work extensively to identify historic data required to facilitate the implementation of the remedies across the membership. This is a significant retrospective exercise and whilst measures have been taken to support the Team, the implementation impact on our wider Service provision is being closely monitored through the management team and the Fund's governance structures. Initial results suggest that the financial impact is generally not material for individual members impacted.

The Government's Pensions Dashboards programme which aims to allow individuals to view their consolidated pension benefits in a single online account, is progressing. LGPS Funds have been provided with updated 'data standards' and notified of their onboarding connection date by 31st October 2025. Arrangements at the Fund are underway to ensure 'data readiness' and our ability to meet this timeline.

The Pensions Regulator's (TPR's) General Code of Practice came into force on the 28th March 2024. The Fund is currently undertaking a 'gap analysis' exercise with support from the Pension Board, in order to assess and address any actions required to ensure compliance with the code.

The Fund will continue to participate in any scheme related consultations on behalf of all stakeholders, the most recent consultation in respect of investment pooling was in September 2024. Further consultation is expected in this area before the end of the calendar year.

I am pleased to report that as part of our workforce planning arrangements, the Fund has continued to support apprenticeship and graduate schemes, with a further three apprentice appointments made during 2024. The ongoing commitment to develop the Fund's Administration Team and to invest in new technologies, has helped the Service maintain business continuity and continuous improvement.

The delivery of the Local Government Pension Scheme truly is a partnership and I would extend my sincere thanks to everyone who plays their part in providing scheme members with a first-class service and benefits from this excellent scheme.

I hope that you find the information presented in this report helpful; if you feel it could be improved in any way, we would welcome your suggestions.

Summary

Participating Employers

■ ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

■ ADMITTED BODIES

- › Agored Cymru
- › Atlas FM Ltd
- › Awen Cultural Trust
- › Careers Wales Association
- › Careers Wales - Mid Glamorgan and Powys Ltd
- › Compass Cymoedd Contract Services (Cymoedd) Ltd
- › DBW FM Ltd Formerly Finance Wales Investment Ltd
- › Development Bank of Wales Plc
Formerly Finance Wales Plc
- › Drive Ltd
- › Ecoserve Group Ltd
- › Halo Leisure
- › Little Inspirations Ltd
- › Local Government Data Unit
- › Merthyr Tydfil Institute for the Blind
- › Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust
- › Merthyr Valley Homes
- › Mrs Bucket Commercial Cleaning
- › Social Care Wales Formerly Care Council for Wales
- › The Fern Partnership
- › Trivallis
- › Valleys to Coast Housing
- › Welsh Government
Former Welsh Development Agency
- › Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC)
- › WSP Glamorgan Consultancy Ltd
Formerly Capita Glamorgan Consultancy

■ Scheduled Bodies:

These include County Councils, Police Authorities and the Environment Agency among many others.

■ Designated Bodies:

Designated bodies, such as Community Councils are required to pass a resolution stating whom within their employment can join the scheme.

■ Admitted Bodies:

Admitted Bodies can participate in the scheme by means of an admission agreement. These Admitted Bodies may state whether all or some of their employees can join the Scheme.

■ SCHEDULED & DESIGNATED BODIES

- › Amgen Cymru
- › Bedlinog Community Council
- › Brackla Community Council
- › Bridgend College
- › Bridgend County Borough Council
- › Bridgend Town Council
No active members at present
- › Central South Consortium
- › Chief Constable South Wales
- › Coleg Y Cymoedd
- › Coity Higher Community Council
- › Cornelly Community Council
- › Coychurch Crematorium Joint Committee
- › Garw Valley Community Council
- › Gelligaer Community Council
- › Hirwaun & Penderyn Community Council
- › Laleston Community Council
- › Llanbradach Community Council
No active members at present
- › Llangynwyd Middle Community Council
- › Llanharan Community Council
- › Llanharry Community Council
No active members at present
- › Llantrisant Community Council
- › Llantwit Fardre Community Council
- › Llwydcoed Crematorium Joint Committee
- › Maesteg Town Council
- › Merthyr Tydfil College
- › Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
- › Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales
- › Pontyclun Community Council
- › Pontypridd Town Council
- › Pyle Community Council
- › Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama
- › South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee
- › South Wales Fire Authority
- › South Wales Valuation Tribunal
- › St Brides Minor Community Council
- › Tonyrefail Community Council
- › University of South Wales
- › Ynysawdre Community Council

Contributors Page

Who's Who

Service Director:

Pensions, Procurement and Transactional Services



Ian Traylor

Ian joined Local Government in 1990 with the former Mid Glamorgan County Council and transferred to Rhondda Cynon Taf during the 1996 re-organisation.

Ian has a well-established background in financial control / risk management with a primary career spent in Internal Audit. Ian joined the Pensions Service in 2006 and is an active member of the Pension Advisory Panel.

Principal Accountant:

Treasury Management and Pension Fund



Yvonne Keitch

With over 30 years experience within local government, Yvonne is responsible for the administration of the pension fund investments.

Yvonne has been the fund's Investment Manager since 1995.

Accountant:

Treasury and Pension Fund



Vanessa Thomas

Vanessa joined local government in 1989 with Rhondda Borough Council and transferred to Rhondda Cynon Taf in 1996 during re-organisation.

She has worked in the Investment Team since 2005 and is currently the officer responsible for the maintenance and closure of the Pension Fund accounts.

Senior Team Manager:

Digital, Comms and Governance



Tim Jenkins

Tim joined Local Government in 2007 and since then has held various roles across a number of sections before joining the Pension Section in 2011 as a Systems Administrator.

During his time in the Pension Section he has been responsible for rolling out several key projects including the introduction of the employer I-Connect monthly file submissions and launching our My Pension Online Service. He currently represents the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund at several national usergroups and currently Chairs a national I-Connect Usergroup.

Pension Fund Committee Members

Chairman Pension Fund Committee:



Councillor Mark Norris

Councillor Norris is the Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development, a member of Capita Glamorgan Joint Committee, Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee, Major Incident Recovery Board, Welsh Language Cabinet Sub Committee, Vice-Chair of Eisteddfod Cabinet Sub-Committee and is Local Member representing Cwm Clydach ward.

Councillor Norris has been Chairman of the Pension Fund Committee since its inaugural meeting on 5th July 2016.

Vice-Chair Pension Fund Committee:



Councillor Martin Douglas Ashford

Councillor Ashford is a member of the Capita Glamorgan Joint Committee, Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee, Overview and Scrutiny 2022 -2027 Committee, Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a Local Member representing Pontyclun Central ward.

Councillor Ashford has been a member of the Pension Fund Committee since May 2022.

Pension Committee Members:



Councillor Dawn Susan Wood

Councillor Wood is a member of the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee and the Local Member representing the Pontypridd Town ward.

Councillor Wood has been a member of the Pension Fund Committee since May 2022 and left in October 2023.



Councillor Gareth Jones

Councillor Jones is a member of the Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee, the Community Services Scrutiny Committee, Community Services Scrutiny Committee (Crime & Disorder), Glamorgan Archives Joint Committee, Llwydcoed Crematorium Joint Committee and a Local Member representing Aberdare West / Llwydcoed ward.

Councillor Jones has been a member of the Pension Fund Committee since October 2022.



Councillor Norman Howell Morgan

Councillor Morgan is a member of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee, Community Services Scrutiny Committee (Crime & Disorder) and is Local Member representing the Pentre ward.

Councillor Morgan has been a member of the Pension Fund Committee since November 2022.

Pension Advisory Panel Members

Deputy Chief Executive / Group Director: Finance, Digital and Frontline Service (Section 151 Officer)



Barrie Davies C.P.F.A

Barrie joined Local Government with Mid Glamorgan County Council in 1985, moving to Rhondda Cynon Taf with re-organisation in 1996.

Barrie is an active member of the Investment and Administration Advisory Panel and was appointed to his current role in March 2019.

Service Director: Finance & Improvement Services & Deputy Section 151 Officer



Paul Griffiths C.P.F.A

Paul joined local government in 1989 with the former Mid Glamorgan County Council and transferred to Rhondda Cynon Taf during the 1996 reorganisation.

Paul has a background in financial management, Internal Audit and corporate performance management, and was appointed to the position of Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services in March 2019. Paul also became a member of the Investment and Administration Advisory Panel in March 2019.

Service Director: Pensions, Procurement and Transactional Services



Ian Traylor

Ian joined Local Government in 1990 with the former Mid Glamorgan County Council and transferred to Rhondda Cynon Taf during the 1996 re-organisation.

Ian has a well-established background in financial control/risk management with a primary career spent in Internal Audit. Ian joined the Pensions Service in 2006 and is an active member of the Pensions Investment and Administration Advisory Panel.

Service Director: Finance Services



Stephanie Davies F.C.C.A.

Following a career in the private sector, Stephanie joined Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2000 as a Principal Accountant responsible for the production of the Council's statutory accounts.

In her current role, one of Stephanie's responsibilities is the management of the Pension Fund Investment team and became a member of the Pension Fund Investment and Administration Advisory Panel during 2014.

Pension Advisory Panel Members (Continued)

Principal Accountant: Treasury Management and Pension Fund



Yvonne Keitch

With over 30 years experience within local government, Yvonne is responsible for the administration of the pension fund investments.

Yvonne has been the fund's Investment Manager since 1995.

Accountant: Treasury and Pension Fund



Vanessa Thomas

Vanessa joined local government in 1989 with Rhondda Borough Council and transferred to Rhondda Cynon Taf in 1996 during re-organisation.

She has worked in the Investment Team since 2005 and is currently the officer responsible for the maintenance and closure of the Pension Fund accounts.

Independent Investment Adviser:



Carolan Dobson

Carolan Dobson is an Independent Investment Adviser for a number of LGPS funds including the Environment Agency, Staffordshire County Council, Buckinghamshire County Council and the London Borough of Enfield.

She was a Director of Abbey National Asset Management and Murray Johnstone and has had over thirty years experience as a fund manager and investment adviser.

Independent Investment Adviser:



David Cullinan

David has been an Independent Investment Adviser to the Fund for over ten years. He is now self-employed, having worked for over thirty years for State Street (formerly the WM Company), managing relationships with a large variety of clients - pension funds, asset management companies, insurance companies, charities and foundations.

From a background in investment accounting, fund valuation and unit pricing, David focussed his career on engagement, measurement and performance of funds in the public sector and in particular, the collation of long term statistics and trends on behalf of the collective LGPS – formerly the sector renowned WM Universe and latterly, PIRC's LAPPA service.

Pension Board Members

Employer Representative: Chair



Professor Hugh Coombs

University of South Wales

Employer Representative:



Mr David Francis

Coleg Y Cymoedd

Member Representative:



Mr Rob Whiles

Pensioner of the RCT Pension Fund

Member Representative:



Mrs Sindy Absalom

Member of the RCT Pension Fund and Trade Union (Unison) representative to December 2023

Member Representative:



Mr Darren Griffiths

Member of the RCT Pension Fund and Trade Union (Unison) representative from January 2024



Administration Report

Introduction

There were a number of key activities throughout 2023/24 which required the collection and validation of membership data. I thank the Fund Employers for their continued engagement and support, which enables the Team to provide accurate data for items such as the Annual Benefits Statements, the Triennial Valuation and the on-going retrospective data requirements in respect of the McCloud remedy.

The McCloud remedy regulations to remove the scheme discrimination, came in to force in October 2023. Implementation of this complex protracted exercise continues to represent a significant and additional challenge for the Fund's Pension Team. Whilst the appropriate corrections are underway, to date the financial variance is generally small for individual members impacted.

Maintaining appropriate communication channels with all stakeholder groups remains a key priority for the Service, engaging with Scheme Members through the "My Pension Online" Member Self-Serve portal, with its document sharing functionality, providing a more efficient digital information sharing channel. It is pleasing to report that the number of scheme members utilising this digital functionality continues to grow each year. In addition, the Fund has developed self-help videos to enhance the membership experience. Further developments to the portal are planned for deployment in early 2025.

To ensure that the Service is adequately resourced to meet existing and future challenges (McCloud, Dashboards, etc), we continue to support, invest and develop the Pension Team. Targeted internal and external technical training is facilitated where necessary and the Fund's longer-term workforce planning arrangements continue to help underpin our business resilience. I am pleased to report that a further three apprentices have been appointed to the Team from September 2024.

During 2023/24, to improve and streamline the service to our overseas pensioners, the Fund commenced the migration of overseas 'pension payments' to the same overseas 'life certification' provider.

The Scheme Advisory Board (SAB), in conjunction with CIPFA, has published new guidance for preparing LGPS fund annual reports. The Pension Fund has updated the 2023/24 Annual Report in accordance with these additional requirements, which included an update of the Service key performance indicators.

Actuarial Valuation

The next Triennial Valuation of the Fund is scheduled for 31st March 2025 and initial meetings with the Actuary and data validation exercises have already commenced. In determining the Valuation, the Administering Authority will consider its strategic and long-term financial objectives, having due regard to the statutory requirement that employer contributions should be set so as "to ensure the long-term cost efficiency of the scheme".

The Valuation will provide a revised 'Rates and Adjustment Certificate' setting out the Employers contributions for the following 3 years, with initial rates taking effect from 1st April 2026.

The overall funding level at the 2022 valuation was a healthy 105.1% and based on latest forecasts, it is anticipated that a further incremental improvement at an overall funding level will be achieved at this next valuation cycle. As the Fund continues to mature, the cashflow position will continue to be monitored closely.

The Fund's membership data scores provided to the Pensions Regulator in the Annual Scheme Return provide a high level of assurance, nevertheless, we will continue to work with the Fund Actuary and Employers to undertake further data cleansing in the lead up to the Valuation.

During August 2024, the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) have published their review of the 2022 LGPS valuations under section 13 of the Public Service Pensions Act. The exercise examines whether the fund valuations have achieved the following aims: Compliance, Consistency, Solvency and Long-term Cost Efficiency.

The RCT Pension Fund has been flagged 'green' on all of the fund specific metrics, indicating there are no material issues noted.

At an overall national Scheme level however, GAD did provide three recommendations for the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) to consider. These include whether greater consistency should be achieved to allow easier comparison between funds and better understanding of risks. GAD also recommends that work continues to refine the climate change principles document in advance of the 2025 fund valuations.

Governance

In March 2024, The Pension Regulator (TPR) implemented its long awaited 'General' Code of Practice. This replaces Code of Practice 14 for public service pension schemes and brings together 10 of TPR's existing 'codes of practice' and some associated guidance. The new general code details the Regulator's expectations of the conduct and practice which governing bodies should meet to comply with their duties as set out in pension legislation.

Further to the Fund's initial preparations for the code during 2023/24, and the high standard of governance already demonstrated within the LGPS, the Fund has commenced a 'gap analysis' exercise to ensure that our existing compliance practices satisfy those expectations as set out by the Regulator. The Fund's Pension Board, in accordance with their responsibilities, are assisting with this compliance activity.

The Fund's governance forums continued to operate effectively on behalf of all stakeholders. Throughout the year, officers worked closely with the RCT Pension Board to jointly consider any emerging and existing items of risk and compliance. Meetings of the Chairs of Welsh Pension Boards are facilitated through the Wales Pension Partnership (WPP), which include an update from the 'host' authority in respect of WPP activity and updates from the Operator and the Investment Management Solutions Provider. The WPP Joint Governance Committee arrangements also includes Scheme Member Representation.

The SAB 'Good Governance' review proposed recommendations aimed to enhance and strengthen the existing high standards of governance and administration within the LGPS. This has now been incorporated within the recent consultation "Fit for the Future" and initiated on the 14th November 2024.

Regulatory

McCloud

On 8th September 2023, the Government laid the revisions to the LGPS regulations which make retrospective provision to rectify the unlawful discrimination identified by the McCloud judgement and which came into force on 1st October 2023. Separate taxation rectification regulations have been laid to ensure that members whose benefits are increased due to the McCloud changes will not be penalised by any disproportionate tax implications.

Since the implementation date, a small number of cases have already been impacted by the remedy underpin. The Local Government Association (LGA) are supporting implementation by publishing technical guides, member communications and a McCloud factsheet. In December 2023 in accordance with the Disclosure Regulations, the Fund notified all Members in respect of these changes to the scheme.

► Further information in respect of McCloud can be found at the RCT Pension Fund website and on the national LGPS website:

www.lgpsmember.org/2023/10/05/mccloud-remedy-new-pages/

HMRC Pension Tax Changes

Lifetime Allowance ('Replaced')

The Lifetime Allowance (LTA) provided a limit on the amount of pension savings that you could build up over your lifetime that benefit from tax relief. From the 6th April 2024, the LTA was abolished and replaced with two lump sum tax free limits.

- The lump sum allowance is £268,275. It limits the amount of tax-free cash you can take from your pension.
- The lump sum and death benefit allowance is £1,073,100.

➤ Further information and details around the Transitional Protection and the LTA protection can be found on the LGPS Member site
www.lgpsmember.org/your-pension/the-essentials/tax

Annual Allowance

In March 2023, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) laid regulations to move the annual revaluation date, which is the date that active and deferred member benefits are increased in line with inflation, from 1st April to 6th April. This urgent technical change was made to address the unintended impact of the high inflation within the existing methodology of revaluing pension growth to determine whether the annual allowance has been exceeded.

From 6th April 2023, the standard annual allowance increased from £40,000 to £60,000. The annual allowance is the amount your pension savings can increase by in a year without you having to pay extra tax. If your savings increase by more than the annual allowance, you will have to pay tax on the excess.

Furthermore, the annual allowance taper provision limits changed from 6th April 2023. Effective from 2023/24, a member's pension growth is measured against a tapered annual allowance if their Threshold income is more than £200,000 and their Adjusted income is more than £260,000. With a minimum tapered annual allowance of £10,000.

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) provide an online calculator to help members determine how much annual allowance they have used:

➔ www.tax.service.gov.uk/pension-annual-allowance-calculator

The Fund's Communication Team issued a statement and factsheet during October, within six months of the end of the tax year, to individual members that are impacted by the Annual Allowance. If you exceed the annual allowance in a year, you must report this to HMRC in your self-assessment tax return.

Freedom of Choice / Transfer Scams

Whilst these freedoms are not applicable to the LGPS, the Fund continues to experience interest in the possibility of transferring benefits out to Defined Contribution arrangements. Along with such freedoms there have unfortunately been a national increase in pension transfer scams.

Pension Liberation

Some companies are approaching pension scheme members and claiming that they can help cash in your pension early, this could be by text, adverts on the internet or by post. In most cases the earliest age that you can bring your pension into payment is 55, any earlier and you may be liable to high tax charges. These companies also tend to charge high fees for dealing with the transfer. The people transferring are generally not made aware of these tax charges or fee.

The Pensions Regulator (TPR) continues its work to strengthen the due diligence expectations on Pension Funds and their Trustees in respect of transfer requests, which can now result in the Fund refusing the transfer. Both the Fund's Pension Committee and Pension Board are updated on these responsibilities.

The TPR has published a strategy to combat pension scams. It will tackle the threat from scammers by:

- educating savers about the threat that scams present;
- encouraging higher standards and preventing practices that lead to saver harm; and
- fight fraud through the prevention, disruption and punishment of criminality.

► You can find useful guidance from TPR on how to avoid and report pension scams.

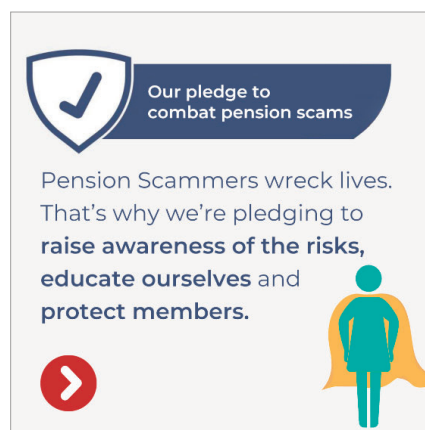
www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/pension-scams

The Pensions Regulator (TPR) continues to provide alerts via its pension scam blog, which shares intelligence on the methods being used by scammers and advice in respect of this dynamic threat. The RCT Pension Fund has signed up to the TPR 'Pledge to Combat Pension Scams' together with the associated awareness activity and reporting.

→ www.rctpensions.org.uk/en

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) issued a press release warning that the cost-of-living crisis could cause an increase in pension scams. The warning follows FCA research that a quarter of consumers would consider withdrawing money from their pension earlier than planned to cover the cost of living, making them vulnerable to pension scammers.

→ www.fca.org.uk/publication/fca/pensions-scams-leaflet-screen.pdf



In October 2024, as part of 'Scams Awareness Week 2024' a new video was released by the Pension Regulator (TPR) in association with the Pensions Scam Action Group (PSAG).

→ www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/pension-scams/pension-scams-video-case-study

Prevention and Detection of Fraud

The Fund participates in the National Fraud Initiative which is designed to target and prevent fraud and corruption. As part of the initiative public agencies are allowed to share this information for cross matching purposes, with any anomalies investigated.

The national 'tell-us-once' service and mortality tracing services are in place to minimise the risk of overpayments and potential fraudulent pension claims. Annual life certification is in place for overseas pensioners, utilising digital facial recognition technology, supported by appropriate authentication arrangements.

The Pensions Service also works with the Council's Corporate Fraud Team to support the pursuit and prosecution where necessary of any potential pension irregularity.

The Council's Internal Audit Service in accordance with its annual delivery plan, undertake a regular independent review of the Fund's internal control environment, with the actual scope and risk focus agreed at each review. At the latest Pension Fund review 2023/24, Internal Audit were able to provide 'substantial assurance' that a sound system of governance, risk management and control exists, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives.

Forward Look

Cost CAP Review

In July 2024, the GAD concluded the Scheme Cost Assessment at 31 st March 2020. The cost cap was introduced by the Public Service Pensions Act 2013. The Act requires the setting of an employer cost cap rate against which changes in the cost are to be measured.

On 19th September 2023, HM Treasury issued a written ministerial statement detailing reforms to their cost control mechanism. Reforms have been made to address concerns that the cost control mechanism did not meet its original objectives.

Following a review by the Government Actuary and a public consultation the mechanism now

- only assesses costs associated with the post-2015 reformed schemes;
- increases the margin by which costs need to vary from the target in order for benefit, or member contribution, changes to be required from 2% to 3% of pensionable pay; and
- includes an 'economic check' such that changes will only happen if the costs would still be outside the same margin had the impact of changes in long-term economic assumptions been included.

At the latest review, costs were assessed as being within the range where the SAB may make recommendations to amend benefits to bring scheme costs back towards the target cost but is not obliged to. SAB agreed not to recommend any changes in its letter to the Secretary of State about the outcome of the scheme cost assessment.

UK Pensions Dashboards Programme

The Government is progressing its Pensions Dashboards implementation which will enable individuals to digitally access their various pensions all in a single, secure online location, thereby supporting better planning for retirement. Dashboards will provide clear and simple information about an individual's multiple pension savings, including their State Pension.

The connection date for LGPS Funds has been confirmed as October 2025. The Fund's 'Data Readiness' project work is underway, with an appropriate Integrated Service Provider (ISP) engaged.

The ISP solution will:

- Securely extract and hold the dashboard data;
- Streamline the matching process;
- Manage the high volumes of requests received from the Pension Dashboard Programme;
- Provide members with real time information; and
- Carry out all legislative duties on the Fund's behalf, such as the reporting requirements and maintaining high levels of availability.

→ www.pensionsdashboardsprogramme.org.uk

September 2024 CPI rate announced

On 16th October 2024, the Office for National Statistics announced the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rate of inflation for September 2024 as 1.7%.

Government policy in recent years has been to base increases on the rate of CPI in September of the previous year. The LGPS Pension Increase is formally confirmed by HM Treasury in January and paid from the first Monday of each new tax year.

Performance Information

The results of key performance indicators identified and agreed by the Pension Panel for the period up to 31 st March 2024 are listed in the table below:

Procedure Description	Performance Target	Intervention Target	Actual Performance	Number of cases Processed
Divorce Estimate Calculation for members	10 days	95%	93.3%	104
Preserved Benefit Notification to leavers	10 days	90%	99.1%	1732
Refund of Contributions Payment back to scheme members	10 days	95%	96.4%	274
Employer Request for Retirement Estimate	5 days	95%	82.4%	773
Retirement Payment From active membership	5 days	95%	96.6%	655
Preserved Benefit into Payment on Retirement	5 days	95%	95.3%	597
Transfer In Calculation from previous pension scheme including late transfer applications	10 days	90%	62.8%	296
Transfer Out Payment to receiving pension scheme	10 days	95%	73.4%	305

Service Standards

Many Fund employers have undertaken some rationalisation and internal restructuring over the last year and this has increased our workload for producing early retirement costs for employers, along with pension illustrations and retirement packs to members.

Providing this complex information in a timely and accurate manner has proved challenging but the demand has been met with no significant reduction in our published performance standards or to the detriment of other priority work.

This has been achieved by actively reallocating and targeting resources in line with our key objectives.

Disputes

In line with legislation the Pension Fund has an Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure (IDRP) which deals with formal complaints against the Scheme.

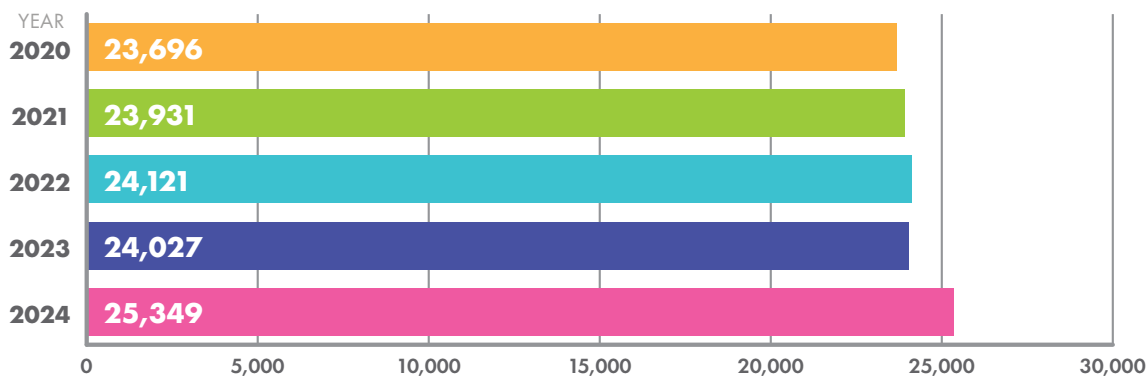
During 2023/24 no complaints were received under the procedure.

Membership of the Fund

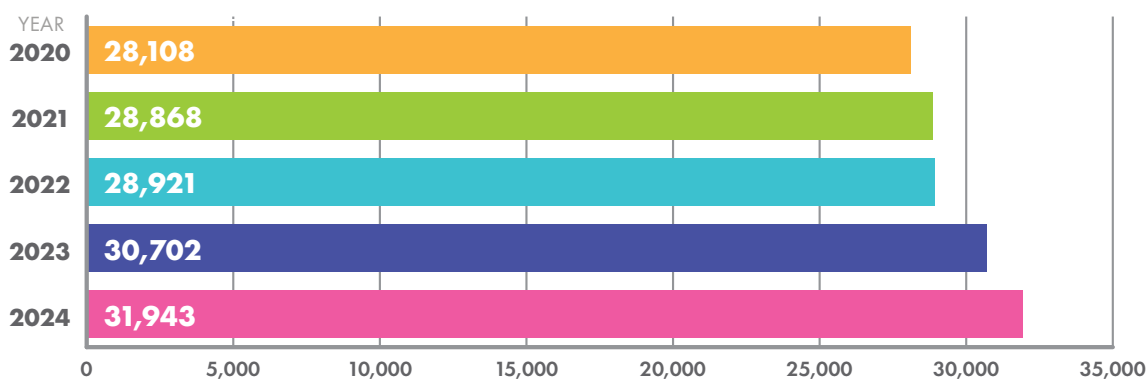
Number of Employers	Active	Ceased	Total
Scheduled Body	35	23	58
Admitted Body	24	12	36
TOTAL	59	35	94

Fund membership at 31 st March is as follows:

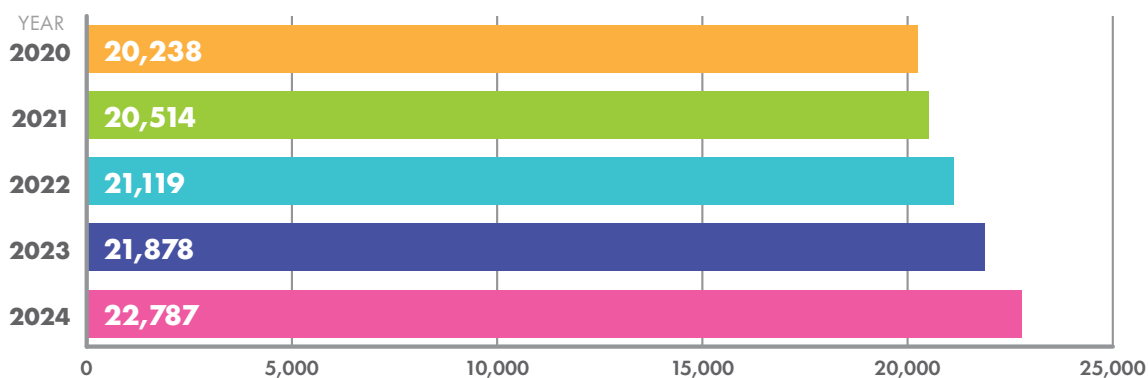
Number of Contributing Members



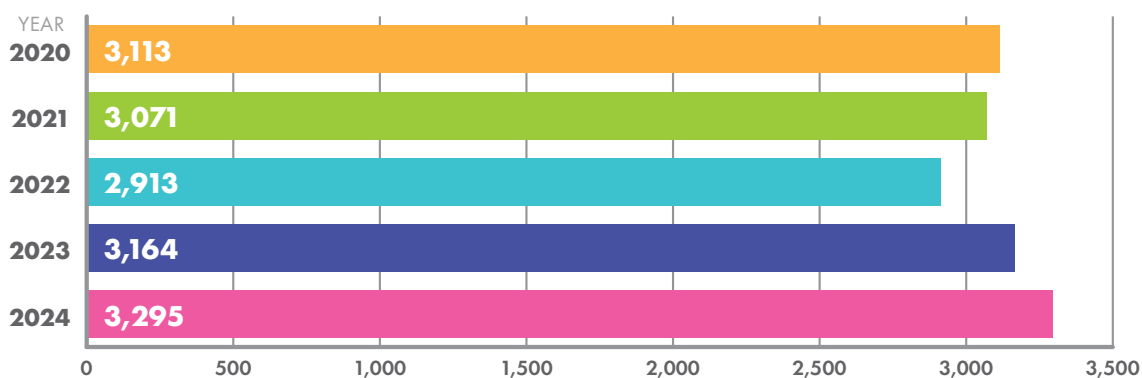
Number of Deferred Members



Number of Pensioner and Dependants



Number of Undecided Withdrawals



Membership Trends	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	% Increase / Decrease from 2022/23
Active Employers	51	51	52	54	59	9.26%
Contributors	23,696	23,931	24,121	24,027	25,349	5.50%
Pensioners	17,512	17,728	18,220	18,860	19,640	4.14%
Dependants	2,726	2,786	2,899	3,018	3,147	4.27%
Deferred Beneficiaries	28,108	28,868	28,921	30,702	31,943	4.04%

Fund Costs per Member	Cost per member	
	2022/23	2023/24
Administration Costs	£27.34	£32.25
Investment Management Expenses	£135.07	£138.48
Oversight and Governance Costs	£5.53	£4.92
TOTAL	£167.94	£175.65

The Pension Fund currently employs:

- 28 full time equivalent staff in administration
- 2 in Pension Fund Investments and Accounts

Membership Analysis

Leavers from Active Status	2022	2023	2024
Refund of contributions	256	272	257
Transfers to other schemes	0	0	0
Death in Service	27	27	32
Ill Health Retirements	50	70	76
Early / Normal Retirements	287	313	363
Redundancy / Efficiency Retirements	341	68	533
Flexible Retirement	17	28	47
Late Retirement	133	139	193
Opt Outs	120	132	131
Preserved Benefits	2,070	2,929	1,435
Other Leavers	301	415	533
TOTAL	3,602	4,263	3,600

Deferred Benefits - Exits	2022	2023	2024
Transfer to other schemes	316	848	363
Deaths	28	21	49
Ill Health Retirements	6	11	13
Early / Normal Retirements	576	631	612
Other Benefits	45	66	91
Number of Deferred Members re-entering the scheme	0	27	15
TOTAL	971	1,034	1,143



Investment Report

Introduction

At the start of the financial year, the market value of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund investments was £4,256.4 million. At 31st March 2024 the Fund had increased in value to £4,711.8 million.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund achieved an annual return of 11.1% in 2023/24. This year was a rollercoaster ride for investors. The cocktail of uncertainties resulted in quite dramatic share price reactions to individual company announcements. This had resulted in a good year for equities overall. RCT Pension Fund's longer returns are comfortably ahead of benchmark over 10, 20 and 30 year periods ranking in 10th percentile over 10 years, 4th percentile over 20 years and 22nd percentile over 30 years of PIRC's Annual Local Authority Fund Statistical Universe.

Investment Management

The Pension Fund Committee is responsible for the strategic management of the RCT Pension Fund in accordance with its term of reference.

The Deputy Chief Executive / Group Director – Finance, Digital and Frontline Services (in his capacity as S151 Officer) supported by an Investment and Administration Advisory Panel, has delegated responsibility for all day to day operational matters.

The Pension Fund Investment and Administration Advisory Panel is chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive/Group Director – Finance, Digital and Frontline Services, and consists of two independent investment advisors and other Senior Finance Officers.

The Panel meets quarterly to consider both administration and investment issues and determine policy in light of market movements and to question and challenge the Investment Managers on activities and performance.

There are currently ten separate investment mandates:

- Bailie Gifford Traditional Equities
- Global Opportunities High Alpha Equities (WPP)
- Sterling Credit Fund (WPP)
- Local Impact Infrastructure (WPP)
- BlackRock Passive mandates covering Low Carbon Equities and Passive UK Gilts
- Global Growth High Alpha Equities (WPP)
- Sustainable Equities (WPP)
- Closed Ended Infrastructure (WPP)
- CBRE Property
- BlackRock Global Infrastructure Solutions

Investment Performance

The table below shows performance, at an asset class level, over historical periods measured to 31st March 2024.

	1 Year		3 Year		5 Year	
	Benchmark	Fund	Benchmark	Fund	Benchmark	Fund
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Equities	19.0	15.4	9.7	4.0	10.5	9.9
Total Bonds	3.3	4.2	-5.1	-4.4	-1.9	-1.4
Property	7.8	0.4	11.5	1.4	9.1	1.1
Infrastructure	4.6	4.6				
Cash	5.1	8.0	2.4	3.9	1.5	2.6
TOTAL ASSETS	13.6	11.1	5.6	1.7	7.0	6.5

Asset Allocation and Performance

The table below shows the asset allocation and the performance of these asset allocations against their respective benchmarks for the year 2023/24.

	Opening Value		Closing Value		Net Performance (1 year)	Benchmark
	£'000	%	£'000	%	%	%
Equities	786,080	18.4	444,003	9.4	9.0	13.5
Pooled Funds						
Global Growth Equities	1,526,579	35.9	1,763,568	37.4	15.8	20.5
Global Opportunities Equities	407,334	9.6	487,186	10.3	19.9	20.5
Sustainable Equities	-	-	113,382	2.4	-	-
UK Credit	520,721	12.2	707,830	15.0	7.6	6.1
Infrastructure (closed ended)	-	-	16,897	0.4	-	-
Local Investments	-	-	2,918	0.1	-	-
Other Pooled Investments						
Passive UK Gilts	438,537	10.3	539,630	11.5	0.0	0.0
Passive Equities	223,739	5.3	278,382	5.9	24.3	24.0
Pooled Property	290,130	6.8	288,102	6.1	0.4	7.8
Infrastructure	29,613	0.7	38,507	0.8	4.4	4.4
Cash	33,629	0.8	31,444	0.7	8.0	5.1
TOTAL ASSETS	4,256,362	100	4,711,849	100	11.1	13.6



Asset Allocation pooled and non pooled

The table below shows the allocation of the Fund's assets on an Local Government Pension Scheme pooled and non pooled basis for year 2023/24.

	Opening Value		Closing Value	
	£'000	%	£'000	%
Assets invested through the Wales Pension Partnership				
Global Growth Equities	1,526,579	35.9	1,763,568	37.4
Global Opportunities Equities	407,334	9.6	487,186	10.3
Sustainable Equities	-	-	113,382	2.4
UK Credit	520,721	12.2	707,830	15.0
Infrastructure (closed ended)	-	-	16,897	0.4
Local Investments	-	-	2,918	0.1
Assets outside pooling arrangement				
Equities	786,080	18.4	444,003	9.4
Other Pooled Investments				
Passive UK Gilts	438,537	10.3	539,630	11.5
Passive Equities	223,739	5.3	278,382	5.9
Pooled Property	290,130	6.8	288,102	6.1
Infrastructure	29,613	0.7	38,507	0.8
Cash	33,629	0.8	31,444	0.7
TOTAL ASSETS	4,256,362	100	4,711,849	100

Asset Allocation between UK and other Assets

The table below shows the allocation of the Fund's assets between UK investments and other investments for the year 2023/24.

	Opening Value		Closing Value	
	£'000	%	£'000	%
UK				
Equities	308,336	7.3	162,518	3.5
Passive Gilts	438,537	10.3	539,630	11.4
Other				
Non Pooled	47,744	11.1	281,485	6.0
Pooled Investments				
Global Growth Equities	1,526,579	35.9	1,763,568	37.4
Global Opportunities Equities	407,334	9.6	487,186	10.3
Sustainable Equities			113,382	2.4
UK Credit	520,721	12.2	707,830	15.0
Infrastructure (closed ended)			16,897	0.4
Local Investments			2,918	0.1
Other Pooled Investments				
Passive Equities	223,739	5.3	278,382	5.9
Pooled Property	290,130	6.8	288,102	6.1
Infrastructure	29,613	0.7	38,507	0.8
Cash	33,629	0.8	31,444	0.7
TOTAL ASSETS	4,256,362	100	4,711,849	100

Details of Fund Managers

The market values of investments held by the Fund Managers employed by the Fund are detailed in the following table.

	Market Value		Proportion of Fund	
	31/03/2023 £'000	31/03/2024 £'000	31/03/2023 %	31/03/2024 %
Baillie Gifford (Global Equities)	790,914	446,592	18.6	9.5
BlackRock (Passive Equities)	223,739	278,382	5.3	5.9
BlackRock (Passive Bonds)	438,537	539,631	10.3	11.5
BlackRock (Infrastructure)	29,613	38,507	0.7	0.8
CBRE (Property)	299,452	289,990	7.0	6.2
Waystone (Global Growth)	1,526,579	1,763,568	35.9	37.3
Waystone (Global Opportunities)	407,334	487,186	9.6	10.3
Waystone (Sustainable Equities)		113,382		2.4
Waystone (UK Credit)	520,721	707,830	12.2	15.0
GCM Grosvenor (Closed Ended Infrastructure)		16,897		0.4
Capital Dynamics (Local Investment Infrastructure)		2,918		0.1
Internally Managed	19,473	26,966	0.5	0.6
TOTAL ASSETS	4,256,362	4,711,849	100.0	100.0

No single investment accounted for more than 5% of the Fund's assets.

The market value of investments shown in this table includes short-term investments such as cash balances and money deposits.

Investment risk is mitigated by employing a number of fund managers to diversify manager risk, with mandates covering a variety of assets including equities, bonds and property. Managers must maintain a diversified portfolio of investments and comply with the LGPS investment regulations, and any additional restrictions within their mandates. The underlying investments are further diversified by country and industry sector.

Each manager's performance is monitored quarterly against a target linked to an asset allocation benchmark, effectively constraining managers from deviating significantly from the intended approach, while still permitting some flexibility to enhance returns.

Profits and Losses on Investments

	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000	£'000
Profit on sales	64,796	87,134
Loss on sales	(42,272)	(56,322)
Net profit / (loss) on sales	22,524	30,812
Change in market value	(321,726)	369,803
Net increase / (decrease) in value	(299,202)	400,615

Custodial Arrangements

Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund has appointed State Street to act as custodian for the shares of the pension fund.

Shares are held to the order of the custodian for the benefit of Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund. State Street is regulated in the UK by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulatory Authority.

Waystone, the operator of the Wales Pension Partnership (WPP), has appointed Northern Trust to act as custodian for shares held within the sub funds of the WPP.

Fund Manager and Advisor Fees

Fund manager fees are charged on a reducing scale based upon the market value of the fund.

In addition to fund manager fees, the indirect costs of the investments in the WPP are reflected in the net asset value of the pooled units.

The Fund's advisors receive a fixed annual fee for their services and attendance at quarterly meetings. Any additional meetings incur an extra charge.

Largest Share Holding

The ten largest holdings for the equity fund manager Baillie Gifford as at 31 st March 2024 are

Share	£
Ashtead	7,737,706
Bunzl	6,948,007
Rio Tinto	6,828,940
RELX	6,797,633
Legal & General	6,450,396
ASML	6,029,110
Diageo	6,004,355
Unilever	5,769,156
Marks & Spencer	5,620,907
Howden Joinery Group	5,518,042

Wales Pension Partnership (WPP)

The WPP was established in 2017 with the objective to deliver:

- ▀ **economies of scale**
- ▀ **strong governance and decision making**
- ▀ **reduced costs and excellent value for money, and**
- ▀ **an improved capacity and capability to invest in infrastructure**

The WPP is one of the eight Local Government Pension pools nationally and is a collaboration of the eight LGPS funds in Wales including Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, Clwyd, Dyfed, Greater Gwent (Torfaen), Gwynedd, Powys, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Swansea. The eight funds have a long, successful history of collaboration including a collaborative tender for a single passive equity provider for the Welsh funds pre-dating the Government's pooling initiative.

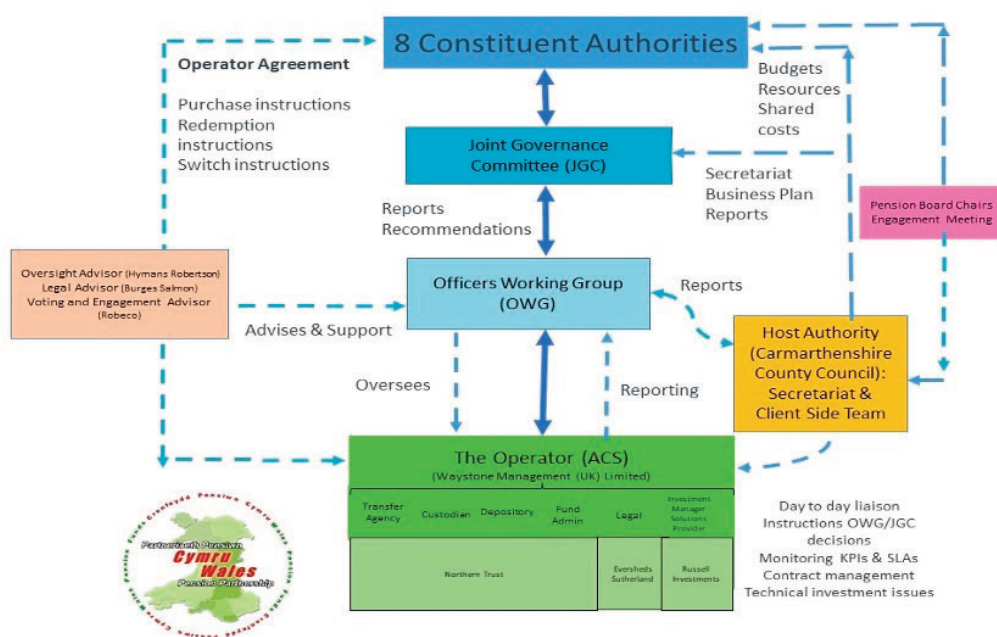
Collective investment management offers the potential for investment fee savings, opportunities to broaden investment portfolios, enhanced voting and engagement activity as well as access to shared knowledge and best practice. Whilst the WPP is responsible for providing collaborative investment solutions, each constituent authority remains responsible for setting their own investment strategy.

WPP's operating model is designed to be flexible and deliver value for money. WPP appointed an external fund Operator and makes use of external advisers to bring best of breed expertise to support the running of the Pool. The Operator is Waystone Management (UK) Limited (Waystone) and they have partnered with Russell Investments to deliver effective investment management solutions and provide strong net of fee performance for all the Constituent Authorities.

Governance

The WPP details how it deals with all aspects of Governance through its Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) which was approved by all eight Constituent Authorities (CA) in March 2017.

The IAA defines the standards, roles and responsibilities of the Constituent Authorities, its Members, Committees and Officers and includes a Scheme of Delegation outlining the decision-making process. In line with its belief that good governance should lead to superior outcomes for stakeholders, the WPP has put in place a robust governance structure:



The eight Constituent Authorities of the WPP are:

1. Dyfed Pension Fund (Host)



2. City and County of Swansea Pension Fund



3. Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Pension Fund



4. Clwyd Pension Fund



5. Gwynedd Pension Fund



6. Powys Pension Fund



7. Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund



8. Torfaen County Pension Fund



The Constituent Authorities (CA) sit at the top of the WPP's governance structure. They retain control of all activity carried out by the WPP and remain responsible for approving the WPP's Business Plan, which outlines the WPP's budget and workplan, as well as its Beliefs and Objectives.

The Joint Governance Committee (JGC) oversees and reports on the WPP and is comprised of one elected member from each of the eight Constituent Authorities and a co-opted (non-voting) scheme member representative.

The OWG provides support and advice to the Joint Governance Committee and is comprised of practitioners and Section 151 officers from all eight Constituent Authorities.

Carmarthenshire County Council is the Host Authority for the WPP and is responsible for providing administrative and secretarial support to the JGC and the OWG, and liaising day to day with the Operator on behalf of all of the Welsh LGPS funds.

Waystone (Operator) carries out a broad range of services for the WPP, which includes facilitating investment vehicles & sub-funds, performance reporting, transition implementation and manager monitoring and fee negotiations. There is an Operator Agreement in place which sets out the contractual duties of the Operator and governs the relationship between the Operator and the WPP. The JGC and OWG, with the support of Hymans Robertson, oversee the work that Waystone carries out on behalf of the WPP. Waystone engages with the Constituent Authorities by:

- **Direct Engagement:**
attendance at annual pension committee meetings
- **Indirect Engagement:**
with CAs collectively, through the JGC and OWG

In collaboration with Waystone, Russell Investments provide investment management solution services to the WPP and they work in consultation with WPP's eight Constituent Authorities to establish investment vehicles.

Northern Trust is the Depository for the WPP ACS vehicle and provides numerous services including securities lending, fund administration, compliance monitoring and reporting.

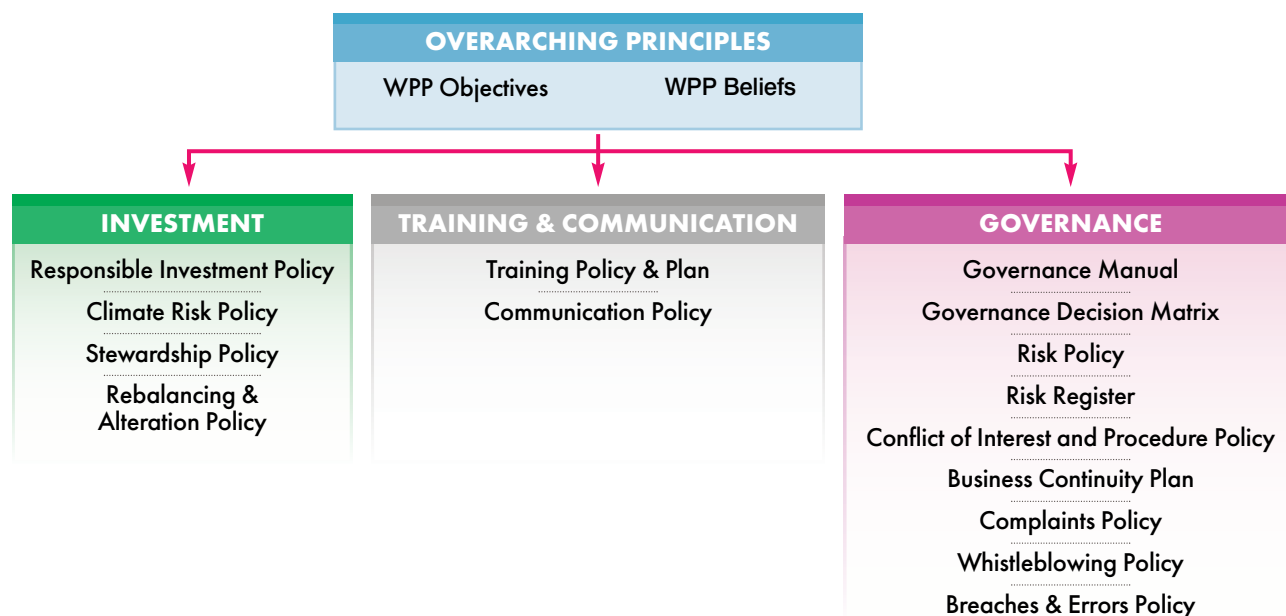
Hymans Robertson are WPP's Oversight Advisor and their role spans oversight and advice on governance arrangements, operator services, strategic investment aspects and project management support.

Burges Salmon are WPP's legal advisors, and they provide legal advice in relation to FCA regulated funds, tax and governance arrangements, including assisting with complex procurement processes.

Robeco UK has been appointed as WPP's Voting and Engagement provider and are responsible for implementing the Voting Policy across WPP's portfolio and undertaking engagement activity on behalf of the WPP.

The WPP's beliefs are the foundation for WPP's governance framework and have been used to guide all of the WPP's activities and decision making, including its objectives and policies.

The WPP, in consultation with the Constituent Authorities, has developed a set of governing policies. In all instances the WPP's policies and procedures have been developed to either complement or supplement the existing procedures and policies of the Constituent Authorities. The WPP's key policies, registers and plans are listed below and can be found on the WPP website.



Responsible Investment (RI) has been a key priority for the WPP since it was established in 2017. Various activities have been undertaken to work towards WPP's ambition of becoming a leader in Responsible Investment. Initially the focus was on formulating a Responsible Investment Policy and since then the WPP has formulated its own Climate Risk Policy and has worked with its Voting and Engagement Provider, Robeco, to agree a Voting Policy. A WPP RI Sub-Group has been established to take ownership of RI related workstreams and actions that are required to achieve the commitments made in the WPP's RI and Climate Risk Policies.

■ The WPP's Business Plan, Governance Manual and all other policies detailed in the chart above can be found on the WPP website:
www.walespensionpartnership.org

Risk

Risk management is a critical element of WPP's commitment to good governance, the WPP has developed a structured, extensive and robust risk strategy which seeks to identify and measure key risks and ensure that suitable controls and governance procedures are in place to manage these risks.

The WPP's Risk Policy has been developed in such a way that risks can be anticipated and dealt with in a swift, effective manner to minimise potential loss or harm to the WPP and its stakeholders.

WPP maintains a Risk Register which is reviewed regularly by a dedicated Risk Sub-Group which reports back to the OWG and JGC on a quarterly basis.

Training

The WPP has its own training policy and develops an annual training plan which is designed to supplement existing Constituent Authority training plans.

Local level training needs will continue to be addressed by Constituent Authorities while the WPP training plan will offer training that is relevant to the WPP's pooling activities. Induction training is also provided to all new JGC members.

Pooling progress to date

The WPP aims to deliver investment solutions that allow the Constituent Authorities to implement their own investment strategies with material cost savings while continuing to deliver investment performance to their stakeholders.

The WPP has made significant progress towards delivering on this objective, from the launch of the first three active equity sub-funds in 2019 through to launching the initial Private Markets Investment programmes in 2023. Alongside the Constituent Authorities existing passive investments, this means that the WPP has now pooled 74% of assets.

As at 31st March 2024, WPP's Constituent Authorities has total assets worth £25bn, £18.5bn of which sits within the pool, see breakdown below:

Asset Class	Managed by	Launch Date	31st March 2024 £'000	%
Global Growth Equity Fund	Waystone Management (UK) Ltd	February 2019	3,585,735	14.4
Global Opportunities Equity Fund	Russell Investments	February 2019	3,286,471	13.1
UK Opportunities Equity Fund	Russell Investments	September 2019	743,530	3.0
Emerging Markets Equity Fund	Russell Investments	October 2021	259,410	1.0
Sustainable Active Equity	Russell Investments	June 2023	1,570,357	6.3
Global Credit Fund	Russell Investments	July 2020	1,033,734	4.1
Global Government Bond Fund	Russell Investments	July 2020	488,815	2.0
UK Credit Fund	Waystone Management (UK) Ltd	July 2020	707,817	2.8
Multi-Asset Credit Fund	Russell Investments	July 2020	732,391	2.9
Absolute Return Bond Fund	Russell Investments	September 2020	572,982	2.3
Private Markets* This is the drawn down value as at 31st March 2024 and does not include commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure closed ended – GCM Grosvenor • Infrastructure open ended – IFM, CBRE and Octopus • Private Credit – Russell Investments • Private Equity – Schroders Capital 		308,187	1.2
Passive Investments	BlackRock	March 2016	5,200,323	20.8
Investments not yet pooled			6,514,755	26.1
TOTAL INVESTMENTS ACROSS ALL 8 PENSION FUNDS			25,004,507	100

Pooling Costs

Carmarthenshire County Council, as the Host Authority for the Wales Pension Partnership is responsible for providing administrative and secretarial support and liaising day to day with the Operator on behalf of all of the LGPS funds in Wales.

The WPP budget is included in the WPP Business Plan and approved annually by all eight Constituent Authorities.

The Host Authority and External Advisor costs (the running costs) are funded equally (unless specific projects have been agreed for individual Funds) by all eight of the Constituent Authorities and recharged on an annual basis. Details of costs incurred by RCT Pension Fund in respect of the WPP are detailed in 14.0 of the Statement of Accounts.

Investment Fee Savings from Pooling

Investments managed by the Wales Pension Partnership	Value as at 31st March 2024 £'000	2023/24 Actual Fee Savings £'000	Cumulative Fee Saving £'000
Waystone Global Growth Equity Fund	1,763,568	1,230	6,083
Waystone Global Opportunities Equity Fund	487,186	92	(190)
Waystone UK Credit Fund	707,830	235	987
TOTAL		1,557	6,880

Assets were moved from the segregated global equity managers during January 2019 into the WPP Global Equity funds. The segregated bond manager was transitioned into the WPP Credit Fund and the passive UK gilt fund of BlackRock during July 2020. Therefore savings of bond investments is partly due to a strategy decision by the RCT Pension Fund.

Saving analysis is based on the assumption that the managers have achieved their performance target of 2.5%.

Objectives 2024/25

In establishing the WPP pool, the prime focus has been on pooling the listed assets, namely equities and fixed income. Progress continues to be made with the rationalisation of the existing range of mandates.

In July 2021, the Joint Governance Committee appointed bfinance as WPP's Allocator Advisor and they have assisted the WPP with the identification of Private Markets Allocators. WPP's Infrastructure, Private Credit and Private Equity investment programmes were launched in 2023.

Work has been progressing in formulating WPP's Real Estate requirements and the optimal means of implementation. With the assistance of bfinance, the procurement process for appointing investment managers is underway with the announcement due to take place in August 2024 and the investment programmes due to launch in 2024/25.

The Sustainable Active Equity Sub-Fund was also launched in 2023/24 and this sub fund, along with the Private Market investment programmes have incorporated responsible investment in their allocation and appointment. With further programmes in development, WPP is now working closely with its service providers to develop a common reporting framework to allow the consistent disclosure of information to its stakeholders.

During 2023/24, the WPP published its third annual Stewardship Report, remaining a signatory to the UK Stewardship Code and published its first All-Wales Climate Report (AWCR). The AWCR assessed climate exposures across all the Welsh funds and the recommendations that came out of the report are now being progressed, including the evolution of WPP's investment offerings (in particular within the passive allocations and within fixed income) and the implementation of a climate framework.

WPP's existing Oversight Advisor and Voting & Engagement provider contracts come to an end on 31st December 2024 and 31st March 2025 respectively. Work is underway with the contract re-tenders with both appointments due to be made by the end of this calendar year.

There will be focus on reviewing existing WPP policies, in particular the RI focused policies, evolving the Stewardship Policy and incorporating an escalation strategy. Training also continues to be a key area of focus and the WPP will continue to provide timely and relevant training facilitated by the pool for the benefit of its wider stakeholder groups.

Securities Lending

Securities lending commenced in March 2020. Revenue is split on an 85:15 basis between WPP and Northern Trust with all costs for running the securities lending programme taken from Northern Trust's share of the fee split.

A minimum of 5% of the nominal quantity of each individual equity holding is held back and a maximum of 25% of total AUM is on loan at any one time. A proxy recall service was implemented in December 2023.

Total revenue of securities lending during 2023/24 was £1,077,100 (gross) / £915,594 (net) with £473,209,901 out on loan as at 31st March 2024.

- More detailed information can be found in WPP's Annual Return which is published on the WPP website www.walespensionpartnership.org

Investment Strategy Statement

1. Overall Responsibility

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is the designated statutory body responsible for administering the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund on behalf of the constituent Scheduled and Admitted Bodies.

The Council is responsible for setting investment policy, appointing suitable persons to implement that policy and carrying out regular reviews and monitoring of investments.

The Council has created a politically balanced Pension Fund Committee consisting of elected members to oversee the Council's responsibility with regard to the administration of the Pension Fund. This Committee is responsible for the strategic management of the Pension Fund.

The Council has appointed the Deputy Chief Executive / Group Director – Finance & Digital and Frontline Services as the officer with Section 151 responsibilities to exercise delegated powers to make decisions in respect of operational matters of the Pension Fund investments and administration. An Investment and Administration Advisory Panel has been formed to support him in this capacity.

This is made up of:

- ▶ **Service Director: Finance and Improvement Services**
- ▶ **Service Director: Pensions, Procurement and Transactional Services**
- ▶ **Service Director: Finance Services**
- ▶ **Principal Accountant: Treasury and Pension Fund Investments**
- ▶ **Senior Accountant: Treasury and Pension Fund Investments**
- ▶ **Independent Advisors**

Both the Committee and the Panel meets quarterly. The Council is not strictly a trustee (technically, this is the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)) but acts in a quasi - trustee role.

In accordance with the requirements of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013, a Pension Board has been established in order to assist Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, as "Scheme Manager" with achieving effective and efficient governance and administration of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund.

The role of the Pension Board as defined by sections 5(1) and 5(2) of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013, is to assist Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Administering Authority as Scheme Manager to:

- ▶ **Secure compliance with the Principal Regulations and any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the LGPS;**
- ▶ **Secure compliance with the requirements imposed in relation to the LGPS by the Pensions Regulator; and**
- ▶ **Ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the LGPS by the Scheme Manager.**

The Pension Board will provide oversight of the above matters and accordingly it is not a decision making body in relation to the management of the Fund itself.

▶ Full details of governance arrangements can be found on the following link:
www.rctpensions.org.uk/En/RelatedDocuments/GovernanceandInvestments/GovernanceDocuments/PensionFundGovernancePolicy.pdf

2. Primary Objective

The Fund's objective is to provide for members' pension and lump sum benefits on their retirement or for their dependants' benefits on death before or after retirement, on a defined basis in accordance with LGPS regulations.

3. Funding Objectives

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council should manage the Fund in such a manner that, in normal market conditions, all accrued benefits are fully covered by the actuarial value of the Fund's assets and that an appropriate level of contribution is agreed by the Authority to meet the cost of future benefits arising.

The Funding Strategy Statement and the Investment Strategy Statement are intrinsically linked and together aim to deliver stable contribution rates for employers.

The investment objective is to maximise returns subject to an acceptable level of risk whilst increasing certainty of cost for employers, minimising long term cost.

The Fund's objective is to achieve a return on Fund assets that is sufficient, over the long-term, to meet the funding objectives on an ongoing basis.

The Deputy Chief Executive / Group Director - Finance, Digital and Frontline Services supported by the Investment and Administration Advisory Panel will ensure that one or more Investment Managers are appointed who are authorised under the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2016 to manage the assets of the Fund. Contracts / mandates are in place giving instructions to the Managers as to how the investment portfolio is to be managed.

The Pension Fund Committee having taken account of advice from the Deputy Chief Executive / Group Director – Finance, Digital and Frontline Services may give specific directions as to the strategic asset allocations and will ensure the suitability of assets in relation to the needs of the Fund. The Investment Managers (each of which will have a benchmark and target to reflect their mandate) will be given full discretion over the choice of individual stocks and will be expected to maintain a diversified portfolio within the restrictions specified in each mandate.

4. Diversification Policy: Requirement to invest fund money in a wide variety of investments

The Fund invests in a range of asset classes to help reduce overall portfolio risk.

This will ensure that if a single asset class is not performing well, this underperformance is balanced by other better performing assets at that time. The portfolio is also diversified to reduce volatility in performance.

The Fund is diversified into the following asset classes:

- Equities
- UK Gilts
- Corporate Bonds
- Property
- Infrastructure
- Cash

The Fund commissioned an Asset / Liability review in 2020, the fundamental aim of which was to position the Fund's investments in order to:

- Reduce risk
- Maintain (as far possible) return expectations
- Minimise long term costs
- Increase diversification
- Optimise the transitioning of assets into the Pool
- Introduce Infrastructure (align to Pool aspiration) thus ensuring the Pension Fund is being invested in the most efficient way.

Aon was appointed to give their view on the risk / return of the Pensions Fund's current investment strategy. Following on from this they were requested to comment and recommend alternatives that could deliver the Fund's long term objectives.

Simulations were undertaken for different portfolio asset strategies. The model estimated the probability of achieving a variety of funding outcomes over different time periods given the current asset allocation strategy. The majority allocation to equities in the portfolio gave a potentially high return, but was also the most significant contributor to overall risk.

Alternative asset allocation strategies were reviewed as a potential means of increasing diversification and reducing risk. Options were reviewed by the Panel, Committee and Board. It was noted that the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund was not particularly high risk compared to other LGPS funds and that some of the potential alternatives resulted in entering into asset classes that were expensive and difficult markets to enter.

The Committee concluded that the Fund should move toward the following asset allocation strategy with steps set out to achieve the desired allocation.

Asset Class	Pension Fund's allocation (31/03/2023)	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3
		Reduction in Equities, increase in Govn and Corp Bonds	Reduction in Equities for infrastructure investment	Reduction in equities for additional infrastructure investment
Total Equities	69%	64%	59%	54%
Infrastructure	1%	0	5%	10%
Property	7%	7%	7%	7%
Government Bonds (UK)	10%	12%	12%	12%
Corporate Bonds (UK)	12%	15%	15%	15%
Cash	1%	2%	2%	2%

Following the above, the target and maximum percentages of total value of all investments that we will invest in particular investments or asset classes was as follows:

Asset Class	Target % of Fund	Max. % of Fund
Equities	54%	75%
Government Bonds	12%	35%
Corporate Bonds	15%	15%
Property	7%	15%
Infrastructure	10%	10%
Cash	2%	5%

The above target forms the basis of a customised benchmark which the Fund's performance is monitored against. The customised benchmark moves in line with market volatility. The asset allocation of the portfolio is not rebalanced on a routine basis but is reviewed annually to ensure the target return is not adversely impacted.

We may not permit more than 5% of the total value of all investments of fund money in entities that are connected with the Authority in line with Section 212 of the LG and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

In assessing the diversification policy, the Fund will consult with Independent Advisors.

5. Asset Allocation Policy: Assessment of the suitability of particular investments and types of investments

Investments are selected with their suitability to meet the Fund's overall objective of meeting pension obligations as they fall due. The level of return required is informed by the triennial actuarial valuation.

In the long term, low volatility assets such as gilt-edged investments behave in a similar manner to pension liabilities and would therefore "match" the attributes of pension obligations. However the requirement to achieve a longer term higher rate of return is, on average, achieved by other classes of assets such as stocks or property.

The current portfolio has been constructed with actuarial and independent advisor advice to achieve a specified level of return within risk parameters.

A management agreement is in place for each Investment Manager which sets out the relevant benchmark, performance target, asset allocation ranges and any restrictions as determined by the Pension Fund Committee.

The following demonstrates the allocation of the Fund as at March 2023:

	% of Fund Invested
Equities	18.5
Pooled Funds	
WPP Global Equities	45.4
WPP UK Credit	12.2
Other Pooled Investments	
Passive UK Gilts	10.3
Passive Equities	5.3
Pooled Property	6.8
Infrastructure	0.7
Cash & Deposits	0.8

The Pension Fund Committee has agreed not to invest in private equity at the present time.

The Pension Fund Committee has agreed to stock lend in line with the following principles:

- Appropriate collateralisation and indemnification;
- A level of stock is held back to maintain ability to vote;
- The ability to call back stock to vote on specific issues.

The Asset Allocation Strategy is reviewed annually by the Investment and Administration Advisory Panel to ensure that returns, risk and volatility are managed and consistent with overall investment strategy.

6. Policy On Risk:

Approach to risk, including the ways in which risks are measured and managed

The Fund maintains a Risk Register that is agreed by the Investment and Administration Advisory Panel and reported to the Pension Board and Pension Committee on a quarterly basis.

The risk register examines funding, investment, operational, governance and regulation issues, ranks risks in terms of likelihood and impact and details mitigation measures.

Investment Risk

This covers items such as the performance of financial markets and the Fund's Investment Managers, asset reallocation in volatile markets, leading to the risk of investments not performing (income) or increasing in value (growth) as forecast.

Examples of specific risks would be:

- assets not delivering the required return (for whatever reason, including manager underperformance)
- systemic risk with the possibility of interlinked and simultaneous financial market volatility
- insufficient funds to meet liabilities as they fall due
- inadequate, inappropriate or incomplete investment and actuarial advice is taken and acted upon
- counterparty failure

The specific risks associated with assets and asset classes are:

- equities – industry, country, size and stock risks
- fixed income - yield curve, credit risks, duration risks and market risks
- alternative assets – liquidity risks, property risk, alpha risk
- money market – credit risk and liquidity risk
- currency risk
- macroeconomic risks

The adoption of an asset allocation benchmark and the monitoring of performance relative to a performance target constrains the investment managers from deviating significantly from the intended approach, while permitting flexibility to manage the Fund in such a way to enhance returns.

The overall investment objective is to maximise investment returns and to minimise employer contributions over the long term within agreed risk tolerances.

The requirement is to be 100% funded. The funding level is calculated triennially, following an actuarial review.

The Fund's assets are managed on an active basis (except the Global Passive Equity mandate and the Passive UK Gilt mandate) and are expected to outperform their benchmarks over the long term. In this way the investment performance achieved by the Fund is expected to exceed the rate of return assumed by the Actuary within the valuation.

The Fund's Investment Managers have been given weighted average benchmarks and targets to reflect their mandates. Both asset allocation and stock selection is monitored.

The current targets for each mandate are as follows:

Portfolio	Portfolio Benchmark Index	Portfolio Target
Traditional Equity	UK - FTSE All Share US – FTSE All World Europe – FTSE All World Europe Far East – FTSE All World Developed Asia Other Intl – MSCI Emerging Index	Composite Index + 1% pa over rolling 3 year period
Global passive equity	MSCI World Low Carbon Target Reduced Fossil Fuel Select 12 BST	Index
Global high alpha equity	MSCI All Countries World Index	Index + 2% over rolling 3 year period
Infrastructure		9% IIR (net of fees with a 4% p.a. cash yield)
Passive UK Gilt	FTSE Actuaries UK Conventional Gilts All Stock	Index
UK Credit	ICE BofA ML Eur-Sterling	Index plus 0.65%
Property	CPI plus 4.5%	

Review of the Investment Managers is ongoing based on the quarterly and annual performance data supplied to the Panel by external performance management agencies.

The appointment of more than one Investment Manager introduces diversification of manager risk as discussed above.

Each Investment Manager is expected to maintain a diversified portfolio of investments and adhere to restrictions imposed within their agreement.

Investment Managers also have investment restrictions as follows:

Portfolio	Max. 10% in any single holding	Max. of 10% held in cash	Max. of 5% held in cash	No single overseas equity exceeds 5% of total value of fund	Max. holding of 25% in trust scheme	Max 25% in Emerging Markets
Baillie Gifford Traditional Equities	•	•		•	•	
WPP Global Growth Fund	•	•			•	
WPP Global Opportunities Fund	•				•	•
WPP UK Credit	No limits as pooled funds					
BlackRock Passive Equities	No limits as pooled funds					
BlackRock Passive UK Gilts	No limits as pooled funds					
BlackRock GIS4 Solutions	No limits as pooled funds					
CBRE Property	•		•			

The performance of both markets and Investment Managers is reviewed regularly by the Investment and Administration Advisory Panel, which has the appropriate skills and training required to undertake this task. The Panel is also supported by Independent Advisors providing advice to enable the Panel to robustly fulfil its functions.

Environmental, Social and Governance risks

The Fund believes that environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors should be taken into account on an ongoing basis and are an integral part of the Fund's responsibilities as a long-term sustainable investor.

The Fund is committed to carbon transition and to the parallel process of reducing fossil fuel exposure.

Fund engagement with investee companies is crucial in relation to improving standards of corporate governance, which over the long term is expected to enhance investment returns.

7. Approach to pooling investment, including the use of collective investment vehicles and shared services.

The Wales Pension Partnership (WPP) has appointed Link Fund Solutions Ltd (Link) to establish and run a collective investment vehicle for the sole use of the LGPS funds in Wales. This will enable the pooling of assets across a range of asset classes.

Link have established and will run an Authorised Contractual Scheme (a tax efficient UK collective investment vehicle) on behalf of the WPP. The ACS will have sub-funds in a range of asset classes that will meet the needs of the LGPS funds in Wales, to allow them to execute their differing asset allocation strategies.

With the support of Russell Investments, and in consultation with the eight individual LGPS Funds, Link have begun the process of appointing a number of Investment Managers. Each LGPS Fund in the pool will retain full control over strategic asset allocation decisions. Northern Trust will have custodian duties.

By using fewer Investment Managers with larger mandates, it is expected that the WPP will deliver fee savings, one of the primary aims of Government policy.

A summary of the pooling objectives of the WPP are:

- Generate consistent net of fee excess returns.
- Diversify manager risk.
- Reduce average manager fees.
- Achieve tax efficiency by reclaiming withholding tax on dividends (for non-UK equity sub-funds).
- Equitably share the costs of transitioning into sub-funds.

Progress continues to be made by the Wales Pension Partnership (WPP) in the establishment of appropriate sub funds to satisfy the investment objectives across the Welsh Funds. The first two sub funds for the collective investing of assets was launched during January 2019 and related to Global High Alpha Equities. The sub fund for UK and European Equities was launched during September 2019. The third phase related to Fixed Interest with five sub funds being launched during July 2020 (Global gilts, global corporates, UK corporates, multi asset credit and absolute return bonds). The fourth sub fund related to emerging market equities and was launched October 2021.

8. How social, environmental and corporate governance considerations are taken into account in the selection, non-selection, retention and realisation of investments.

The overriding principle of the Fund's investment policy is to obtain the best possible financial return using the full range of investments authorised under the Local Government Pension Scheme regulations.

Although the pursuit of a financial return is our predominant concern, where possible, the Fund is committed to include Responsible Investment factors (environmental, social and corporate governance factors) into the investment process. These non-financial factors are considered to the extent that they are not detrimental to the Fund's investment returns. The incorporation of these factors into Investment Managers' stock selection decisions should serve to enhance the process, rather than restrict choice in any way. The Fund does not negatively screen stocks from the investment universe available to Managers.

The Fund requires its Investment Managers to integrate all material financial and non-financial factors, into the decision-making process for all investments. Furthermore, it expects its managers to proactively engage, influence and promote good corporate governance in the companies and markets to which the Fund is exposed. The Fund's Investment Managers provide updates on their activities in this regard.

All of the Fund's Investment Managers are signed up to the United Nations Principles of Responsible Investment (UNPRI) which encourages asset owners and asset managers to incorporate environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues into investment analysis and decision making, be active owners, seek disclosure of ESG issues and promote the principles within the industry.

The six principles are:

1. We will incorporate Environmental, Social and Governance issues into investment analysis and decision-making processes;
2. We will be active owners and incorporate Environmental, Social and Governance issues into our ownership policies and practices;
3. We will seek appropriate disclosures on Environmental, Social and Governance issues by the entities in which we invest;
4. We will promote acceptance and implementation of the Principles within the investment industry;
5. We will work together to enhance our effectiveness in implementing the Principles; and
6. We will each report on our activities and progress towards implementing the Principles.

The Pension Fund is a member of the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF). LAPFF exists to promote the investment interests of local authority pension funds, and to maximise their influence as shareholders while promoting corporate social responsibility and high standards of corporate governance among the companies in which they invest.

The Fund recognises the focus and financial risks associated with climate change, fossil fuels and carbon management. The Fund remains committed to an orderly carbon transition and has set out its approach in Appendix A to this Investment Strategy Statement.

The Fund is also committed to adhering to the principles of the Stewardship Code.

9. Exercise of Voting Rights attached to investments.

Long term investment interests are enhanced by the highest standards of corporate governance and corporate responsibility. Poor governance can negatively impact shareholder value.

This Fund recognises the importance of stewardship and engagement via the equity fund managers is exercised to exert a positive influence on companies.

The Wales Pension Partnership has employed a voting and engagement provider to exercise its voting rights to promote good corporate governance and social and environment responsibility. A proportion of stock is held back from stock lending activities to facilitate this. The Provider supplies quarterly voting activity reports.

The Equity Fund Manager employed outside the WPP is expected to exercise their voting rights. The Fund has agreed a voting template which incorporates best practice governance guidelines. An independent voting agency is employed to monitor and compare the voting records of the manager against this template. The manager provides quarterly voting activity reports.

10. Myners Principles of Good Investment Guidance.

The Fund assesses and reviews its own compliance with the Myners Principles annually.

The Fund has assessed itself to be fully compliant with the principles below:

» **PRINCIPLE 1:** Effective Decision Making

» **PRINCIPLE 2:** Clear Objectives

» **PRINCIPLE 3:** Risk and liabilities

» **PRINCIPLE 4:** Performance assessment

» **PRINCIPLE 5:** Responsible ownership

» **PRINCIPLE 6:** Transparency and reporting

APPENDIX A

Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund Responsible Investment and Carbon Investment Principles

The Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund is an open, defined-benefit pension fund as part of the national Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

The nature of the Fund and scheme design means that payment of pensions will extend over the very long term. In considering the Fund's investment strategy, the Fund seeks to operate

■ **a long term, sustainable strategy;**

■ **one which does not rely upon the pursuit of short term returns;**

■ **a well-structured asset and fund manager investment allocation which targets long term socially responsible, sustainable investment performance.**

The Fund deploys a relatively uncomplicated investment structure which seeks to provide a return on investments which is above the level of pension liabilities and which seeks to achieve 100% funding over the long term.

As a long term investor, the Fund must be comprehensive in the consideration and mitigation of risks that the portfolio faces and investments are diversified across a number of asset types.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund recognises the investment implications of climate change and carbon emissions.

The Fund is committed to an orderly carbon transition and believes active engagement with investee companies, rather than divestment, is the preferred option to bring about change whilst managing overall investment risk issues. In this regard, the Fund requires its Investment Managers to engage with investee companies and seek to ensure that their business objectives are aligned to reducing carbon exposure.

We do however also recognise that there may be instances where divestment is an appropriate course of action and have identified principles to guide us in this regard.

This document outlines out how the Fund will approach this divestment, how the risks and other considerations associated with such a commitment will be managed and how the divestment over time will be incorporated into the asset allocation strategy for the Fund.

The overall approach of the Fund to incorporating wider environmental social and governance issues (ESG) is set out in more detail within the Investment Strategy Statement.

Principles

1. Responsible Investor

We are of a firm view that as responsible owners we have a voice and an ability to influence strategic change within investee companies and that this can be more powerful than disinvesting alone.

2. Asset allocation

We will incorporate all ESG factors into our asset allocation and investment strategy considerations.

3. Investment Managers

We will ensure that all our investment managers are signed up to the United Nations Principles of Responsible Investment (UNPRI), that they engage effectively and are transparent in telling us how they are making a difference. Where investee companies are not aligning themselves to reduce long-term carbon exposure then we will disinvest, in an orderly way.

The Fund demands that all its Investment Managers properly consider climate related and other environmental social and governance risks in decision making within their respective portfolios.

As and when investment managers and asset allocations require amending, the risk of fossil fuel exposure will be incorporated into any due diligence regarding risk and reward decision making.

The Fund's passive equity mandate is managed through a low carbon product.

4. Stakeholder engagement

The Fund's primary purpose is to be able to pay for pension liabilities over the long term.

There are national arrangements in place to reduce pension benefits if the LGPS is unable to sustain itself through loss of value or growth in liabilities. We therefore have a duty to ensure that the future pension entitlements of members are not compromised.

However, we do hold the view of "a world worth living in" as one of our guiding principles.

5. Long Term and alignment to global goals

As an open fund, we are long term investors and must not be overly influenced by short term factors and influences.

6. Working Together

We will collaborate with other Welsh Funds through the Wales Pension Partnership and seek to align our long term goals with our partners.

It is important that the Fund works with our partners to share knowledge and best practice as well as utilising collective assets to push for the most effective and efficient implementation of reduced fossil fuel strategies. We will also work with other funds nationally through our membership of the LAPFF to encourage companies to adopt the highest standards with regard to fossil fuel and energy efficiency.

7. Risk Mitigation

Investment Managers must consider ESG and Climate Change / Carbon Exposure in their investment decisions, specifically with regard to risk mitigation and be clear on any negative implications.

8. Transparency

We will understand the Fund's exposure to Carbon through a systemic approach, engaging with experts to thoroughly and robustly baseline our position and monitor going forward.

Myners Investment Principles

Principle 1: Effective Decision Making

Administering authorities should ensure that:

- Decisions are taken by persons or organisations with the skills, knowledge, advice and resources necessary to make them effectively and monitor their implementation; and
- Those persons or organisations have sufficient expertise to be able to evaluate and challenge the advice they receive, and manage conflicts of interest.

➤ **FULL COMPLIANCE**

Principle 2: Clear Objectives

An overall investment objective(s) should be set out for the fund that takes account of the scheme's liabilities and the potential impact on local taxpayers, the strength of the covenant for non-local authority employers, and the attitude to risk of both the administering authority and scheme employers, and these should be clearly communicated to advisors and investment managers.

➤ **FULL COMPLIANCE**

Principle 3: Risk and liabilities

In setting and reviewing their investment strategy, administering authorities should take account of the form and structure of liabilities.

These include the implications for local taxpayers, the strength of the covenant for participating employers, the risk of their default and longevity risk.

➤ **FULL COMPLIANCE**

Principle 4: Performance assessment

Arrangements should be in place for the formal measurement of performance of the investments, investment managers and advisors.

Administering authorities should also periodically make a formal assessment of their own effectiveness as a decision-making body and report on this to scheme members.

➤ **FULL COMPLIANCE**

Principle 5: Responsible ownership

Administering authorities should :

- Adopt, or ensure their investment managers adopt, the Institutional Shareholders' Committee Statement of Principles on the responsibilities of shareholders and agents
- Include a statement of their policy on responsible ownership in the statement of investment principles
- Report periodically to scheme members on the discharge of such responsibilities.

➤ **FULL COMPLIANCE**

Principle 6: Transparency and reporting

Administering authorities should :

- Act in a transparent manner, communicating with stakeholders on issues relating to their management of investment, its governance and risks, including performance against stated objectives.
- Provide regular communication to scheme members in the form they consider most appropriate.

➤ **FULL COMPLIANCE**



Accounts Report

Fund Account

2022/23		2023/24	
£'000		£'000	£'000
	Contributions		
(112,985)	Employer contributions	(111,319)	
(34,416)	Member contributions	(36,969)	
(147,401)			(148,288)
	Transfers in from other Pension Funds		
(5,917)	Group Transfers in from other schemes or funds	(7,579)	
(1,945)	Individual Transfers from other schemes or funds	(1,027)	
			(8,606)
(2,957)	Other income		(4,645)
	Benefits		
117,196	Pensions	130,805	
22,587	Commutation of pensions and lump sum retirement benefits	30,529	
2,741	Lump sum death benefits	5,371	
142,524			166,705
	Payments to and on account of leavers		
279	Refunds to members leaving scheme or fund	246	
(1)	Payments for members joining state scheme or fund	(2)	
7,641	Individual transfers to other schemes of funds	10,765	
7,919			11,009
150,443			177,714
(7,777)	Net (addition) / withdrawals from dealings with members		16,175
13,397	Management Expenses		14,645
5,620	Net (additions) / withdrawals Including fund management expenses		30,820
	Investment income		
(15,680)	Equities	(15,015)	
	Pooled Funds		
(13,598)	WPP Global Equities*	(45,950)	
0	WPP Sustainable Equities	(766)	
(10,423)	WPP UK Credit Fund	(14,930)	
	Other Pooled Investments		
(10,777)	Pooled Property	(8,974)	
	Other		
(298)	Cash deposits	(780)	
(50,776)			(86,415)
299,202	(Profits) & losses on disposal of investments and changes in the value of investments		(400,615)
75	Taxes on income		110
248,501	Net Returns on Investments		(486,920)
254,121	Net (increase) / decrease in net assets available for benefits during the year		(456,100)
(4,514,596)	Opening Net Assets		(4,260,475)
(4,260,475)	Closing Net Assets		(4,716,575)

* Initially during 2022/23, the dividends from WPP Global Equities were accumulation units, of which only one accumulation took place for the Global Growth Fund and is included within the £13.598m. For the remainder of 2022/23 income remained within the market value price. At year end of 2022/23, the market value of the Global Growth Fund included £14.552m of income. For 2023/24 Global Growth reverted back to accumulation units.

Net Asset Statement

31/03/2023		31/03/2024	
£'000		£'000	£'000
	Investment Assets		
786,080	Equities	444,003	
	Pooled Funds		
1,933,913	WPP Global Equities	2,250,754	
0	WPP Sustainable Equities	113,382	
520,721	WPP UK Credit Fund	707,830	
0	WPP Infrastructure (Closed Ended)	16,897	
0	WPP Local Investment	2,918	
	Other Pooled Investments		
438,537	Passive UK Gilts	539,630	
223,739	Passive Equities	278,382	
290,130	Pooled Property	288,102	
29,613	Pooled Infrastructure	38,507	
4,222,733			4,680,405
31,111	Cash deposits		33,977
	Other investment balances		
1,898	Investment debtors	1,335	
685	Tax recoverable	638	
2,583			1,973
4,256,427			4,716,355
	Investment Liabilities		
(65)	Investment creditors		(4,506)
4,256,362	Net Investment Assets		4,711,849
	Current Assets		
6,916	Contributions due from employers and employees	7,334	
615	Other current assets	1,268	
7,531			8,602
(3,418)	Current Liabilities		(3,876)
4,260,475	Net assets of the scheme available to fund benefits at period end		4,716,575

Notes to the Pension Fund Accounts

Introduction

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2023/24 which is based upon International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as amended for the UK public sector.

Significant Accounting Policies

ACCRUALS OF EXPENDITURE AND INCOME

Where material, accruals are made for employee and employer contributions, investment income, benefits paid, administration costs, investment management fees and advisors fees.

Transfer values are accounted for on a cash basis, with the exception of material group transfers, which are accounted for during the year of effective date of transfer or the year in which the actuary values the transfer, if later.

INVESTMENT VALUATION OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

In terms of "Fair Value", all investments have quoted prices in active markets, with the exception of Pooled Investment Vehicles managed by the WPP and Pooled Property Funds.

Listed securities are valued in accordance with IAS 39 – Financial Instruments, using bid prices as at 31 st March 2024 obtained from recognised Stock Exchanges.

Sterling valuations of securities denominated in foreign currencies are based on closing exchange rates as at 31 st March 2024.

Pooled Investment Vehicles managed by the WPP are valued using net asset values provided by Waystone, the WPP operator. These are reported at the closing single price.

Pooled Property Funds are valued by Fund Managers using reliable valuation techniques to determine Fair Value. Property valuations are represented by unit prices, based on underlying independent professional valuations. No assets require significant judgements or assumptions to determine Fair Value.

ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL COSTS

Transaction costs incurred in acquiring or disposing of investments are included as part of the purchase cost or netted off against sales proceeds, as appropriate.

Transaction costs include fees, commissions and duties. Transaction costs incurred during 2023/24 amounted to £1.78m (£1.22m in 2022/23). In addition to the direct costs disclosed above, indirect costs are incurred through the bid-offer spread on investments within pooled investment vehicles. The amount of indirect costs is not separately provided to the scheme.

TAXATION

As a registered public service scheme, the Pension Fund is exempt from UK income tax and capital gains tax. Overseas investment income incurs withholding tax in the country of origin unless exemption is granted.

Irrecoverable tax is accounted for as an expense in the Fund Account, with any recoverable tax shown as an asset in the Net Assets Statement.

There is a small liability to income tax on refunds of contributions and compounded pensions (small pensions converted into lump sums). These amounts are paid to HMRC on a quarterly basis.

VAT is recoverable on all activities, so the accounts are shown exclusive of VAT.

Statement of Responsibilities for the Pension Fund Accounts

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's Responsibilities

The Council is required:

- › To make arrangements for the proper administration of the Pension Fund's financial affairs and to ensure one of its Officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In the Council, that Officer is the Deputy Chief Executive / Group Director – Finance, Digital and Frontline Services.
- › To manage the Pension Fund's affairs to ensure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets.
- › To approve the Pension Fund Accounts.

I confirm that these accounts were approved by Council on:

Signature: 

Date: 6th November 2024

Presiding Officer

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Floor 4, 2 Llys Cadwyn, Taff Street, Pontypridd CF37 4TH

The Deputy Chief Executive / Group Director – Finance, Digital and Frontline Services' Responsibilities

The Deputy Chief Executive / Group Director – Finance, Digital and Frontline Services is responsible for the preparation of the Pension Fund Accounts which, in terms of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom, is required to present a true and fair view of the financial position of the Pension Fund at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the year.

In preparing the Pension Fund Accounts, the Deputy Chief Executive / Group Director – Finance, Digital and Frontline Services has:


- › Selected suitable accounting policies and applied them consistently.
- › Made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent.
- › Complied with the code.

The Deputy Chief Executive / Group Director – Finance, Digital and Frontline Services has also throughout the financial year:

- › Maintained proper accounting records that were kept up to date.
- › Taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Certificate of the Deputy Chief Executive / Group Director – Finance, Digital and Frontline Services on the Accounts of Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund for 2023/24

I certify that the accounts present a true and fair view of the financial position of Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund as at 31st March 2024 and its income and expenditure for the year.

Signature: 

Date: 6th November 2024

Barrie Davies

Deputy Chief Executive / Group Director – Finance, Digital and Frontline Services

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Floor 4, 2 Llys Cadwyn, Taff Street, Pontypridd CF37 4TH

Contributions

Employers' Contributions

Employers' contribution rates are determined by the Fund's actuary so as to maintain the fund in a state of solvency, having regard to existing and prospective liabilities.

Valuations of the Fund's assets and liabilities for this purpose are carried out every three years. The latest Valuation was carried out as at March 2022 and the results were implemented from 1st April 2023.

Employees' Contributions

Employee contributions are tiered, so that higher earners pay a greater percentage of their salary into the scheme.

The bands for the year 2023/2024 were:

Full Time Equivalent Pay	Contribution Rate
Up to £16,500	5.5%
£16,501, up to £25,900	5.8%
£25,901, up to £42,100	6.5%
£42,101, up to £53,300	6.8%
£53,301, up to £74,700	8.5%
£74,701, up to £105,900	9.9%
£105,901, up to £124,800	10.5%
£124,801, up to £187,200	11.4%
£187,201 or more	12.5%

From 1st April 2014 there is a 50/50 option which allows members to pay half the normal rate of contributions shown above, and build up pension at half the normal rate.

Contributions Receivable and Benefits Payable

Contributions received and benefits paid are shown in the table below:

Type of Body	Member Contributions		Employer Contributions		Pensions, Lump Sums and Death Benefits	
	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Administering	11,528	11,977	39,690	36,186	40,804	50,402
Admitted	4,261	4,595	19,416	17,103	16,882	20,679
Scheduled	18,627	20,397	53,879	58,030	84,838	95,624
Total	34,416	36,969	112,985	111,319	142,524	166,705

Included in employer contributions are £906k of deficit funding contributions (£4,224k in 2022/23).

Contributions Received	EMPLOYEE (£)	EMPLOYERS (£)	Contribution Rate (%)
Agored Cymru	2,661.72	12,981.12	31.70
Amgen Cymru (Cynon)	89,840.58	269,964.59	18.70
Atlas FM Ltd	364.50	1,238.94	18.70
Awen Cultural Trust	88,296.00	172,801.58	14.00
Bedlinog Community Council	455.81	2,102.77	20.30
Brackla Community Council	3,761.18	11,143.28	17.60
Bridgend College	608,339.16	1,674,810.75	17.10
Bridgend County Borough Council	6,533,825.04	20,716,214.05	19.40
Careers Wales	201,493.67	1,037,650.71	33.60
Careers Wales Association	2,322.66	0.00	0.00
Central South Consortium (JES)	408,940.52	345,593.23	6.90
Chief Constable South Wales	5,835,380.09	14,667,804.03	16.20
Coity Higher Community Council	1,515.28	5,468.63	20.70
Coleg Y Cymoedd	725,885.09	2,204,852.28	19.20
Compass Contract Services (Cymoedd) Ltd	4,228.79	0.00	0.00
Cornelly Community Council	2165.76	7,063.47	21.20
Coychurch Crematorium	17,616.71	47,724.40	16.50
DBW FM Ltd	234,546.57	727,879.17	31.90
Development Bank of Wales Plc.	42,000.92	168,850.93	32.20
Drive Ltd	7,107.74	0.00	0.00
Ecoserv Group Ltd	2,000.06	15,982.02	44.60
Garw Valley Community Council	2,097.45	7,259.60	19.50
Gelligaer Community Council	1,321.29	2,505.94	11.00
Halo Leisure Services Ltd	41,706.97	0.00	0.00
Hirwaun & Penderyn Community Council	2,545.73	8,048.73	20.10
Laleston Community Council	3552.62	11,506.50	19.80
Little Inspirations Ltd	2070.88	6,871.00	18.70
Llangynwyd Middle Community Council	806.43	2,752.87	19.80
Llanharan Community Council	4,668.20	17,229.37	20.30
Llantrisant Community Council	5,700.40	17,113.50	18.10
Llantwit Fardre Community Council	9,372.13	25,708.12	16.90
Llwydcoed Crematorium	1,352.95	3,312.48	14.20
Local Government Data Unit	67,669.90	54,511.69	5.70
Maesteg Town Council	4,562.36	11,027.37	14.60
Merthry Tydfil Leisure Trust	105,382.24	284,624.48	16.20
Merthyr Tydfil College	180,732.32	473,330.46	16.70
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	2,894,684.55	10,186,083.69	21.80
Merthyr Tydfil Institute for the Blind	10,500.20	38,227.28	29.80
Merthyr Valley Homes	513,573.56	850,489.46	11.10
Mrs Bucket Commercial Cleaning	2,380.32	18,782.07	43.40
Police & Crime Commissioner	147,311.84	342,499.13	16.20
Pontyclun Community Council	5,973.28	18,127.40	18.10
Pontypridd Town Council	24,570.29	69,626.98	17.60
Pyle Community Council	2,033.34	6,631.69	21.20
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	11,976,632.36	36,185,614.80	18.70
RWCMD	183,324.96	415,820.03	16.70
Social Care Wales	586,607.42	2,260,817.23	26.50
South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee	653.00	1,687.02	18.70
South Wales Fire Authority	677,957.93	1,607,671.17	15.60
South Wales Valuation Tribunal	6,498.90	14,997.37	15.00
St Brides Minor Community Council	675.68	2,579.88	21.00
The Fern Partnership	939.04	3,192.70	18.70
Tonyrefail Community Council	10,075.14	27,327.09	16.20
Trivallis	923,027.68	2,217,857.00	16.20
University of South Wales	2,007,889.81	4,834,852.59	16.70
Valleys to Coast Housing	70,181.35	327,545.96	29.60
Welsh Government	641,795.64	3,766,166.81	36.30
WJEC	1,007,099.40	5,103,569.58	36.20
WSP Glamorgan Consultancy Ltd	27,180.44	0.00	0.00
Ynysawdre Community Council	676.70	2,620.56	21.30
TOTAL	36,968,532.55	111,318,715.55	

Contributions Received from Employers

Less than 0.5%, in monetary terms, were received late. Contributions were received late on 26 occasions.

Contributions received are monitored on a monthly basis and employers contacted if the statutory deadlines are missed.

Management Expenses

The management expenses borne by the Fund in 2023/24 are set out below:

	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000	£'000
Administrative Costs	2,181	2,689
Investment Management Expenses	10,775	11,546
Oversight and Governance Costs	441	410
TOTAL	13,397	14,645

Investment management expenses represent 0.25% (0.25% in 2022/23) of the value of the Pension Fund as at 31st March 2024.

2023/24 Audit Fees of £54k are included in Oversight and Governance Costs (£41k in 2022/23).

The investment management expenses borne by the Fund in 2023/24 are set out below including comparative Note for 2022/23:

	2023/24			2022/23		
	Total	Management Fees	Transaction Costs	Total	Management Fees	Transaction Costs
2023/24	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Equities	1,539	1,179	360	1,829	1,486	343
Pooled Funds						
WPP Global Equities	7,391	6,100	1,291	7,295	6,024	1,271
WPP Sustainable Equities	644	160	484	0	0	0
WPP UK Credit Fund	602	460	142	593	484	109
WPP Infrastructure (Closed Ended)	64	56	8	0	0	0
WPP Local Investment	90	65	25	0	0	0
Other Pooled Investments						
UK Gilts	23	23	0	24	24	0
Passive Equities	25	25	0	21	21	0
Pooled Property	506	481	25	552	551	1
Pooled Infrastructure	242	224	18	0	0	0
	11,126	8,773	2,353	10,314	8,590	1,724
Custody Fees	420			461		
Total	11,546			10,775		

The Fund incurs no performance related fees.

Included in the management expenses above, is the cost of the Fund's involvement in the WPP collective investment pooling arrangement, as set out below:

	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000	£'000
WPP Oversight and Governance Costs		
Running Costs	158	171
WPP Investment Management Expenses		
Fund Managers Fees	6,961	7,306
Transaction Costs	880	1,382
Custody Fees	407	386
TOTAL	8,406	9,245

The oversight and governance costs are the annual running costs of the Pool, which includes the Host Authority costs and other external advisor costs. These costs are funded equally by all eight of the Local Authority Pension Funds in Wales. All other costs, including the investment management expenses are fees payable to Waystone (the WPP operator) and include fund manager fees, transaction costs (which also includes the operator fee) and custody fees. These costs are based on each Fund's percentage share of the WPP pooled assets and are deducted from the Net Asset Value (NAV).

Transactions with Related Parties

In the course of fulfilling its role as Administering Authority to the Fund, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC provided services to the Fund for which it charged £2m (£1.6m in 2022/23). These costs are mainly in respect of those staff employed in ensuring that the pension service is delivered.

At the year-end, contributions outstanding from the Employing Bodies in the Fund amounted to £7.3m (£6.9m in 2022/23), of which £5.5m related to employer contributions and £1.8m to employee contributions.

There are members of the Pension Fund Investment and Administration Advisory Panel, the Pensions Board and the Pension Fund Committee who are also members of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund.

The administration of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund is a function of full Council, with responsibility for day to day decisions being delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive / Group Director – Finance, Digital and Frontline Services. As such, the post holders are required to declare any interests with related parties. The disclosure can be found in the Statement of Accounts of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

The Committee Members and Senior Officers that advise the Committee are required to declare their interest at each meeting.

- Officer remuneration and Members allowances are disclosed within the Statement of Accounts for Rhondda Cynon Taf at the following link:
www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/Performancebudgetsandspending/StatementofAccounts.aspx

Contingent Liabilities

There is a contingent liability of £1.245m (£1.165m in 2022/23) in respect of refundable contributions for leavers who have not yet claimed refunds.

Audit Opinion

The statement of the Auditor General for Wales to the members of Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund on the Annual Report

I have examined the pension fund accounts and related notes contained in the 2023-24 Annual Report of Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund to establish whether they are consistent, in all material respects, with the pension fund accounts and related notes included in the Statement of Accounts produced by Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund for the year ended 2023-24 which were authorised for issue on 6th November 2024. The pension fund accounts comprise the Fund Account and the Net Assets Statement.

Opinion

In my opinion the pension fund accounts and related notes included in the Annual Report of Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund are consistent, in all material respects, with the pension fund accounts and related notes included in the Statement of Accounts produced by Rhondda Cynon Taf for the year ended 31st March 2024 which were authorised for issue on 6th November 2024 on which I issued an unqualified opinion.

I have not considered the effects of any events between the date on which I issued my opinion on the pension fund accounts included in the pension fund's Statement of Accounts, 6th November 2024 and the date of this statement.

Respective responsibilities of the Administering Authority and the Auditor General for Wales

The Administering Authority, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, is responsible for preparing the Annual Report. My responsibility is to report my opinion on whether the pension fund accounts and related notes contained in the Annual Report are consistent, in all material respects, with the pension fund accounts and related notes included in the Statement of Accounts of the Pension Fund. I also read the other information contained in the Annual Report and consider the implications for my report if I become aware of any misstatements or material inconsistencies with the pension fund accounts. This other information comprises the Chairman's Foreword, Introduction, Summary, Administration Report, Investment Report, Actuary's Report, Communication Report and Pension Fund Governance.



Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales
29th November 2024

1 Capital Quarter
Tyndall Street
Cardiff, CF10 4BZ

- ▣ The maintenance and integrity of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's website is the responsibility of the Accounting Officer; the work carried out by auditors does not involve consideration of these matters and accordingly auditors accept no responsibility for any changes that may have occurred to the financial statements since they were initially presented on the website.

Actuary's Report

Introduction

This statement has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 57(1)(d) of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (the 'LGPS Regulations').

The LGPS Regulations require that a full actuarial valuation is carried out every third year. The purpose of this is to establish that the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund (the 'Fund') is able to meet its liabilities to past and present contributors and to review employer contribution rates. The last full actuarial investigation into the financial position of the Fund was completed as at 31 March 2022 by Aon, in accordance with Regulation 62 of the LGPS Regulations.

Actuarial Position

- 1** The valuation as at 31 March 2022 showed that the funding level of the Fund had increased since the previous valuation with the market value of the Fund's assets as at 31 March 2022 (of £4,512.1 M) covering 105% of the liabilities.

- 2** The valuation also assessed each individual employer's (or group of employers') position separately. Contribution requirements were determined based on the principles in the Fund's Funding Strategy Statement and are set out in Aon's report dated 31 March 2023 (the "actuarial valuation report").

In addition to the contributions certified, payments to cover additional liabilities arising from early retirements (other than ill-health retirements) will be made to the Fund by the employers.

Total contributions payable by all employers over the three years to 31 March 2026 are estimated to be:

Year from 1 April	% of pensionable pay	Plus total contribution amount (£M)
2023	19.1%	0.906
2024	19.1%	0.938
2025	19.1%	0.971

- 3** The funding plan adopted in assessing the contributions for each employer is in accordance with the Funding Strategy Statement.

Different approaches were adopted in relation to the calculation of the primary contribution rate, stepping of contribution changes and individual employers' recovery / amortisation periods as agreed with the Administering Authority and reflected in the Funding Strategy Statement, reflecting the employers' circumstances.

4 The valuation was carried out using the projected unit actuarial method for most employers, allowing for future increases in pensionable pay.

The main financial actuarial assumptions used for assessing the funding target and the contribution rates were as follows.

Discount rate for periods IN service	
Scheduled and subsumption body funding target *	4.30% p.a.
Intermediate funding target	3.90% p.a.
Ongoing orphan funding target	3.90% p.a.
Discount rate for periods AFTER LEAVING service	
Scheduled and subsumption body funding target *	4.30% p.a.
Intermediate funding target	3.80% p.a.
Ongoing orphan funding target	1.30% p.a.
Rate of pay increases	3.55% p.a.
Rate of increase to pension accounts **	2.30% p.a.
Rate of increases in pensions in payment ** (in excess of Guaranteed Minimum Pension)	2.30% p.a.

* The secure scheduled body discount rate was also used for employers whose liabilities will be subsumed after exit by a scheduled body.

** In addition, a 10% uplift has been applied to the past service liabilities on the scheduled and subsumption body and intermediate funding targets to make allowance for short-term inflation above the long-term assumption.

The discount rate and rate of increases to pensions for already orphaned liabilities (i.e. where there is no scheme employer responsible for funding those liabilities and the employer has exited the Fund) were

The assets were valued at market value.

5 The key demographic assumption was the allowance made for longevity. The post retirement mortality assumption adopted for the actuarial valuation was based on the standard self-administered pension scheme (SAPS) S3 mortality tables (Heavy) with appropriate scaling factors applied based on an analysis of the Fund's pensioner mortality experience and a Fund membership postcode analysis using Aon's Demographic Horizons™ longevity model.

The assumption includes an allowance for future improvements based on the 2021 Continuous Mortality Investigation Projections Model, with a long term annual rate of improvement in mortality rates of 1.5% p.a.

The resulting average future life expectancies at age 65 (for normal health retirements) were:

	Men	Women
Current pensioners aged 65 at the valuation date	21.5%	24.1%
Current active members aged 45 at the valuation date	22.8%	25.6%

Further details of the assumptions adopted for the valuation, including the other demographic assumptions, are set out in the actuarial valuation report.

6 The valuation results summarised in paragraph 1 above are based on the financial position and market levels at the valuation date, 31 March 2022.

As such the results do not make allowance for changes which have occurred subsequent to the valuation date. The Actuary, in conjunction with the Administering Authority, monitors the funding position on a regular basis.

7 The formal actuarial valuation report and the Rates and Adjustments Certificate setting out the employer contribution rates for the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026 were signed on 31 March 2023.

Other than as agreed or otherwise permitted or required by the Regulations, employer contribution rates will be reviewed at the next actuarial valuation of the Fund as at 31 March 2025 in accordance with Regulation 62 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013.

8 This Statement has been prepared by the Actuary to the Fund, Aon, for inclusion in the accounts of the Fund. It provides a summary of the results of their actuarial valuation which was carried out as at 31 March 2022.

The valuation provides a snapshot of the funding position at the valuation date and is used to assess the future level of contributions required.

This Statement must not be considered without reference to the formal actuarial valuation report which details fully the context and limitations of the actuarial valuation.

Aon does not accept any responsibility or liability to any party other than our client, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, the Administering Authority of the Fund, in respect of this Statement.

9 The report on the actuarial valuation as at 31st March 2022 is available on the Fund's website at the following address:

→ www.rctpensions.org.uk/EN/GovernanceAndInvestment/AnnualReports.aspx

Aon Solutions UK Limited
May 2024



Communication Report

Annual Meetings

The 2023 Annual General Meeting was held in November with representatives from our major fund employers attending.

Presentations included an update on Pension Fund Performance and an Actuarial update.

Helpdesk

Our Helpdesk continues to assist with pension queries and calls can be made between the hours of 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

You can contact the Helpdesk on:

➔ 01443 680 611

Website

The Pension Fund website is a useful tool in our communication strategy and allows us to provide information about the Fund and the LGPS to our members and prospective members.

It contains information for existing and previous members as well as pensioners. All Wales Factsheets, LGA Factsheets, commonly used forms and our governance documents are all up-loaded to the site, as well as minutes of meetings of the Local Pension Board meetings.

A dedicated General Data Protection Regulation page has been added to the website which contains the Fund's Privacy Statement and Memorandum of Understanding.

The website is reviewed and updated when changes to legislation are implemented.

The Helpdesk regularly refers members to the web-site to download forms or to get information.

Our Fund Employers have a specific section of the RCT website with relevant staff having their own unique log-in details. This section of the website includes all the necessary forms and documents required for the administration of members benefits e.g. new starter forms, termination forms etc

The website can be viewed at:

➔ www.rctpensions.org.uk

Pensions Made Simple member videos are now available to view on both the desktop and mobile versions of www.lgpsmember.org and on the RCT Pension Fund Website. There are eight videos in total with English and Welsh versions available.

Presentations

The Team are happy to provide presentations as required.

Either to provide members with information regarding the scheme and their pension benefits or to educate employers on the administration requirements of the scheme.

Annual Benefit Statements

In line with regulations the Fund issues Annual Benefit Statements to all active and deferred members.

The statements for the 2023/2024 scheme year were issued within the deadline required by the scheme regulations and complied with Scheme Advisory Board Guidance.

Home Visits

In cases of Serious Ill Health, a representative of the Pension Section will attend a home visit in conjunction with Human Resource representatives if appropriate.

Electronic Communications

Member Self Service (My Pension Online) is available to all the Fund's active, deferred and pensioner members.

The facility allows members to be able to view and change some of their personal details and deferred and active members can run estimates of future pension benefits.

We continue to encourage communication to and from the Pension Section electronically and continually work to ensure that data being sent or received from our Fund employers is secure.

The Fund now receives monthly electronic data submissions from most employers which allows member data and pay information to be uploaded directly into our Pension software. Going forward, we will be rolling this facility out to all remaining employers.

LGPS 2014

The Team continually reviews the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 which were laid before Parliament on 19th September 2013 and outlined the structure of the LGPS from 1st April 2014.

- Benefits are based on Career Average Re-valued Earnings (CARE)
- Accrual rate of 1/49th
- Definition of pensionable pay to include non- contractual overtime
- Introduction of a new 50/50 option where members can pay less for short periods of time and build up pension at half the rate they would normally
- Increased contribution rates for higher earners
- Normal Pension Age linked to State Pension Age

Benefits from membership in the scheme prior to April 2014 will maintain a final salary link with a members final salary (based on the pensionable pay definition in force before April 2014) being determined when they leave the scheme.

The RCT Pension Fund website includes a link to www.lgpsmember.org which has been set up and maintained by the Local Government Association as a central source of information and includes various calculators which members can use.

The Team continually reviews our processes and correspondence to ensure that the Fund is compliant with the regulations, that the details we receive from employers when members join or leave the fund include the information required and that our members fully understand how their benefits are calculated. We have maintained our communications with our contributing employers so that they are kept up to date with changes to the LGPS and any other relevant technical changes.

Cost of Living Increases

Pensions payable to members who retire on health grounds and to members' spouses and children are increased annually in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI), as at 30th September from the preceding year.

The LGPS Pension Increase is formally confirmed by HM Treasury in January and paid from the first Monday of each new tax year.

Pensions payable to other members who have reached the age of 55 also benefit from annual inflation proofing.

The end of contracting out has led to changes in who has the responsibility for increasing any pension which includes an entitlement to a Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) (relating to membership up to 5th April 1997). Prior to 2016 some or all of the statutory inflation proofing was provided by the Department of Work and Pensions. Since April 2016 the Fund will now be responsible for the full pension increases on any GMP benefits.

The 2023/24 increase was 6.7%.



Pension Fund Governance

Administering authorities must ensure that existing governance arrangements are maintained and developed to help support the decision making process.

The Governance arrangements for the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund are summarised and clarified in a number of key documents that relate to the effective stewardship of the Fund.

- An overarching Governance Statement of Compliance that indicates the Fund's position against the Government's best practice standards
- A Governance Policy Statement which provides an overview of the management structure, decision making and employer engagements within the scheme
- We are committed to providing a comprehensive communication and information service to participating employers and members of the pension scheme and services we provide can be found in our Communications Policy Statement.
- A Pension Administration Strategy which seeks to improve efficiency in the delivery of agreed standards of quality and to ensure compliance with statutory requirements
- The Investment Strategy Statement which shows, in detail how we manage the Fund's investments.
- The Funding Strategy which provides a summary of how we will fund our pension liabilities and includes an overview of how any risks to the fund are identified, managed and reviewed.

These documents are reviewed annually, apart from the Funding Strategy Statement which is reviewed every three years, and the latest versions can be found under the Governance & Investment section of our pension website, or alternatively, please contact our Pension Helpdesk for a copy.

The 2022 Valuation Report which explains the assumptions data and the results of the latest valuation exercise is available in the Employers Section of the website.

Local Pension Board

In accordance with the Public Services Pensions Act 2013 the Pension Fund was required to appoint, by 1st April 2015, a Local Pension Board to assist Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Administering Authority as 'Scheme Manager' in -

- Securing compliance with the Principal Regulations and any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the LGPS;
- Securing compliance with the requirements imposed, in relation to the LGPS, by the Pensions Regulator; and
- Ensuring the effective and efficient governance and administration of the LGPS by the Scheme Manager

Membership of the Pension Board

The Pension Board consists of 4 members and is constituted as two employer representatives and two member representatives:

Employer Representatives:

Responsible for representing all the Fund Employers (Scheduled, Designated, and Admitted Bodies)

- › **Professor Hugh Coombs (Chair)** University of South Wales
- › **Mr David Francis** Coleg Y Cymoedd

Member Representatives:

Responsible for representing all Scheme Members (Active, Deferred, and Pensioner Members)

- › **Mr Rob Whiles** Pensioner
- › **Mrs Sindy Absalom**
Active Member and Trade Union (Unison) representative (to December 2023)
- › **Mr Darren Griffiths**
Active Member and Trade Union (Unison) representative (from January 2024)

Role of the Pension Board

The first core function of the Board is to assist the Administering Authority in securing compliance with the Regulations, any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the Scheme, and requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator in relation to the Scheme.

Within this extent, the Board will consider areas including, but not restricted to:

- Review regular compliance monitoring reports which shall include reports to and decisions made under the Regulations by the Committee.
- Review management, administrative and governance processes and procedures in order to ensure they remain compliant with the Regulations, relevant legislation and in particular the Pension Regulators Code of Practice.

The second core function of the Board is to ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Scheme. Within this extent, the Board will consider areas including but not restricted to:

- Assist with the development of improved customer services.
- Monitor performance of administration, governance and investments against key performance targets and indicators.
- Monitor internal and external audit reports.
- Review the outcome of actuarial reporting and valuations.

Chairman's Update



This statement represents a review of the activities of the Pension Board covering the period of this Annual Report. In accordance with the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 the Pension Board's role is to assist the Adminstrating Authority in:

- Securing compliance with the Principal Regulations and any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the LGPS;
- Securing compliance with the requirements imposed in relation to the LGPS by the Pension Regulator; and,
- Ensuring the effective and efficient governance and administration of the LGPS by the scheme manager.

The Pension Board does not have decision making powers.

The Board continued to meet regularly over the financial year 2023/24. These meetings provided the opportunity for members to use either a hybrid format or to attend the traditional face to face meetings. A number of members of the Board also attended the Annual General Meeting (on line).

As in previous financial years all Pension Board meetings were quorate. There were four meetings of the Pension Board over the relevant financial year. In addition, as has become normal practice, the Pension Committee and Pension Board met jointly in March with a major item on that agenda being the annual review of the Pension Fund's strategic policy documents. Pension Board members took the opportunity to feed in their comments to these documents both prior to the Pension Committee and at the Committee itself. Thus, at this meeting the Board is able to contribute directly to the development and review of various essential strategy documents for the Fund.

There remains a positive relationship between the Pension Board and Pension Committee for which the Board is grateful.

In undertaking its remit of discharging its oversight and scrutiny roles the Pension Board reviews a wide range of the Pension Fund's activities.

Regular items on the agendas included the:

- monitoring and review of investment performance, strategies and associated costs;
- consideration of any breaches of regulations under the breaches policy;
- examination of the risk register with the Board making suggestions for any revisions thought necessary;
- consideration of the performance of the pension administration function including examining workflow, data quality, resourcing and related performance statistics;
- receipt of updates on the performance, governance and new initiatives associated with the Welsh Pension Partnership;
- consideration of developments affecting the LGPS;
- progress made on ESG issues;
- review of the training and development plans and achievements of the Pension Board and Pension Committee; and,
- review of any internal and external audit reports relevant to the fund.

The Board pays particular attention to monitoring the achievement of relevant deadlines for specific activities (e.g. issuing the Annual Benefit Statements by the required due date). There were no breaches of regulations during the course of the year which required a referral to the Pension Regulator. Here, the Board would like to pay tribute to the way in which the administration of the Fund operates. During the year it was observed that there is the continued momentum shown in previous years for the development of administrative and governance procedures as the pension environment changes and evolves rapidly around the Fund.

Chairman's Update

In the interests of the Board's activities being transparent the agendas, names and roles of Board members together with minutes for the Pension Board's meetings are available on the Pension Fund's website.

As outlined above this year's agendas continued the practice of previous years of monitoring the progress of the all Wales Pension Partnership (WPP). This activity, in addition to monitoring the progress of the Partnership against defined objectives and deadlines, continued to cover such important items as reviewing the development of its governance arrangements. These governance arrangements are continuing to evolve and a number of positive developments took place over the last financial year in these respects. These arrangements will inevitably continue to develop.

All pension board chairs in Wales continued to meet twice a year with officer representatives of the WPP and its external advisors from Waystone and Russell Investments. These meetings help give an all Wales perspective in terms of the governance of pension funds and the performance of the Pool's investments. At the 31st March 2024 the Pool had increased its proportion of pooled assets to c74% (including passive investments).

The RCT Pension Board is given feedback on the outcomes of these meetings. In addition, the member representative for the WPP, who attends the Joint Governance Committee, reports to these meetings giving the opportunity for direct feedback on the functioning of the Joint Governance Committee. This forum aids building good working relationships between board chairs, the host authority and Pool thus helping strengthen overall governance of Welsh pension funds.

Members of the Pension Board attended regular training both internally and externally. Welsh Pension Partnership on line training has been particularly well received across Wales. All sessions are aimed at keeping delegates up to date with developments in what is becoming an increasingly complex and demanding field. Other ad hoc training is undertaken with external providers as necessary. Continuous professional development is obviously important and it is anticipated that such associated requirements will be increasingly enhanced over time as the Pension Regulator further develops its governance requirements for pension funds. A complete record of all training is kept for each member and is discussed at each Pension Board. In addition, in relation to such training, processes are in place to disseminate the outcomes of any such individual training to all Board members and, as appropriate, within the Administrating Authority.

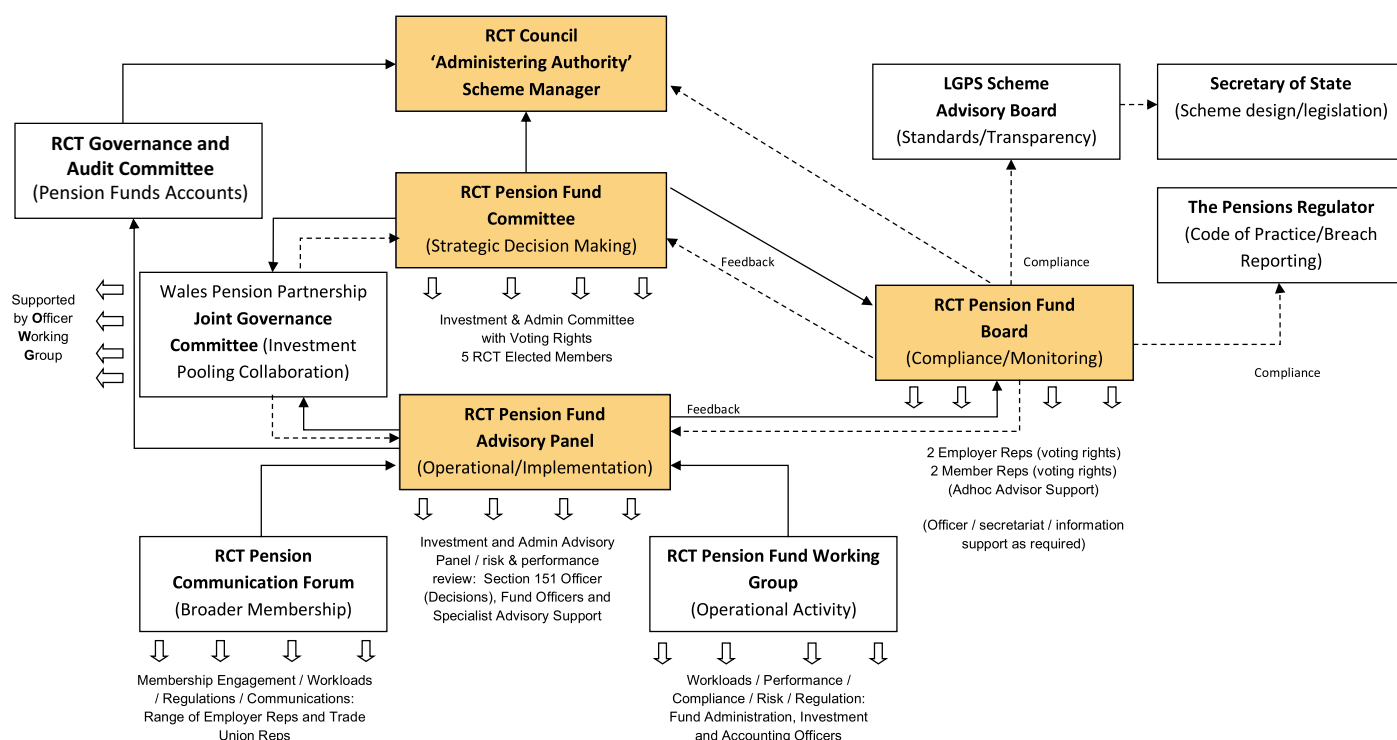
A significant event in 2023/24 was that The Pension Regulator's revised final general (single) code of practice dealing with the governance and administration of pension funds came into force in March 2024 after a somewhat long gestation period. This will inevitably impact on the operation of all pension boards and funds. Given its importance processes have been set in train to compare the new code with the Fund's current governance practices and make revisions as necessary.

During the year Sindy Absalom left the Board to be replaced by Darren Griffiths. The Board is grateful to Sindy for her work and contribution while a member of the Board.

Finally, I am grateful to my fellow pension board members and the officers and staff supporting the Board for their work, contributions and continued support.

Professor Hugh Coombs
Chair, RCT Pension Board

Governance Structure



Pension Governance Attendance 2023/2024

This table shows the attendance at meetings during the year.

	Investment and Administration Panel	Pension Fund Working Group	Pension Fund Communications Forum	Pension Fund Discretion Panel
	Total meetings held: 4	Total meetings held: 4	Total meetings held: 2	Total meetings held: 3
Barrie Davies	3	2	1	-
Paul Griffiths	4	4	-	-
Ian Traylor	3	4	2	3
Stephanie Davies	3	4	-	-
Yvonne Keitch	4	4	2	-
Vanessa Thomas	4	4	-	-
Catherine Black	-	4	1	3
Gemma Penning	-	3	-	3
Tim Jenkins	-	-	2	-

Knowledge and Skills

To identify the skills required by decision makers for the Local Government Pension Scheme CIPFA have developed a knowledge and skills framework which the Fund have adopted to ensure all panel and working group members have the required level of knowledge.

The core requirements are

- Pensions legislative and governance context
- Pensions accounting and auditing standards
- Financial services procurement and relationship management
- Investment performance and risk management
- Financial markets and products knowledge
- Actuarial methods, standards and practices

Members of panels and working groups for the Rhondda Cynon Taf Fund regularly attend training sessions to ensure a full understanding of the Local Government Pension Scheme, including legislation, scheme benefits, investment strategy, actuarial methods and pensions accounting.

Audience	Area of Framework	Delivered by	Date
Councillor Norris	Pensions Legislative and Governance	LAPFF	19th April 2023
Councillor Norris	Financial Markets and Products Knowledge	LAPFF	19th April 2023
Various Pension Committee Members and Officers of the Investment and Administration Panel	Financial Markets and Products Knowledge	WPP	8th June 2023
Pensions Service Manager, Senior Team Leader (Pensions)	Pensions Legislative and Governance	Pensions Officer Group	16th June 2023
Service Director, Pension, Procurement and Transactional Services, Pensions Service Manager, Senior Team Leader (Pensions), Digitalisation and Communications Manager	Pensions Legislative and Governance	Aon	22nd June 2023
Members of Pension Fund Investment & Administration Advisory Panel	Pensions Legislative and Governance	Fund managers	29th June 2023
Members of Pension Fund Investment & Administration Advisory Panel	Financial Markets and Products Knowledge	Fund managers	29th June 2023
Councillor Norris and Principal Accountant Pension Fund & Treasury Management	Pensions Legislative and Governance	LAPFF	12th July 2023
Councillor Norris and Principal Accountant Pension Fund & Treasury Management	Financial Markets and Products Knowledge	LAPFF	12th July 2023
Senior Team Leader (Pensions), Digitalisation and Communications Manager	Pensions Legislative and Governance	Heywood	13th July 2023
Principal Accountant Pension Fund & Treasury Management	Pensions Accounting and Audit Standards	Northern Trust	24th August 2023
Members of Pension Fund Investment & Administration Advisory Panel	Pensions Legislative and Governance	Fund managers	19th September 2023
Members of Pension Fund Investment & Administration Advisory Panel	Financial Markets and Products Knowledge	Fund managers	19th September 2023
Various Pension Committee Members and Officers of the Investment and Administration Panel	Financial Markets and Products Knowledge	WPP	21st September 2023

Audience	Area of Framework	Delivered by	Date
Principal Accountant Pension Fund & treasury Management	Pensions Legislative and Governance	UK Pension Scheme RI Roundtable	25th September 2023
Various members of Pension Fund Investment & Administration Advisory Panel and Pension Committee	Pensions Legislative and Governance	SAB	26th September 2023
Principal Accountant Pension Fund & Treasury Management	Pensions Legislative and Governance	Cross Pool RI Group	2nd October 2023
Pensions Service Manager, Senior Team Leader (Pensions), Digitalisation and Communications Manager	Pensions Legislative and Governance	Aon	4th October 2023
Councillor Norris and Principal Accountant Pension Fund & Treasury Management	Pensions Legislative and Governance	LAPFF	4th October 2023
Councillor Norris and Principal Accountant Pension Fund & Treasury Management	Financial Markets and Products Knowledge	LAPFF	4th October 2023
Pension Committee and officers	Pensions Legislative and Governance	BlackRock	9th October 2023
Principal Accountant Pension Fund & Treasury Management	Financial Markets and Products Knowledge	Russell Investments	10th October 2023
Principal Accountant Pension Fund & Treasury Management	Financial Markets and Products Knowledge	CM Grosvenor	19th October 2023
Principal Accountant Pension Fund & Treasury Management	Financial Markets and Products Knowledge	Pensions for Purpose	8th November 2023
Councillors of Pensions Committee, Members of Pension Fund Investment & Administration Advisory Panel, Pensions Service Manager, Senior Team Manager (Pensions)	Pensions Legislative and Governance Context	Annual General Meeting	15th November 2023
Councillors of Pensions Committee, Members of Pension Fund Investment & Administration Advisory Panel, Pensions Service Manager, Senior Team Manager (Pensions)	Investment Performance and Risk Management	Annual General Meeting	15th November 2023
Councillors of Pensions Committee, Members of Pension Fund Investment & Administration Advisory Panel, Pensions Service Manager, Senior Team Manager (Pensions)	Pensions Legislative and Governance Context	Annual General Meeting	15th November 2023
Pension Service Manager and Senior Team Leader (Pensions)	Pensions Legislative and Governance	Pensions Managers Conference	21st – 22nd November 2023
Members of Pension Fund Investment & Administration Advisory Panel	Pensions Legislative and Governance	Fund managers	27th November 2023
Members of Pension Fund Investment & Administration Advisory Panel	Financial Markets and Products Knowledge	Fund managers	27th November 2023
Pension Service Manager, Senior Team Leader (Pensions) and Digitalisation and Communications Manager	Pensions Legislative and Governance	Aon	29th November 2023
Principal Accountant Pension Fund & Treasury Management	Pensions Legislative and Governance (procurement evaluation)	Host Authority of WPP	December 2023
Pension Committee and officers	Pensions Legislative and Governance	LAPFF	11th December 2023

Audience	Area of Framework	Delivered by	Date
Various members of Pension Fund Investment & Administration Advisory Panel and Pension Committee	Pensions Legislative and Governance	WPP	13th December 2023
Pension Service Manager, Senior Team Leader (Pensions) and Digitalisation and Communications Manager	Pensions Legislative and Governance	LGA	20th December 2023
Councillor Karl Johnson	Pensions Legislative and Governance	Internal	December 2023
Councillor Karl Johnson	Pensions Accounting and Audit Standards	Internal	December 2023
Councillor Karl Johnson	Financial Services Procurement and Relationship Management	Internal	December 2023
Councillor Karl Johnson	Investment Performance and Risk Management	Internal	December 2023
Councillor Karl Johnson	Financial Markets and Products Knowledge	Internal	December 2023
Councillor Karl Johnson	Actuarial Methods, Standards and Practices	Internal	December 2023
Councillor Karl Johnson	Pensions Legislative and Governance	LGA	November and December 2023
Councillor Karl Johnson	Pensions Accounting and Audit Standards	LGA	November and December 2023
Councillor Karl Johnson	Financial Services Procurement and Relationship Management	LGA	November and December 2023
Councillor Karl Johnson	Investment Performance and Risk Management	LGA	November and December 2023
Councillor Karl Johnson	Financial Markets and Products Knowledge	LGA	November and December 2023
Councillor Karl Johnson	Pensions Legislative and Governance	LGA	November and December 2023
Councillor Norris, Service Director, Pension, Procurement and Transactional Services, Principal Accountant Pension Fund & Treasury Management	Pensions Legislative and Governance	LGA	18th and 19th January 2024
Councillor Norris, Service Director, Pension, Procurement and Transactional Services, Principal Accountant Pension Fund & Treasury Management	Financial Markets and Products Knowledge	LGA	18th and 19th January 2024
Councillor Norris, Service Director, Pension, Procurement and Transactional Services, Principal Accountant Pension Fund & Treasury Management	Investment Performance and Risk Management	LGA	18th and 19th January 2024
Service Director, Pension, Procurement and Transactional Services, Pensions Service Manager, Digitalisation and Communications Manager	Pensions Legislative and Governance	Aon	29th January 2024
Councillor Norris and Principal Accountant Pension Fund & Treasury Management	Financial Markets and Products Knowledge	LAPFF	31st January 2024

Audience	Area of Framework	Delivered by	Date
Pensions Service Manager, Senior Team Leader (Pensions)	Pensions Legislative and Governance	Mercer	7th February 2024
Councillor Norris, Principal Accountant Pension Fund & Treasury Management	Financial Markets and Products Knowledge	Russell Investments	21st February 2024
Various members of Pension Fund Investment & Administration Advisory Panel and Pension Committee	Pensions Legislative and Governance	WPP	5th March 2024
Senior Team Leader (Pensions), Digitalisation and Communications Manager	Pensions Legislative and Governance	Heywood	5th March 2024
Members of Pension Fund Investment & Administration Advisory Panel	Pensions Legislative and Governance	Fund managers	12th March 2024
Members of Pension Fund Investment & Administration Advisory Panel	Financial Markets and Products Knowledge	Fund managers	12th March 2024
Councillor Norris, Principal Accountant Pension Fund & Treasury Management	Financial Markets and Products Knowledge	GCM Grosvenor	14th March 2024
Pensions Manager, Senior Team Leader (Pensions)	Pensions Legislative and Governance	Pensions Officer Group	15th March 2024

Partners

Scheme Actuary:



Aon Hewitt Limited

The primary role of the actuary is to provide the fund with information about the fund's liabilities and the best way of meeting these liabilities.

A valuation of the fund takes place every three years that enables the actuary to calculate liabilities versus the fund's assets. The actuary will then recommend appropriate contribution rates for employers to help prevent any future shortfalls.

Hewitt were appointed as the scheme's actuary in October 2003.

Fund Auditor:



Audit Wales

Audit Wales is independent of government and is responsible for the annual audit of some £21 billion of annual public expenditure.

Its mission is to promote improvement, so that people in Wales benefit from accountable, well-managed public services that offer the best possible value for money.

AVC Provider:



Prudential

Prudential were appointed as the fund's Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC) provider in 2002.

As a leading Local Government AVC provider, they work closely with our Pensions Section in ensuring members are aware of their options in topping up their existing pension provision.

Fund Legal Advisors:



Eversheds

Partners

Fund Managers:

The investment of the Pension Fund's assets is the responsibility of external Fund Managers appointed by the Fund.

These Fund Managers are given specific mandates and performance targets, which are monitored by the Rhondda Cynon Taf Investments Panel at quarterly meetings.



Baillie Gifford Asset Management

Baillie Gifford is an Edinburgh based investment management partnership founded in 1908. They were appointed by the fund to manage global equities in 2005, and now have two separate equity mandates.



BlackRock Investment Management

BlackRock Investment Management BlackRock is one of the largest asset management firms in the world, across a broad range of investment assets. They were appointed to a UK equity mandate by the fund in 2010, a fixed interest mandate in 2020 and an infrastructure mandate in 2022.



CBRE

CBRE is the world's leading commercial real estate advisor. They have managed a property portfolio for the fund since they acquired the previous manager ING in October 2011.



STATE STREET

State Street

State Street is a leading U.S. based provider of financial services to institutional investors. State Street provides a custody and performance measurement service for the RCT Pension Fund.



Waystone

The FCA authorised operator of the Wales Pension Partnership. Former operator was Link.



GCM Grosvenor

GCM Grosvenor is a closed ended infrastructure manager of the WPP.



Capital Dynamics

Capital Dynamics is the local Investment Manager of the WPP.

Further Information

More information about the Scheme can be found in the Members Guide available at
➔ www.rctpensions.org.uk

Contributors' Contact Information

For information about the Local Government Pension Scheme and pension matters in general please contact:

The Pensions Helpdesk ☎ 01443 680611
✉ pensions@rctcbc.gov.uk

or write to:

Pension Section
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council,
Oldway House, Porth
CF39 9ST

Pensions Administration Policy **Mr Ian Traylor**
Service Director Pensions, Procurement & Transactional Services
☎ 01443 680611
✉ ian.d.traylor@rctcbc.gov.uk

Fund Investments **Miss Yvonne Keitch**
Principal Accountant, Treasury Management and Pension Fund
☎ 01443 680611
✉ yvonne.keitch@rctcbc.gov.uk

Pension Fund Accounts **Mrs Vanessa Thomas**
Accountant, Treasury and Pension Fund
☎ 01443 680611
✉ vanessa.g.thomas@rctcbc.gov.uk

Pensions Presentations Training Sessions **Mr Tim Jenkins**
Senior Team Manager – Digital, Comms and Governance
☎ 01443 680611
✉ tim.jenkins@rctcbc.gov.uk

Mae croeso i chi gyfathrebu â ni yn y Gymraeg
You are welcome to communicate with us in Welsh