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1. Introduction

This is the Business Plan for Gloucestershire Pension Fund, which is managed and administered by Gloucestershire County Council. The Business Plan details our strategic aims, priorities and areas of key focus for 2026/27.

The Business Plan is formally reviewed and agreed every year however throughout the year it is monitored by officers, and as a result the Pensions Committee may be asked to agree changes to it.

The purpose of the Business Plan is to:

- Outline the strategic vision and objectives for the management of Gloucestershire Pension Fund.
- Outline the key priorities and improvements to be implemented by the Pension Fund over the next year to help achieve those objectives.
- Enable progress and performance to be monitored in relation to those priorities.

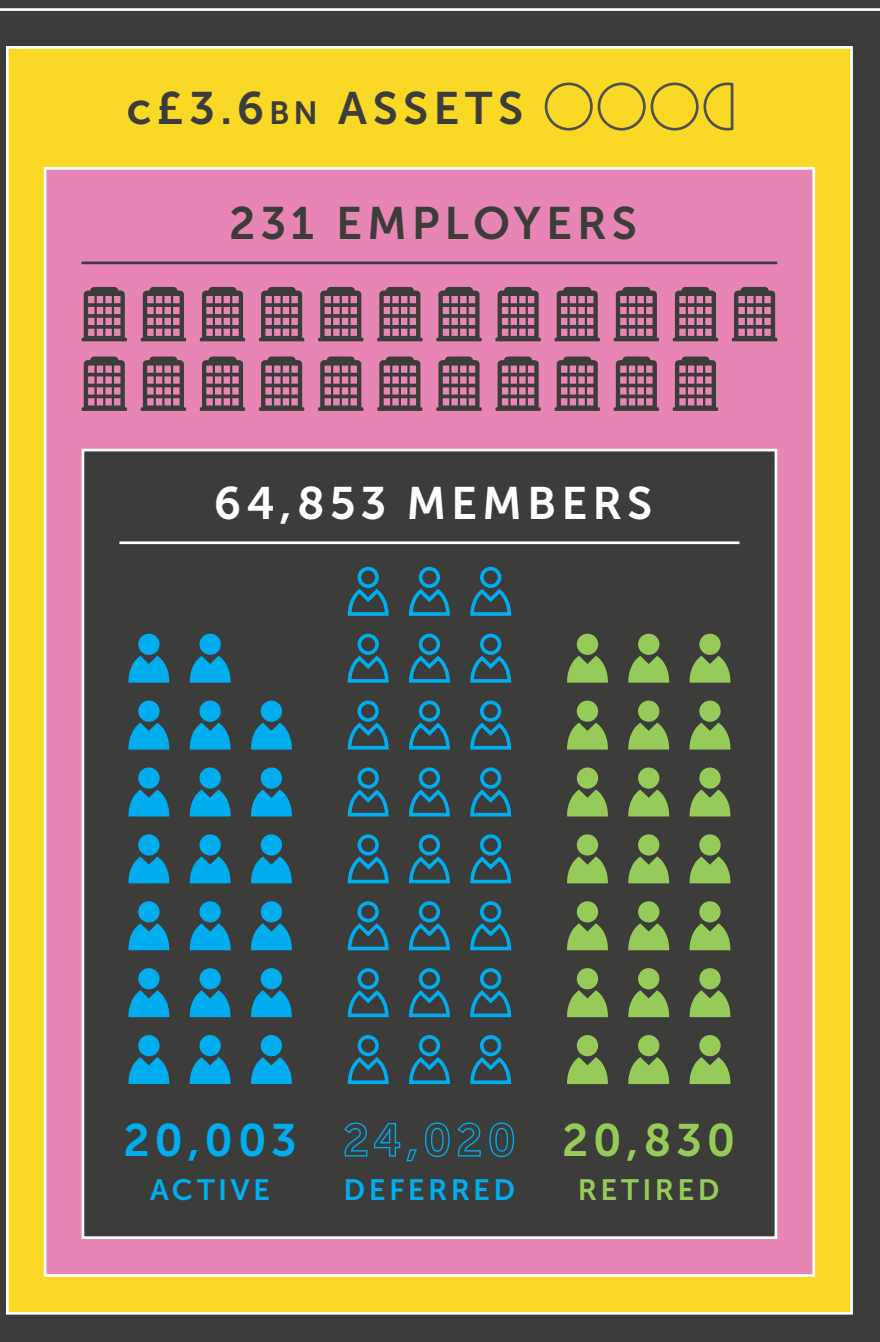
In addition, this Business Plan includes a budget for expected operational payments from Gloucestershire Pension Fund over the period, including the resources required to manage the Fund.



2. Background

Gloucestershire Pension Fund is a c£3.6bn Local Government Pension Fund, which provides death and retirement benefits for local government employees (other than teachers, police and firefighters) in Gloucestershire and employees of other qualifying bodies which provide similar services. Total membership as at 31 March 2025 was 64,853 members consisting of 20,003 active, 24,020 deferred, 20,830 retired (pensioner/dependant). There are 231 active employer bodies in the Fund.

Further information about the Fund can be found at [About the Fund](#) on our website and within our [Annual Report](#)





3. Vision

Our vision is to:

Deliver outstanding pension services to our scheme members and employers.



4. Strategic Goals

We seek to achieve our vision is through the achievement of following strategic goals, which have been determined based around the Fund’s responsibilities and the way in which it operates.



GOVERNANCE



- Act in the best interests of its members and employers
- Compliant, striving to follow statutory guidance
- Acting with integrity, accountable for decisions
- Robust and effective governance arrangements
- Maintaining appropriate knowledge and expertise at all levels

INVESTMENT



- Long-term focus
- Strong, risk-appropriate returns
- Excellent steward of our assets
- Embedded ESG considerations

FUNDING



- Strong funding levels
- Predictable and affordable contributions
- Ensure net cash outgoings can be met as/when required

ADMINISTRATION



- High quality and timely administration
- Cost effective and efficient, maximising use of technology
- Maintain accurate data
- Members understand their pension and can make informed decisions
- Pay the right benefits on time
- Communicate in a clear and concise manner

Our key strategies and policies which support this business plan and guide the management of the Fund are listed in **Appendix 4**, and the latest versions of each can also be found in the **Policies and reports** section of our website.

5. Current Key Challenges and Influences

INVESTMENT



POOLING

As part of Government reforms, the Fund needs to transfer all its assets from Brunel Pensions Partnership to LGPS Central during 2026/2027.

This is significant undertaking in terms of cost, risk, and officer time, and thus this transition will form one of the Fund's key projects. The reforms also require our new pool to take a greater strategic role in the management of our assets and absorb a number of other new shareholders/clients.



ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The economic landscape continues to evolve, with interest rates and inflation impacting investment strategies.

Based on a surplus funding environment, the Fund will need to reassess risk appetite and explore opportunities for diversification to maintain stable returns.



ESG INTEGRATION

There is need for focus on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors.

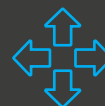
The Fund needs to continue to enhance ESG integration to meet regulatory requirements and our stakeholder expectations.

COMPLIANCE



GOVERNMENT REFORMS

The "Fit for the Future" reforms will deliver significant changes to asset pooling and governance whilst the implementation of the Access and Fairness and Access and Protection planned reforms are expected to have a material impact on the administration of the Fund, requiring changes to the administration system and additional work to be undertaken.



COMPLEXITY

With planned reforms, and previous reforms in recent years, there is an ever-increasing complexity within the LGPS which the Fund needs to manage. The changes required range from backdated reforms such as McCloud and changes to survivor benefits, to additional benefit protections and alterations to the way that new employers join the Fund.



ADMINISTRATION



PENSIONS DASHBOARD

Whilst the Fund has connected to the dashboard ecosystem, further officer work and time will be required when the Government decides to open dashboards to the public.

It is anticipated the implementation will occur in 2026/2027 but the exact date is unknown at the time of writing.



TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS

Through the purchase and availability of new technology (such as Artificial Intelligence), the Fund has the opportunity to increase automation, controls, efficiency, and accessibility to members and employers. Members are now able to view their benefits at any time and both and employers can share data with us in a greatly automated manner.

The Fund will seek to continue embed and improve its use of technology wherever it can improve the way the Fund operates and improve outcomes for members and employers. Further information on our approach to administration can be found in our

[Administration Strategy](#)

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



COMMUNICATION

Enhancing communication with scheme members and employers to ensure transparency and trust remains vital. Providing clear and concise information about benefits and responsibilities will help stakeholders understand their responsibilities.

Further information concerning our approach to Communications can be found in our

[Communications Policy](#)





6. Core Projects for 2026/27

In order to meet the Fund's vision and strategic goals, each year the Fund sets itself a series of significant core projects for the year; the progress of these projects is overseen by the Committee at each of its meetings. The core projects for this year are outlined below. Whilst the Fund has estimated the costs of delivering these projects in its annual budget, the nature of these projects is fluid and contain aspects which are out of the Fund's control, and additional costs may therefore occur during the year.

ASSET POOL TRANSITION

REQUIREMENT

Completion of the transition from Brunel Pensions Partnership to LGPS Central and the managed closure of Brunel Establishing effective business as usual practices with LGPS Central.

RESOURCES/COST

Led by the Head of Pensions utilising Internal resource and consultancy support. Further detail is set out in the budget.

TIMEFRAME

30 June 2026.

FIT FOR THE FUTURE REFORMS

REQUIREMENT

Once finalised, ensure compliance with all aspects of the Fit for the future reforms (i.e. pooling reforms and good governance changes).

RESOURCES/COST

Led by the Head of Pensions using a mixture of internal resource and consultancy support. Further detail is set out in the budget.

TIMEFRAME

Within the regulatory requirements (to be determined).

BENEFITS REGULATORY REFORMS

REQUIREMENT

Once finalised, ensure compliance with all aspects of regulatory reform resulting from the 'Access and Fairness' and 'Access and Protection' consultations.

RESOURCES/COST

Led by the Strategic Pensions Manager – Service delivery using internal resource. Further detail is set out in the budget.

TIMEFRAME

Within the regulatory requirements (to be determined).

CYBER SECURITY/BUSINESS CONTINUITY

REQUIREMENT

Deliver the work plan resulting from the introduction of the Fund’s Cyber Security strategy. (Note the Fund’s Cyber Security strategy is not published due to risks posed by providing such information in the public domain.)

RESOURCES/COST

Led by the Head of Pensions using a mixture of internal resource and consultancy support.

TIMEFRAME

31 December 2026.

i-CONNECT ROLLOUT

REQUIREMENT

Onboard all c230 employers onto the i-Connect platform and fully integrate its use into business-as-usual activity.

RESOURCES/COST

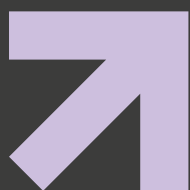
Led by the Strategic Pensions Manager – Service delivery using internal resource.

TIMEFRAME

31 March 2028.

Furthermore, each year the Fund’s management team also maintains a list of operational projects which it plans to deliver and monitors the progress against it in addition to delivering business as usual work, as summarised in appendix 3, whilst seeking to minimise disruption.





7. Delivering the Business Plan

BUDGET

The budget for 2026/27 is detailed in appendix 2, which covers the costs of delivering the operational delivery of the Fund and current expected project costs.

RISKS

The risk management policy and the detailed Risk Register of the Fund matches high level risks, under each of the areas of activity, to the Fund's high-level objectives:

- Funding and investment risks.
- Operational and regulatory risks.
- Governance risks.

Each of the detailed risks under these categories has been given a target risk score based upon impact and likelihood. These risks are then monitored against the target risk. Changes to the level of risk are reported at each Committee meeting.

The next few years will remain challenging for those involved in the governance, management and operation of the Fund. The risks documented in the Risk Register will be reviewed and updated every quarter for presentation to Committee. The Fund's Business Plan has been completed to ensure that all our known risks are being managed and resourced.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

In order to identify whether we are meeting our agreed Business Plan actions we will:

- Continue to monitor progress of the key projects and the agreed budgets on an ongoing basis.
- Provide updates on progress against these key priorities on a regular basis to the Pensions Committee, which will be shared with the Local Pension Board.
- As part of these updates:
 - highlight any areas where we are exceeding or failing to achieve our targets and the reasons why and, as a result, identify any changes to the planned priorities.

TRAINING

The Fund has an agreed training policy in place to aid the Pensions Committee members, Local Pension Board members in performing and developing personally in their individual roles, with the ultimate aim of ensuring that Gloucestershire Pension Fund is managed by individuals who have the appropriate levels of knowledge and skills. Further detail on this can be found in [Appendix 5](#) and on the Fund's website.



Appendix



APPENDIX 1:

Budget

	Budget 2025-26	Proposed Budget 2026-27	Budget Movement Proposed 2026-27	
	£ 000	£ 000	£ 000	%
Administrative Expenses				
Staff Costs	1,772	2,060	288	16%
Premises	82	90	8	9%
IT	676	696	20	3%
Supplies & Services	528	566	38	7%
Other Central Costs	124	128	4	3%
Total Administrative Expenses	3,182	3,540	359	11%
Oversight & Governance Expenses				
Staff Costs	293	341	48	16%
Audit Fees	95	98	3	3%
Actuarial Fees	488	400	-88	-18%
Pension Committee/Board	40	40	-	0%
Performance Monitoring Service	82	96	14	18%
Investment Consultancy	150	155	5	3%
Other Professional Fees	150	155	5	3%
Total Oversight & Governance Expenses	1,298	1,285	-13	-1%
Income				
Recoveries for services provided	-246	-250	-4	2%
Total In House Costs	4,233	4,575	342	8%
Budgeted Investment Management Expenses				
Brunel Contract Costs**	1,625	500	-1,125	-69%
LGPS Central Costs**	-	1,800	1,800	-
Custody Fees	87	93	5	6%
Tax & Legal Costs	26	50	24	94%
Total Budgeted Investment Mgmt Expenses*	1,738	2,443	705	44%
TOTAL PENSION FUND BUDGET	5,971	7,018	1,046	18%

* **Additional Portfolio Investment Management Fees and Related Costs** - Due to the nature of additional management fees and associated costs being linked to asset valuations, performance and transactions undertaken, they are very difficult to predict and budget for. Whilst these costs are not included within the above budget, they are however, fully reconciled and monitored and are reported to Committee separately as part of the year end reporting process.

** **The budget provisions for both LGPS Central and Brunel Pools** are based on the most up-to-date information; however these are subject to change, as the requirements for both the wind-down of Brunel and the development of appropriate governance and operational frameworks at LGPS Central remain ongoing. The Fund is actively working in partnership with both officers of the pools and partner LGPS Pension Funds to agree and formalise on going arrangements. Any future amendment will be advised to Committee accordingly.

APPENDIX 2:

Key Tasks/Statutory Work Plan for 2026/27

GOVERNANCE

Task	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Review of Risk Register	☑	☑	☑	☑
Approval of External Audit Plan	☑			
Review and approve Business Plan for 2027/28				☑
Annual review against The Pensions Regulators Code of Practise				☑
Approval of audited Fund accounts		☑		
Approval of Annual Report			☑	
Training Needs Analysis				☑
Review Breaches log	☑	☑	☑	☑
Monitor employer activity	☑	☑	☑	☑

INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

Task	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Monitor Fund performance	☑	☑	☑	☑
Responsible Investment Reporting	☑	☑	☑	☑

FUNDING

Task	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Review of ongoing funding position	☑	☑	☑	☑
Cash flow modelling				☑

ADMINIS-TRATION

Task	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Issue Annual Benefit Statements to active and deferred members		☑		
P60's distributed to pensioner members	☑			
Annual pension in payment and CARE accrual increase exercise	☑			
Annual submission of HMRC Event report				☑
Issue notices to employees for breaches of HMRC Annual Allowance limits			☑	
Provision of data to actuary to produce financial accounting required for employer accounts	☑	☑	☑	
Data quality assessment for the Pensions Regulator			☑	

APPENDIX 3:

Ongoing Activities

The key activities section of the Business Plan highlights what our key tasks are for the next two to three years, focussing on areas of change and project like tasks which are in addition to our day to day "ongoing activities". On a day-to-day basis our focus is on the following key elements:

- Paying pension benefits to beneficiaries, as prescribed by the LGPS regulations.
- Ensuring we receive all the employee pension contributions paid by active members of the Fund, as prescribed by the LGPS regulations.
- Ensuring all the employers in the Fund pay their pension contributions.
- Safeguarding the Fund's assets.
- Investing any Fund assets that are not currently needed to pay benefits.
- Working with the actuary so, over the valuation cycle, a determination can be made as to how much employers need to pay into the Fund to ensure we have enough money to pay pension benefits in the future.
- Communicating with our scheme members about their membership of the Fund.

Managing this on a day-to-day basis involves a wide range of processes and procedures, some of which are outlined below, and all of which have been designed around achieving our Fund's objectives as outlined in our strategies and policies. The pension fund is large, complex and highly regulated. As such, these processes and procedures require expert knowledge and experience from both officers and external advisors in several diverse areas, as illustrated below.

GOVERNANCE

- Setting the agenda, reporting and presenting to the Pensions Committee and Local Pension Board
- Implementing and monitoring the achievement of other areas of governance such as the Training Strategy, Breaches Policy and The Pension Regulator's Code of Practice
- Review on Risk Framework and setting risk appetite and reviewing risks regularly
- Procurement of and payment for advisers and other services
- Assisting internal and external audit in their role
- Replying to Freedom of Information requests in adherence with statutory time limits

ACCOUNTANCY

- Preparing and publishing the Fund's Annual Report
- Completing the Annual Accounts and assisting external auditors
- Preparation and monitoring of the Annual Budget
- Preparation of statutory and non-statutory returns as required
- Cash flow monitoring to ensure liquidity of the Fund
- Monitoring of income and expenditure including employer and scheme member contributions
- Invoices are sent in a timely manner

ASSET POOL OVERSIGHT

- Participation in the Oversight Board and Client Group of the Brunel Pool and the equivalent for our new asset pool, LGPS Central
- Assessment and analysis of the performance of all portfolios in which the Fund is invested
- Monitoring the service level agreements and that key performance indicators are being met
- Monitor that the asset pool provides value for money

ADMINISTRATION

- Providing ongoing information to scheme members and their beneficiaries as they join, leave or change their status in the Fund, within statutory timescales
- Calculating and notifying entitlement to retirement, leaving and death benefits
- Processing transfers into and out of the Fund
- Providing quotations of retirement benefits including any additional costs to employers
- Providing information on how scheme members can increase their pension benefits
- Providing information to relevant parties in respect of divorce proceedings
- Maintaining accurate scheme member records
- Maintaining the Fund's Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure
- Maintaining and updating the pensions software system
- Monitor and providing information on key performance indicators
- Extracting and forwarding data to the Fund actuary to track membership changes for employer mergers and TUPE transfers
- Reporting and making payments to HMRC
- Processing bulk updates to data relating to employer year end returns
- Providing information to employers and members via relevant communication channels
- Providing new employers with information about their Fund responsibilities
- Providing ongoing support and technical updates to employers

FUNDING

- Agreeing the funding strategy with the actuary, consult with employers, and monitoring continued appropriateness annually
- Assisting the actuary with the Actuarial Valuations by providing membership data and presenting results and explanations to employers of future employer contributions and deficit payments
- Arranging actuarial data required by the Government Actuary Department ("GAD")
- Monitoring the employer's covenant including their ability to pay contributions and managing any employers who wish to join or leave the Fund

INVESTMENTS

- Carrying out a review of the investment strategy at least every three years to coincide with the triennial actuarial valuation
- Appointing, monitoring and dismissing of fund managers, including within a pooling environment
- Monitoring and reporting on investment performance in collaboration with the investment advisor
- Monitoring and implementation of the strategic asset allocation decisions
- Annual objective setting for the Fund's Independent Investment Advisor
- Working with other LGPS funds and the Environment Agency to pool investments through our role within the Brunel Pension Partnership (see previous page)
- Setting investment advisors objectives
- Monitoring and engaging with our fund managers on their responsible investment approach
- Responsible investment and ESG reporting on the Fund's investments for different asset classes and strategies.
- Collaboration with responsible investment initiatives to which the Fund is a member/ supporter, such as TPI, IIGCC and LAPFF

APPENDIX 4:

Policies and Strategies

Policy	Approved	Review due by
Business Continuity	December 2024	December 2027
Cash Management Strategy	February 2026	April 2027
Cessation	February 2026	February 2029
Communication Policy	September 2024	September 2027
Conflicts of Interest	September 2024	September 2027
Contribution Reviews	February 2026	February 2029
Cyber Security **	December 2024	December 2027
Data Improvement	September 2024	September 2027
Debt Management Policy **	December 2025	December 2028
Funding Strategy Statement	February 2026	February 2029
Governance Policy & Compliance Statement	September 2024	September 2027
Investment Strategy Statement	December 2022	September 2026
Pension Administration Strategy	December 2024	December 2027
Pre-Payment of Contributions	February 2026	February 2029
Overpayment & Underpayments of Pension Scheme Benefits	September 2024	September 2027
Reporting Breaches of the Law	December 2024	December 2027
Responsible Investment	February 2025	September 2026
Risk Management	December 2024	December 2027
Statement of Administering Authority Discretions	February 2024	February 2027
Training Strategy	September 2024	September 2026

Latest versions of the majority of the documents above can be found in the [Policies and reports](#) section of our website.

** Not published due to the sensitivity of content.

APPENDIX 5:

Training Plan

A high-level training plan will be established based upon the results and recommendations from the National Knowledge and Skills (NKA) that will be undertaken by members of the Committee and Board in accordance with the training policy in September 2024. An indicative schedule of delivered sessions and other information sessions is detailed below:

Title of Session	Timescale	Audience	Delivery method
Core Topic: To be identified from the Knowledge & Skills assessment.	May 2026	Local Pension Board and Officers	Virtual
PLSA Local Authority Conference	June 2026	Pensions Committee, Local Pension Board and Officers	In Person
Core Topic: To be identified from the Knowledge & Skills assessment.	July 2026	Pensions Committee, Local Pension Board and Officers	Virtual
Core Topic: To be identified from the Knowledge & Skills assessment.	October 2026	Pensions Committee, Local Pension Board and Officers	Virtual
Core Topic: To be identified from the Knowledge & Skills assessment.	February 2026	Pensions Committee, Local Pension Board and Officers	Virtual
Workshop & Training Day: Investment Beliefs	May 2026	Pensions Committee, Local Pension Board and Officers	In Person
Workshop & Training Day: Business Planning	May 2026	Pensions Committee, Local Pension Board and Officers	In Person
LGA Governance Conference	January 2027	Pensions Committee, Local Pension Board and Officers	Virtual or In Person
CIPFA Pension Audit & Accounting workshop	TBC	Officers	Virtual or In Person
LGA Fundamentals Training	As required	Pensions Committee, Local Pension Board	Virtual or In Person
Hymans Online Learning Academy (LOLA)	As required	Pensions Committee, Local Pension Board and Officers	Virtual

The training plan for 2026/27 will aim to be delivered via various different methods and will be delivered independent of the Committee and Board meetings.

Other training opportunities and conferences will be made identified and offered to Committee and Board members as appropriate.



CONTACT US



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