

## **Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee**

Minutes of the meeting of the Management Committee held at Templeton House on 25 November 2025 at 10am.

### **Members Present**

Mark McBride (Chair), Michael Rafferty, Richard Baker, Alan Law, Antoinette McMillen, Shane McCurdy, Heather McKinstry, Peter Moore, Paul Francey, Dooley Harte, Cathy Matthews and JJ Tohill (Via Teams).

### **In Attendance**

David Murphy (Secretary)  
Nicola Todd (Deputy Secretary)  
Maria Bowers (Head of Finance)  
Louise Hickland (Head of Investment Services)  
Annie McElhatton (Investment Service Manager)  
Gemma Major (Governance Officer)  
John Smith (Department for Communities)  
Sonali Pier (PIMCO)  
Philipp Nowak (PIMCO)  
Andrew Singh (Isio)  
Kirstie Ferguson (Isio)

### **Apologies**

Ken Clayton

### **Invited but did not attend**

Jeff Glass

## **1 Declaration of Member Interests**

- 1.1 Antoinette McMillen and Alan Law declared an interest in respect of agenda item 11 and 14, which related to legal action being taken against NILGOSC by NIPSA. Items 11 (partial) and 14 had been redacted for both members.

Heather McKinstry joined the meeting.

## **2 Chairperson's Business and Apologies**

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Ken Clayton, and it was noted that Jeff Glass, DfC, was not in attendance.
- 2.2 The Chairperson reported that JJ Tohill would be joining the meeting via teams and would be late to join.
- 2.3 The Committee welcomed John Smith from the Department for Communities to the Management Committee meeting. John Smith thanked the Committee for inviting him to attend the meeting.
- 2.4 The Committee passed on their condolences to Paul Francey and his family following their recent bereavement.
- 2.5 The Secretary advised the Committee that he may have to leave the meeting early and that the Deputy Secretary would step in, if required.

## **3 Minutes of the previous meeting on 30 September 2025**

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2025, having been circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

## **4 Matters Arising**

- 4.1 The Secretary reported that the Board Effectiveness Review has been moved to the January meeting due to time constraints with the November and December agendas.

## **5 Appointment of Chair of IDRC**

- 5.1 Alan Law nominated Peter Moore as Chair of the IDRC. This was seconded by Antoinette McMillen.
- 5.2 Peter Moore accepted the position and the Committee agreed to appoint Peter as Chair of the IDRC for a period of twelve months.

JJ Tohill joined the meeting via teams. The Head of Investment Services and the Isio representatives joined the meeting.

## **6 Investment Strategy Review**

- 6.1 The Chair welcomed Kirsty Ferguson and Andrew Singh from Isio to the Management Committee meeting.

- 6.2 The Head of Investment Services presented her cover paper outlining Phase 1 of the investment strategy review, noting that this stage involved a review of the overall investment objective and asset allocation strategy. She highlighted that two strategies had been proposed by Isio and that Alternative Strategy 2 was recommended by the Investment Team as the most efficient portfolio.
- 6.3 Isio outlined their review of the investment objective and conclusion that the current target of CPI+3% measured over 3 and 5 year periods remains suitable to meet the long-term needs of the Fund. Isio outlined its view that this level of return could be achieved in a more risk efficient manner compared to the current strategy, and presented two alternative strategies for consideration.
- 6.4 Isio recommended a new allocation to private credit and advised that both the proposed alternative strategies offer further diversification as well as increased inflation linkage and exposure to cashflow driven assets.
- 6.5 The Committee discussed the alternative strategies proposed, noting the key investment characteristics of each as presented in Isio's report. The Committee noted recent media coverage of private credit as an asset class and sought assurance from Isio as to the suitability of adding such an allocation. Isio provided further background on the different areas of the private credit market noting that Phase 2 of the strategy review would address the implementation aspects for all asset classes including ESG considerations.
- 6.6 The Committee agreed to maintain the existing investment return objective of CPI+3.0% p.a. as measured over a three year and five-year rolling period.
- 6.7 The Committee agreed to adopt Alternative Strategy 2 as set out in the report. The Committee noted that Phase 2, which will consider how to implement the agreed strategy, will be presented at the March meeting.
- 6.8 The Chair thanked Andrew Singh and Kirstie Ferguson for their report and presentation.

The Committee had a short break.

JJ Tohill left the meeting.

## **7 Appointment of Emerging Markets Manager**

- 7.1 The Head of Investment Services presented the paper on the appointment of an Emerging Market Equity Manager. She outlined the selection process that had been followed together with the final scoring as agreed by the selection panel.

- 7.2 Following a comprehensive evaluation and validation process led by Isio, the top ranked manager, Lazard Asset Management was recommended for appointment subject to satisfactory due diligence.
- 7.3 The Committee agreed to appoint Lazard Asset Management as an emerging markets equity manager, subject to satisfactory due diligence and the agreement of a satisfactory investment management agreement.
- 7.4 The Secretary and the Head of Investment Services left and the Investment Services Manager joined the meeting.

## **8 Manager Performance Briefing Note – PIMCO**

- 8.1 The Investment Services Manager presented the report providing an overview of the performance of PIMCO's multi-asset credit portfolio for the year to 30 September 2025.
- 8.2 The Committee noted the report and agreed to use it as a basis for discussion with PIMCO.

The PIMCO representatives joined the meeting.

## **9 Presentation by PIMCO**

- 9.1 The Chair welcomed Sonali Pier and Philipp Nowak to the meeting and invited them to present on the multi-asset credit portfolio under management.
- 9.2 The Co-portfolio manager, Sonali Pier and the Head of EMEA & Asia-Pacific Credit Product strategy introduced herself and Philipp Nowak to the Committee.
- 9.3 Sonali Pier provided an overview of the portfolio's performance and activity throughout the year to 30 September 2025. She provided a summary of key contributors and detractors together with an outlook for the portfolio going forward.
- 9.4 The Committee raised a number of questions with PIMCO including the outlook for emerging markets in 2026, positioning, duration and the management of ESG risks.
- 9.5 The Committee noted the presentation given by PIMCO and Chair thanked Sonali and Philipp for attending the meeting.

The Investment Services Manager, Isio and PIMCO representatives left the meeting.

- 9.6 The Committee discussed the potentially controversial nature of certain holdings within the multi-asset class portfolio and agreed that ESG

implementation would be considered during Phase 2 of the investment strategy review, due in March 2026.

## **10 Public Sector Pensions Report**

10.1 The Public Sector Pensions Report was presented to the Committee by the Deputy Secretary on behalf of the Secretary.

10.2 She drew the Committee's attention to MHCLG's consultation entitled Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales: Scheme improvements (access and protections), launched on 13 October 2025.

10.3 The Deputy Secretary highlighted that CPI was 3.8% for September, noting that this is normally the rate used to revalue LGPS pensions from the following April.

10.4 The Committee noted the report.

The Head of Finance joined the meeting.

## **11 Secretary's Report and Seal Log**

11.1 The Deputy Secretary presented the report and noted that following the Committee meeting on 30 September 2025, the Actuary had updated the assumptions to include a surplus buffer of 115% as requested by the Committee. She confirmed that employers have been notified of expected contribution rates at the valuation seminars held in October 2025 and subsequently by written communication.

11.2 She reported that NILGOSC had connected to the Pensions Dashboard Programme (DPD) infrastructure on 3 October, ahead of the 31 October connection deadline, noting that the dashboard itself is still in the testing phase and is not yet available to the general public.

11.3 An update was provided on the backlog of reassessed pension benefits and the subsequent impact of the diversion of resources on business-as-usual activity.

11.4 Dooley Harte requested details on the number of members affected by proposed government changes to salary sacrifice arrangements. The Deputy Secretary advised that, without knowing exactly what would be contained in the upcoming Autumn Budget, this would not affect LGPS contributions as they operated on a net pay basis. Dooley Harte requested that an update be provided after the Budget announcement.

11.5 The Committee noted the Secretary's report and seal log.

**12 Progress of the Corporate Plan 2025/26**

12.1 The Deputy Secretary presented her report on the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2025/26 during the six months ended 30 September 2025.

12.2 The Committee noted the progress update.

**13 Annual Budget 2025/26 – Expenditure to half year ended 30 September 2025**

13.1 The Head of Finance presented the comparison of Actual Expenditure to Budget for the six months to 30 September 2025 and provided the rationale behind key variances.

13.2 The Committee noted the report.

Alan Law and Antoinette McMillen left the meeting.

**14 Comparison of Exceptional Legal Services (NIPSA Case) Actual Expenditure to Budget for the six months to 30 September 2025.**

14.1 The Head of Finance presented a comparison of Actual Expenditure to Budget for exceptional Legal Services (NIPSA) for the six months to 30 September 2025.

14.2 The Committee noted the report.

Alan Law and Antoinette McMillen rejoined the meeting.

**15 Any Other Business**

15.1 There being no further business, the meeting was closed.

The next meeting will be held on 16 December 2025.

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Chairperson (Signature).

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Date