

# Business Plan 2024/25



## ACCESS Joint Committee

Date: 12 February 2025

Report by: Director of ACCESS Support Unit

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Business Plan 2024/25</b>
<b>Purpose of the Report:</b>	To provide an update on the 2024/25 Business Plan.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	The Committee is asked to note the report.
<b>Enquiries to:</b>	Kevin McDonald Email: <a href="mailto:kevin.mcdonald@accesspool.co.uk">kevin.mcdonald@accesspool.co.uk</a>

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The Joint Committee (JC) have a role to keep the performance against the strategic business plan agreed by the Councils under review.
- 1.2 The Section 151 Officer Group are responsible for making recommendations to the Joint Committee on budget and business plan matters, reviewing / advising on budget variations throughout each financial year and advising the Committee on the identification of, and mitigation of, any risk to the operation or success of the Pool. In response to decisions made by the Joint Committee, the Section 151 Officers should ensure appropriate resourcing, support, advice and facilitation to the Joint Committee.
- 1.3 The ACCESS Support Unit (ASU) have a responsibility to manage the development and implementation of the strategy, business plan and budget including the identification and management of risks.

## 2. 2024/25 Business Plan

- 2.1 The Business Plan for **2024/25** was agreed by the JC in December 2023 prior to being recommended to the Councils. At the same meeting, the JC also determined the budget necessary to implement this year's plan and to be charged to the relevant Authorities.
- 2.2 Activities within this year's 2024/25 Business Plan (**Annex A**) that are also the subject of separate items on this agenda include:
  - Government Pensions Review
  - Operator re-procurement
  - Alternative / non-listed assets

### 3. Government Pension Review

- 3.1 The Chancellor of the Exchequer unveiled the Government's response to phase 1 of its own Pension Review in the Mansion House speech on 14 November 2024. This was accompanied by the publication of the consultation entitled *Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS): Fit for the future*. Within this document Government outlined four "minimum standards" expected of all pools by March 2026. These are:
- I. Authorities to delegate implementation of investment strategy to their pool;
  - II. Authorities to take their principal advice on their investment strategy from the pool;
  - III. Authorities to transfer legacy assets to the management of the pool; and
  - IV. Pools required to be investment management companies authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), with the expertise and capacity to implement investment strategies.
- 3.2 This is a consultation requiring two forms of response:
- A. by 16 January 2025, stakeholders, and other interested parties, were invited to reply to a series of questions specifically posed within the consultation. These included questions on the minimum standards shown above;
  - B. by 1 March all pools are required to provide a submission to Government which "demonstrate a clear path" to meeting the Consultation's requirements.
- 3.3 The ACCESS draft response to the consultation (requirement A above) was discussed with Members of the Committee at a virtual briefing on 15 January 2025, and following Members' feedback the updated response was submitted to Government in accordance with the deadline.
- 3.4 The ACCESS submission to Government re: meeting the Consultation's requirement is the subject of a separate paper on this agenda.

#### 4. Impact of Government Pension Review on 2024/25 Business Plan

- 4.1 In light of the Mansion House speech and accompanying LGPS: Fit for the Future consultation, officers and the ASU reviewed the 2024/25 Business Plan. Two key outcomes of this reviews were then highlighted to Members at their informal briefing on 2 December:
- a) the prioritisation of the exploration of options outlined within the Government Consultation LGPS Fit for the future and, as a consequence; and
  - b) the pausing of a number of activities within the 2024/25 Business Plan.
- 4.2 With regard to a) above, the 2024/24 Business Plan contains an “*Engagement with HM Government*” milestone within the Governance theme. The activities within this milestone have been expanded as detailed below and constitutes the pool’s A1 priority:

Theme	Milestone	Activity
Governance	Engagement with HM Government	EXISTING: The Pool will actively participate in pooling-related consultations
		NEW: The Pool will explore options to meet Government expectations outlined within the “LGPS fit for the future” consultation

- 4.3 The full Business Plan is shown at Annex A to this report and details the actions that are paused and continuing.
- 4.4 An update on the 2024/25 budget appears in a sperate item on this agenda.

#### 5. 2025/26 Business Plan & Budget

- 5.1 Proposals for next year’s budget and business plan will be brought to the Committee’s next meeting on 24 March 2025.

#### 6. Recommendations

- 6.1 The Committee is asked to note the:
- 2024/25 Business Plan update.