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Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Consultation outcome

Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales: Access for Elected Members - government response

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Introduction

The government published the ‘Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales: Scheme improvements (access and protections)’ consultation on 13 October 2025, closing on 22 December 2025. The consultation set out proposals for four policy areas: Normal Minimum Pension Age, pensions for elected members, academies in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and new Fair Deal.

This government response addresses one of the four policy areas – pensions for elected members. The proposals gave mayors and councillors in England access to the LGPS. The proposals were put forward because the government believes that they will help talented people come into public service and ensure a consistent position across the UK. Councillors in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales already have access to the LGPS.

The consultation also included a draft statutory instrument to bring the change into legislation. An updated draft statutory instrument, that takes into account the suggestions made at consultation, has been published alongside this response.

The government is prioritising access for elected members, so that they can enter the LGPS in the 2026-27 LGPS year. A further government response will be published later in the year, addressing the three other proposals in the consultation.

Access for elected members

The proposals were that all elected members would have access to the Local Government Pension Scheme. Elected members would include all mayors and deputy mayors in England, all councillors at principal authorities in England, and all London Assembly members.

Membership of the scheme would be on the same basis as given to other, non-elected, members of the scheme, with a small number of exceptions to reflect the different employment status. The draft statutory instrument detailed the exceptions made. No changes were proposed to the existing access that Welsh councillors have to the scheme.

LGPS access for mayors

Question 4

Do you agree with the proposal to give mayors access to the scheme?

Summary of responses

There were 208 responses to this question. 155 responses (75%) agreed that mayors should have access to the scheme, 31 responses (15%) disagreed, and 22 responses (10%) were unsure.

Of those that disagreed with the proposal, the most consistent argument, put forward by 17 respondents, was that mayors are not employees, and that the role should not be seen as a career with associated pension benefits. Some of these respondents saw it as a conflict of interest between the political nature of the role and the financial incentive.

18 respondents argued that access to the LGPS would be too expensive, in particular at a time when local government budgets are very squeezed. 7

respondents argued that defined benefit schemes are unaffordable for all members, not just mayors.

Of those that agreed with the proposal, the most consistent argument, put forward by 66 respondents, was that the role of mayor is already difficult and full-time, meaning other paid work was practically impossible, and so they felt it was unfair to effectively financially penalise someone for performing public service.

27 respondents argued that LGPS access would encourage more people to consider standing for office, and in particular younger mayors.

Our response

Given that three quarters of respondents agreed with the proposal, the government intends to proceed with the proposal and give mayors access to the LGPS.

The government recognises that mayors are not employees and the proposed statutory instrument specifically treats mayors differently to scheme members with a contract of employment. However, the government does not agree with the second assertion, that not being an employee means pension access should be limited. As many respondents pointed out, being a mayor is a significant, full-time role. The government will treat elected leaders with the respect they deserve as dedicated public servants.

As to concerns about cost, the government continues to believe that the change should be seen in the context of the LGPS 2025 valuation and the strong funding position of the scheme.

LGPS for Councillors

Question 5

Do you agree with the proposal to give councillors access to the scheme?

Summary of responses

There were 218 responses to this question. 157 responses (72%) agreed that councillors should have access to the scheme, 39 responses (18%) disagreed, and 22 responses (10%) were unsure.

Similar arguments to those for mayors were put forward by those that disagreed with the proposal. 25 respondents (11%) argued that it would be

too expensive and that councillors should only have access to defined contribution pension schemes. 24 respondents (11%) said that the role should not be seen as a career with associated pension benefits.

10 respondents (5%) said they thought LGPS access will be a conflict of interest for councillors, especially those that sit on the LGPS administering authority's pension committee.

The Taxpayers' Alliance argued that LGPS access was incompatible with local democracy, in that it represented an uplift in overall councillor remuneration, with the uplift through a central government instead of a local decision. Some councillors have voted against increasing their allowances, feeling that they could not justify the cost to their constituents. The Taxpayers' Alliance suggested that councillors should have to vote every election term if they felt continued LGPS access was justified.

Similar arguments to that for mayors were also put forward by those that agreed with the proposal. 58 respondents (27%) said that the role of councillor is difficult and, in some cases, already full-time, and deserving of a good pension. 39 respondents (18%) said that LGPS access would encourage more people to consider standing for office, and in particular younger councillors.

47 respondents (22%) said that it was important that a councillor has the same access to the scheme, regardless of if they are in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

45 respondents (21%) said that, whilst they agreed with the proposal, it would be complicated to administer, and practically impossible to implement in time for the start of the next scheme year in April 2026. 33 respondents (15%) raised the particular issue of the May 2026 elections, in that they were concerned that councillors would enter the LGPS, only to be voted out of office the following month, meaning a lot of administrative work for little reward for members.

Our response

Given that almost three quarters of respondents agreed with the proposal, the government intends to proceed with the proposal and give councillors in England access to the LGPS.

As many respondents pointed out, being a councillor is a significant role, and one that is often full-time. The government will treat elected leaders with the respect they deserve as dedicated public servants. As to concerns about cost, the government continues to hold that the change should be

seen in the context of the LGPS 2025 valuation and the strong funding position of the scheme.

The government does not agree that it is a conflict of interest for councillors to receive LGPS benefits, even for those that sit on the LGPS pension committee. LGPS benefits are set nationally, not locally. The draft statutory instrument consulted on included specific safeguards, such as not allowing employers to contribute to additional pension contributions (Regulation 16 of the LGPS Regulations 2013) or additional voluntary contributions (Regulation 17). The government intends to proceed with these safeguards, to block ways that an employer could inappropriately boost a councillor's pension.

The government understands the Taxpayers' Alliance point about councillor remuneration and local democracy. The government will not create a specific mechanism to force councillors to vote every term for continued membership. Joining the scheme will however be optional, and if a councillor feels that they cannot justify the cost to their constituents, they will be free to decide not to join, and can campaign on this choice.

The government recognises concern about administering the change. Whilst the government thinks it is important that, for the member, the change comes in as soon as possible, the point about the May election is well made, especially as significant communication will be needed to make councillors in England aware of their new right to join the scheme.

The government intends to lay a statutory instrument in March, but will make the coming into force date 11 May 2026, the first Monday after the local elections. This will avoid the issue of councillors who enter the scheme only to leave one month later and will give software providers and administrators slightly more time to prepare. That said, the government recognises that it may take beyond May 2026 for software to fully catch up. For benefit calculations that are required immediately, such as deaths or transfers, manual calculations will be necessary. The government expects software providers to make necessary updates over the course of the scheme year, and for annual benefit statements to be available to elected members in line with Regulation 89 of the LGPS Regulations 2013, i.e. by the end of August 2027.

Principles and regulations

Question 6

Do you agree with the two principles of how the government plans to develop regulations?

Question 7

Do you have any specific comments on the draft regulations?

The government proposed two principles for how the change would be made, which were:

- as far as possible, elected members should be treated the same as other members of the LGPS;
- as far as possible, elected members should be treated in a way that is consistent with the LGPS in Scotland, Northern Ireland and pre-2014 England & Wales.

The government also published a draft statutory instrument, which demonstrated how these principles could apply to the legislation, and also included consequential amendments to the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) 2003 and establishment orders for combined authorities. The government invited views on the legal drafting.

Summary of responses

There were 187 responses to the question about principles. 124 responses (66%) agreed with the principles, 32 responses (17%) disagreed, and 31 responses (17%) were unsure.

Of those that disagreed with the principles, the reasons given were the same reasons for disagreeing with the proposal overall, such as it being too expensive. There were very few responses that directly disagreed with the principles.

There were numerous questions about the draft regulations. Most questions were highly technical.

12 respondents asked about aggregation, which is where a member has one or more separate LGPS accounts and can, in certain circumstances, be required to combine the accounts. There were questions on whether the period between 2014 and now will be pensionable, aggregation with the 1997 scheme and whether separate periods of office will be automatically aggregated.

9 respondents thought that it would be better to align LGPS access between Welsh and English councillors. Welsh councillors currently have

access to a modified version of the LGPS Regulations 1997 and the suggestion was to bring the Welsh access in line with the new access proposed for English councillors.

5 respondents thought that elected members should be automatically entered into the scheme, in a similar manner to auto-enrolment. Other respondents were less sure between elected membership being opt-in, or opt-out. The Local Government Pension Committee response also did not take a definitive view.

Our response

The government has worked with the Local Government Pension Committee to consider technical queries on the regulations. An updated statutory instrument will be laid in the House of Commons shortly.

On aggregation specifically, the change is not retrospective and service as an elected member between 2014 and the coming into force of the statutory instrument will not be pensionable. The government has changed the statutory instrument, to be clearer that aggregation with the 1997 scheme is permitted, as long as the membership periods being aggregated are in respect of elected membership. The existing rules on automatic aggregation will also apply to elected members, with the exception that Regulation 22(7) and (8) will clarify that elected membership can only be combined with other elected membership.

On aligning LGPS access between Welsh and English councillors, considering the tight timeframe between now and the new scheme year, this suggestion will not be taken forward. The government will continue discussions with the Welsh government and decide in future if alignment is necessary.

Considering that there was no clear consensus that elected membership should be opt-out (contractual enrolment), the government intends to proceed with the statutory instrument as consulted on, i.e. elected membership will be opt-in. It will be important for local authorities to communicate the pension options to their councillors, in the same way as they do to employees. This also applies to the 50-50 scheme, where Regulation 10 will apply to an elected member in the same way as any other member.