



Quarterly  
Engagement  
Report

July-September  
2023



**Climate and  
Finance  
Engagement,  
Minimum Wage,  
Water Companies,  
New Member**

## UPDATES

Smoke from Canadian wildfires blows south over New York, June 2023



# Climate and Finance

**Objective:** LAPFF has been engaging with financial institutions on climate for a number of years now. Most notably, it has issued voting alerts for Barclays, HSBC, and Standard Chartered in recent years. In 2020, LAPFF also sent letters to 11 insurers asking how they approached climate change from a strategic perspective. Discussions with these companies suggested that they tended to approach climate in terms of its effect on the companies rather than in terms of the companies' effects on climate. While investors are clearly interested in the impact climate change is having on insurers, LAPFF's approach is to ask first what companies' impacts are on climate. This approach aligns with the approach set out in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which call for companies to assess their impacts on human rights and rights holders before assessing the impact of human rights on their businesses. This framing is supported not least because risks to the business are missed if the human rights and impact analysis is not undertaken. In LAPFF's experience, the same logic applies in relation to climate change. LAPFF therefore began a process of following up with the eleven insurers, but also expanded the engagement to cover additional insurers of global impact in which LAPFF holds a significant number

**Cover image:** ask first what companies' impacts are on climate

of shares. It also wrote to large global banks in which members have large holdings. Finally, in line with a growing interest of the LAPFF membership in biodiversity and environmental impacts of climate change, the engagement will explore these companies' strategies in relation to natural resources and their link to climate.

**Achieved:** LAPFF has now written to 13 global insurers to engage on their approaches to decarbonisation and natural resources. There have been responses from four companies so far. One company with which LAPFF will clearly not be engaging is Berkshire Hathaway. Its pro forma email stated that no one is reading messages sent to the investor relations email address, and no one is likely to respond to a letter sent to the company's physical address. LAPFF would have hoped for more from Mr. Buffett, but LAPFF found this response to be in line with that of many US companies, which tend to be less willing to engage in a meaningful way than companies in many other markets, including the UK and Australia. For a full list of companies approached so far through this engagement, please see the company engagement table at the back of this report.

**In Progress:** LAPFF will continue to send letters and set up meetings with these companies over the course of the year.

## New Member

LAPFF would like to welcome its newest member, the ACCESS pool. LAPFF's membership now comprises 87 LGPS funds and seven pooled companies, the vast majority of the LGPS family. The more LGPS funds who become LAPFF members, the greater leverage LAPFF gains in engaging with investee companies in relation to their environmental, social, and governance practices as they impact on financial returns. With a membership that in aggregate holds over £350 billion in assets under management, LAPFF's financial clout is already equivalent to that of one of the top ten largest global pension funds. However, any additional members can only help.

Local Authority Pension Fund Forum

**MID YEAR CONFERENCE 2023**

12 July  
Church House,  
Westminster

Given the success of LAPFF's annual conference in Bournemouth, LAPFF decided to hold its first mid-year conference at Church House in London. This event also proved to be a success with speakers from Unseen UK, Rathbones, and DiCello Levitt. The sessions covered a summary of the 2023 AGM season, the link between climate and executive pay, modern day slavery, investor litigation in Europe, and the ESG backlash in the US.

## COMPANY ENGAGEMENTS



Investors are often not provided with a specific vote on company climate plans for shareholder approval

### Say on Climate

**Objective:** It is almost universally recognised that climate change poses significant systemic and company-level risks. Yet, despite the level of investment risks and the need for capital expenditure to deliver the transition, investors are not provided with a specific vote on their climate plans for shareholder approval.

Issuers are increasingly setting out their climate ambitions within a transition plan. It is also something regulators are looking at. For example, the UK's Transition Plan Taskforce, established by HM Treasury, is developing a 'gold standard' for climate transition plans.

Over the past two years, LAPFF has sent letters to the FTSE All-Share companies requesting a vote on climate transition plans. While LAPFF has been encouraged by the substantive responses, such resolutions during 2023 were far from standard practice, including among high-emitting companies.

**Achieved:** To continue to encourage companies to provide shareholders with

such a vote, LAPFF organised a letter to 35 companies in high-emitting sectors considered to face heightened climate risks, whose actions are essential to the accelerated action required to meet the Paris goals and where the risks investors face are substantial.

The letter, like the previous one, was supported by CCLA Investment Management, Sarasin & Partners and the Ethos Foundation. LAPFF gained the support of a wider group of investors and in total had 18 signatories which collectively represented £1.8 trillion in assets under management. The letter stressed the climate-related risks to investors. It also urged companies to provide such votes to enable shareholders to first express their view on climate strategies through a specific AGM vote rather than immediately voting against the chair or another board member. The letter requested a response so that the signatories could make an informed assessment of the company's position.

**In Progress:** LAPFF will be tracking the responses to the letter and will continue to engage with companies about holding a climate transition plan vote. This could

become an important area of shareholder focus if the recommendations of the Transition Plan Taskforce are introduced. LAPFF supports such votes becoming mandatory and will raise the issue where appropriate with policymakers.

### Mining and Human Rights

**Objective:** While LAPFF is continuing to engage with **Anglo American, BHP, Glencore, Rio Tinto, and Vale** on their human rights practices, LAPFF has picked up a new mining company engagement with **Grupo Mexico**. LAPFF has been approached by community members affected by a 2014 leak at one of the company's tailings ponds in Sonora, Mexico.

The main objective of these engagements is to ensure that the companies understand that any failure to respect human rights and environmental impacts could have financial consequences for them and for their shareholders. One of the main milestones LAPFF is looking for is how well the companies acknowledge and engage with the workers and communities they affect. Effective stakeholder engagement is important to LAPFF both as a human rights imperative and because it can expedite less costly solutions to operational, reputational, legal, and financial concerns at companies.

LAPFF is pleased that both the Anglo American and Vale groups in the PRI Advance initiative have recognised the importance of stakeholder engagement. There are plans for both groups to engage with relevant affected stakeholders.

**Achieved:** LAPFF met a Grupo Mexico representative for the first time. LAPFF Chair, Cllr Doug McMurdo, spoke with an investor relations contact, who he found to be open to the engagement. It was interesting to hear that the company has been approached by a number of investors in relation to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues of late. This increase in attention on ESG issues might not be a coincidence as the company is one of those chosen for inclusion in PRI's Advance human rights initiative.

As with many mining companies, LAPFF's view is that Grupo Mexico has a number of processes in place, some of which appear to be sound on paper.

## COMPANY ENGAGEMENTS

However, there appears to be significant work to be done in practice. Once again, the company accounts of its human rights practices and the community accounts differ drastically.

In relation to its PRI engagements, LAPFF has reached out to a couple of non-governmental organisations and community representatives on behalf of the Anglo American PRI Advance group to see if they would be willing to meet the group. There have been positive responses.

**In Progress:** Cllr McMurdo is now seeking to speak with the Sonora community group affected by Grupo Mexico's operations. As LAPFF has done in other such engagements, it will use the community and company perspectives to form a view of how to encourage improved human rights practices at the company.

LAPFF will now work to set up the community meetings for both the Anglo American and Vale PRI Advance groups.

### Water Companies and Sewage Pollution

**Objective:** Water companies are currently facing considerable reputational risks and regulatory scrutiny around their environmental performance. The focus of concern centres on the use of storm overflow drains. These drains are used to stop water backing up into people's homes when there is heavy rain but result in sewage being released into the waterways. As water companies are effectively regional monopoly suppliers subject to environmental and economic regulation, there are considerable regulatory risks, not least those driven by current reputational perceptions and public concern. The sector has faced further recent public scrutiny when financial concerns about Thames Water came to light.

The main objective of the engagement activity, which started in 2022, is to ensure that these risks are being appropriately addressed and that environmental performance improves. An important focus was ensuring plans were in place and progress is being made in reducing the amount of sewage being released into waterways. In addition, LAPFF sought to ensure companies had



Water companies are currently facing considerable reputational risks

credible climate transition plans and progress was being made against them.

**Achieved:** During the quarter, LAPFF's chair, Cllr Doug McMurdo, met with the Chair of **Severn Trent**, Christine Hodgson. The meeting was held against the backdrop of the problems facing Thames Water and covered the challenges facing the sector as a whole. This meeting was very constructive, and it was welcome news that the company was ahead of its targets on reducing overflows. The discussion covered the company's longer-term plans and targets and capital investment. The company also set out how it was addressing climate change, including through capturing emissions from the sewage treatment process.

LAPFF met with the chair of **United Utilities**, David Higgins. The meeting was positive despite the significant challenges that remain in the sector. The company outlined how it had reduced the number of overflows in the past couple of years. The meeting also covered plans to reduce overflows further and investment to address overflow issues. As with the discussion with Severn Trent, issues facing the sector were raised. The company also set out its plans regarding climate adaptation and mitigation.

LAPFF's chair also met the Head of Environment and Sustainability at **Northumbrian Water**. The company is owned by three holding companies, two of which (CK Hutchinson and CK

Asset Holdings Limited) a large number of LAPFF members hold. It was a useful meeting which covered the company's plans and targets to reduce storm overflows and capital investment required to do so. The meeting also covered the company's wider environmental performance and its climate change ambitions.

**In Progress:** While there is progress, significant risks remain. Adverse publicity and concerns about sewage overflows show few signs of diminishing while there is continued focus from regulators. LAPFF therefore will be continuing to engage with the companies on their progress and plans.

### COMPANY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

#### Electric Vehicles and Human Rights

**Objective:** Continuing its engagement with electric vehicle manufacturers to better understand how they are addressing the risks associated with minerals for batteries for their vehicles, LAPFF wrote to a number of companies seeking further engagement with those it has already engaged on this issue and to meet others for the first time.

**Achieved:** LAPFF met with **Volkswagen** (VW) and **Volvo Group** (trucks and HGVs) this quarter, both for the first

## COMPANY ENGAGEMENTS

time. LAPFF had a detailed discussion with Volkswagen, which published its third iteration of its raw materials report this year. The discussion covered the company's overall human rights programme and more focussed attention on individual minerals. LAPFF also broached questions about the scrutiny VW faced for one of its joint ventures linked to auto manufacturer supply chains allegedly associated with Uyghur forced labour in Xinjiang. VW has publicly announced that it will be undertaking a social audit of this factory, although it has faced scrutiny from various NGOs and labour groups that social audits in China are ineffective based on political pressures.

Volvo provided a high-level overview of its human rights programme, which in terms of reporting, appears to be lacking compared to some of its peers, particularly on risk management of human rights in critical mineral and material supply chains. Despite this lack of transparency in reporting, Volvo provided a promising conversation on its aspirations to improve various parts of its human rights work.

**In Progress:** More and more legislative instruments pertaining to corporate sustainability are being enacted around the world, such as the EU Battery Regulation which came into effect in August 2023. These new regulations impose sustainability, recycling, and safety requirements on all battery manufacturers, importers and distributors in the EU. Responsibility and due diligence requirements are also extended to supply chains for materials like cobalt, lithium and nickel. The EU's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, whilst still in development, will require companies to conduct due diligence on, and take responsibility for, human rights abuses and environmental harm throughout their global value chains. Therefore, LAPFF will continue to monitor and engage on how companies are set to meet these requirements, including for minerals and materials being used in the production of electric vehicles, where human rights abuses continue to be a major source of concern.



A number of companies not adhering to wage floor requirements including listed companies such as M&S. Above: M & S in Truro City centre in Cornwall

### Minimum Wage

**Objective:** LAPFF believes that good employment practices are linked to long-term corporate prosperity and hence the creation of investment value. It is therefore concerning when investee companies are found to be in breach of statutory national minimum wage standards. In June, the Department of Business and Trade announced that an investigation had found a number of companies not adhering to wage floor requirements including listed companies such as **WH Smith, Marks & Spencer, Argos** (which is owned by **Sainsbury's**) and Whitbread. LAPFF therefore sought to ensure that changes were in place to avoid future incidents.

**Achieved:** LAPFF wrote to the four companies requesting details around how the incidents occurred, what actions were taken to address the breach, and how they would be prevented in the future. All four companies responded and provided information about the nature of the breaches. Companies provided details of actions taken and gave assurances about seriousness with which they took the issue.

**In Progress:** LAPFF will continue to monitor breaches in labour law and engage companies where any issues are found to ensure that they are addressed.

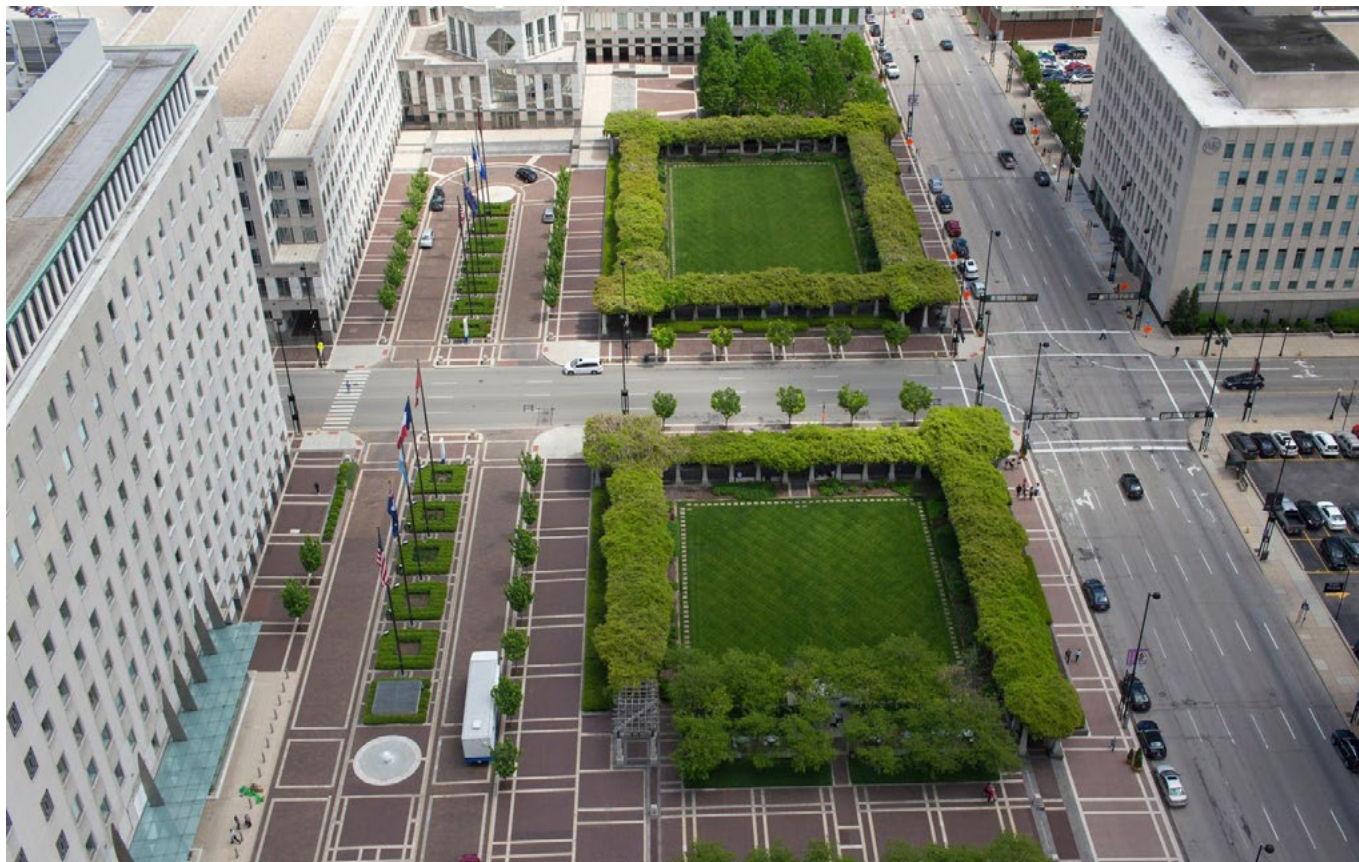
### Biodiversity

**Objective:** Alongside writing to financial institutions regarding their role in supporting positive developments on biodiversity and climate change, LAPFF has also sought to understand approaches to biodiversity at companies in other industries. For example, Procter & Gamble was recently reported to have removed policy commitments not to buy wood pulp from degraded forests. This action comes three years after a majority of investors supported a non-binding shareholder resolution at the company's AGM requesting that Procter & Gamble assess how it could improve efforts to eliminate deforestation and forest degradation in its supply chains. LAPFF also aimed to find out more about Nestlé's approach to regenerative agriculture.

**Achieved:** LAPFF has written to **Procter & Gamble** regarding this engagement. LAPFF also wrote to **Nestlé**, who hosted the Forum at its chair's roundtable in March 2023. The request seeks to discuss the company's plans for regenerative agriculture and how it contributes to the company's pathway to halve its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and reach net-zero by 2050.

**In Progress:** Deforestation is becoming an increasingly important topic for LAPFF members and wider investors,

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A city park owned by the Proctor and Gamble company in Cincinnati, Ohio

particularly as the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) published its final recommendations in September 2023. TNFD will have implications for a wide range of market participants. LAPFF will be monitoring how relevant companies incorporate the TNFD recommendations and will seek to engage those lagging behind on biodiversity and deforestation.

### Shell

**Objective:** Further to Shell's rowing back from its already unsatisfactory Energy Transition Plan, the company is now a point of special focus, given both its size and importance as an investment, as well as the scale of its emissions. LAPFF continues to aim to have the company understand its role in the energy transition and take action accordingly.

**Achieved:** LAPFF has met with the chair of Shell with some meeting of minds on some issues. Comments from the new leadership at the Shell Annual General meeting, that Shell does not have enough

visibility on some putative sources of future revenue and growth to attach numbers to, does accord with LAPFF's critique in LAPFF's voting alerts since 2020.

**In Progress:** Given Shell's historically poor investment performance (over 20 years barely better than a bond return), which is indicative of poor investment decision making, alongside no appreciable record or prospect of investment, further effort will be put into understanding the numbers and the business model as well as direct engagement.

### Centrica

**Objective:** Growing energy prices following the end of Covid lockdowns and since the start of the war in Ukraine have become a major business, economic, social and political issue. Rising costs have been a driver of inflation and reduction in the household standard of living. With prescribed economic regulations this backdrop has led to

mounting scrutiny of energy companies' practices, especially those related to low-income households. LAPFF sought to understand how energy companies were managing the regulatory and reputational risks around the cost-of-living crisis, including changes needed to support those on low incomes or in arrears.

**Achieved:** LAPFF wrote to Centrica one of the major UK energy suppliers and owner of British Gas. The company responded by setting out how it is supporting customers through the cost-of-living crisis. The company also outlined ongoing support and advice that it provides low-income customers.

**In Progress:** With energy prices remaining high, LAPFF will be seeking to meet the major UK energy suppliers on their approaches to supporting households and managing the ongoing risks.

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One of LAPFF's main concerns is to ensure that the National Grid's transition plan allows for a sufficiently speedy transition for the users of its grid

## National Grid

**Objective:** LAPFF has continued its engagement with National Grid through the CA100+ forum. One of LAPFF's main concerns is to ensure that the company's transition plan allows for a sufficiently speedy transition for the users of its grid.

**Achieved:** LAPFF's view is that the company is missing some opportunities to decarbonise more quickly, so LAPFF issued a voting alert for National Grid ahead of the company AGM in July. LAPFF cited three main concerns in the voting alert: the company's confusing approach to the use of gas, delays in connecting clean energy projects to the grid, and disclosure on the energy transition. Consequently, LAPFF recommended opposition to the company report and accounts and to the resolution on political donations.

**In Progress:** LAPFF will continue to engage National Grid on its transition plan, including on the specific points mentioned above.

## SSE

**Objective:** LAPFF has a longstanding engagement with SSE and has found the company to be open and responsive to engagement. Because it is progressive on a number of issues, including a fair and just transition, LAPFF seeks to maintain this relationship and push the company to entrench its leadership role in areas such as just transition and living wage.

**Achieved:** LAPFF Executive member, John Anzani, attended SSE's AGM again this year and asked a two-pronged question about SSE's approach to a just transition. First, he asked whether the SSE is looking to review its just transition principles in the near future. Second, he asked about capital allocation and whether money being spent on carbon capture and storage (CCS) could be better spent elsewhere.

**In Progress:** LAPFF has requested a follow-up meeting to discuss SSE's responses in greater detail.

## Taylor Wimpey

**Objective:** Housing is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and a focus of environmental regulation. To reduce the climate risks associated with overall emissions and the specific consumer and regulatory risks companies face, LAPFF therefore seeks to engage housebuilders on having credible transition plans. Following concerns from consumers and policymakers around leasehold arrangements and fire safety LAPFF also seeks to ensure the issues were being managed.

**Achieved:** The LAPFF Chair, Cllr Doug McMurdo, met with the Chair of Taylor Wimpey to discuss the company's approach to climate change. Since LAPFF last met the company, Taylor Wimpey has produced a transition plan, which has emission targets covering scopes 1-3 emissions and with a net zero by 2045 commitment. The meeting was informative and covered the company's progress and plans for reducing operational emissions, its approach to residual emissions, emissions from its homes when sold, and supply chain emissions such as from concrete and diesel. The issue of the just transition was raised as was putting the company's transition plan to a vote. The meeting also covered issues and costs associated with the agreement with the CMA on leaseholds and works related to fire safety.

**In Progress:** LAPFF will continue to meet with companies in the sector to ensure they have credible plans in place.

## Unilever

**Objective:** Unilever has received quite a lot of press regarding its decision to remain in Russia after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. LAPFF heard from Total last year about that company's difficulties in deciding whether to leave Myanmar and recognises the significant challenges companies face in taking these decisions. Therefore, LAPFF wanted to understand better Unilever's challenges in deciding whether to remain in or exit Russia.

**Achieved:** LAPFF's Chair, Cllr Doug

## COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENTS

McMurdo, met with Unilever Chair, Nils Anderson, to discuss Unilever's challenges in Russia. Mr. Anderson was not only open about the obstacles the company faces in Russia but also appeared to be open to working with LAPFF and others to determine appropriate solutions.

**In Progress:** LAPFF is continuing to participate in investor webinars on human rights and conflict zones. It will also continue to work with Unilever on this issue and will likely seek to partner with other investors who have been investigating the role of companies in conflict zones over the last couple of years.

### COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENTS

#### FAIRR

**Objective:** The FAIRR initiative is a collaborative investor network that raises awareness of material ESG risks and opportunities caused by intensive animal

production. The initiative's engagements have a wide-reaching impact on how business models contribute to material risks for investors. LAPFF aims to increase its understanding of the material ESG risks and opportunities and to engage with relevant companies associated with this issue.

**Achieved:** LAPFF has re-signed onto a FAIRR engagement focusing on working conditions at food producers, mainly in North and South America. LAPFF has also signed onto two new engagement streams, one examining antimicrobial resistance in animal pharmaceutical industry and the other analysing quick-service restaurant antibiotic policies, both with a focus on the concern about increasing global antimicrobial resistance. More than 20 companies have been contacted across these three workstreams.

**In Progress:** LAPFF will join calls as appropriate in due course which are being coordinated by FAIRR.



Farm land in Uruguay. This is the result of intensive livestock business in South America

### Asia Research and Engagement's Energy Transition Platform

**Objective:** LAPFF joined calls hosted through Asia Research and Engagement's Energy Transition Platform which seeks to engage both financial companies and coal-exposed power companies. During the second quarter of 2023, LAPFF joined calls with **Mizuho Financial Group**, **China Construction Bank (CCB)**, and **Huaneng Power**.

**Achieved:** Engagement with Mizuho assessed the feasibility of the company discontinuing all financing of oil and gas projects, and how the company was exploring its reduction targets for upstream activities within these industries. During the engagement, LAPFF raised inquiries regarding Mizuho's transition risk rating matrix, specifically inquiring about the scoring criteria applied to its clients. Additionally, investors sought insights into Mizuho's approach to navigating national policy restrictions, allocating budgets for the development of new green technologies, and leveraging its internal expertise in sustainable finance.

The conversation with CCB revolved around inquiries into CCB's environmental, social, and governance (ESG) rating system for clients, its disclosure practices concerning credit exposure linked to high-carbon industries, and the establishment of green sector targets. Similar to the discussion with Mizuho, this dialogue also delved into considerations related to national policy boundaries and restrictions.

The call with Huaneng Power covered questions around the company's previous disclosures on reaching peak emissions by 2024, as well as continuing aspirations for the company's targets for renewable energy production by the end of China's 14th Five-Year Plan, which comes to an end in 2025.

**In Progress:** Whilst there are many difficulties with aligning investor expectations with company progress in various markets due to challenging and conflicting national policies, ARE's Energy Transition Platform continues to build positive and meaningful



# COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENTS

engagement with a variety of financial institutions and coal-exposed power companies.

## Nature Action 100

**Objective:** Nature loss is a financially material risk. As the world's GDP is highly reliant on nature and its services, biodiversity loss creates significant risks for investors. As such, LAPFF's workplan seeks to engage companies to promote positive environmental impacts and reduce the operational, reputational and regulatory risks associated with nature loss.

**Achieved:** Alongside our own engagement work on biodiversity, this quarter saw LAPFF sign onto a major new collaborative initiative Nature Action 100. The global investor-led engagement initiative led by Ceres and IIGCC seeks to reverse biodiversity loss and drive nature action. The initiative sent letters to 100 companies from eight key sectors systemically important in reversing nature loss. The letter supported by over 190 investors sets out the initiative's expectations.

**In Progress:** LAPFF will seek to be involved in engagements as part of its participation in Nature Action 100.

## 30% Club Investor Group

**Objective:** LAPFF continues to support the 30% Club Investor Group. Initially, the group focused on enhancing gender diversity within UK boards, advocating for a minimum representation of 30 percent women on FTSE 350 boards and senior management positions within FTSE 100 companies. Over recent years, its scope has expanded to cover racial equity in UK boardrooms and promote gender diversity in global boardrooms.

**Achieved:** LAPFF is supporting the Group's Global Workstream, which looks to markets outside of the UK, namely in the USA and Asia, where boardroom diversity is lacking compared to the EU and UK. Through this workstream, LAPFF wrote to KKR & Co Inc. and Shinhan Financial Group asking the companies to set targets for diversity at board level and seeking to discuss individual company approaches to diversity more widely.

**In Progress:** LAPFF hopes to secure meetings with both companies in the fourth quarter of 2023 and continues to support other meetings held by the 30% Club Investor Group on an ad hoc basis as appropriate.

## Valuing Water Finance Initiative

**Objective:** LAPFF is co-chair of the Valuing Water Finance Initiative (VWFI), a global investor-led effort, facilitated by the NGO Ceres, to engage companies with a significant water footprint to value and act on water as a financial risk and drive the necessary large-scale change to better protect water systems.

**Achieved:** Along with other members of the VWFI, LAPFF met with Burberry Plc during the quarter to discuss the company's approach to water stewardship. A headline aim of the VWFI is to work with companies so as not to negatively impact water availability or water quality in areas across their value chain. Water scarcity poses a material risk throughout Burberry's cotton and leather supply chains whilst disposal of wastewater at manufacturing sites and dye houses risks polluting local watersheds. The company outlined its process for assessing risk at a commodity, regional and individual facility level. The outcome of the assessment resulted in the facilities with the highest risk being designated a hot spot. The company has subsequently set a target for zero hot spots within its supply chain by 2030. Burberry has made good progress in identifying water risk in recent years.

**In Progress:** The VWFI will release a detailed assessment and benchmark of all focus companies by the end of October 2023, including Burberry. LAPFF will assess the benchmark to identify potential shortcomings in the company's approach to managing water risk and follow up accordingly. The VWFI benchmark will provide a means through which performance on this issue can be tracked over time.

## SIGN-ON LETTERS AND STATEMENTS

### CDP - Science-Based Targets Campaign

LAPFF signed onto the CDP's science-based targets campaign for the third straight year. This campaign offers CDP investor signatories and Supply Chain members the opportunity to accelerate the adoption of science-based climate targets, by collaboratively engaging companies on this matter.

### WDI – ISSB Letter

LAPFF signed onto a letter to the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) requesting that the body 'prioritise researching' human capital and human rights indicators in its work plan.

### Bank Track – Investor Statement on Global Human Rights Benchmark

Bank Track has finalised its investor statement on banks and human rights and is encouraging signatories to use it as a basis of engagement with banks on human rights. LAPFF is a signatory.

## POLICY UPDATES

### Letter to the UK Prime Minister

LAPFF signed onto a letter organised by the PRI, IIGCC and UKSIF regarding a statement by the Prime Minister on climate change.

### Climate Risks

An updated briefing note for members was produced on LAPFF and climate risks. The briefing document includes an overview of LAPFF expectations of companies regarding climate change and how LAPFF supports change through engagement. The document is available to members on the member section of the website.

### Water Risks

During the quarter LAPFF met with the Director of Investor Relations at Ofwat. In a highly regulated sector, Ofwat and

# COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENTS

other regulators play an important role in shaping what individual companies can do and charge. At the meeting LAPFF discussed issues around capital expenditure, affordability, delivery of investment plans, the resilience of the sector, and the impact of climate change.

## Reliable Accounts

**Objective:** LAPFF has continued to focus on policy making in the area of reliable accounts, given problems with accounting standards and standards of auditing. The focus also extends to climate change aspects of accounts, including decarbonisation. There are cross-cutting issues with capital markets (see later) given the impact that two Parliamentary Committees have given to the effect of pension fund accounting on pension fund asset allocations away from UK equities.

**Achieved:** The concept of Paris aligned accounts is now a mainstream issue. Two Parliamentary Committees, the DWP Select Committee of the Commons and the Industry and Regulators Committee put the accounting standards at the centre of their criticisms of the regulatory and advisory environment.

Freedom of Information Act requests are revealing more troublesome insights into the way Ministers have been briefed by officials at the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), now the Department for Business and Trade (DBT). Requests first made in the summer of 2021 have elicited new information that had been held back but now released in July 2023 given interjection by the Information Commissioner. Further developments are expected and will be reported in full when the sensitivity of a live case has been settled. There are strong parallels with the circumstances of the Freedom of Information Act requests done in 2015 and 2016 which revealed that the Financial Reporting Council was not portraying the position of His Majesty's Government lawyers properly.

**In Progress:** The focus on the Freedom of Information Act requests continues, and Parliamentarians have been kept updated. See also capital markets working group (later).

## Capital market reform and Capital Markets Working Group

**Objective:** LAPFF has for over a decade been concerned about the dropping of standards required of companies listing on UK capital markets, with specific problems with certain mining and extractive companies. More recently a group of City of London interests bereft of asset owner representation has made efforts to drop standards even further. There are overlapping issues with the poor quality of some companies coming to the UK for listing, as with NMC Health which joined the FTSE 100 and then collapsed, and poor-quality accounting. There are also ongoing issues given the work being done by the DWP Select Committee on pensions.

**Achieved:** LAPFF made strong response to the Financial Conduct Authority's consultation on relaxing the Listing Regime further. That response was met by equally strong condemnation of the FCA proposals by other large asset owners, including RailPEN. In the light of this, the LAPFF Executive has decided to set up a Capital Markets Working Group.

**In Progress:** With Parliament coming out of recess for the autumn session, attention will be given to this area, in association with the newly formed Capital Markets Working Group.

## Party conference fringe events

**Objective:** LAPFF hosts fringe events at the political conferences. The meetings are a valuable way for LAPFF to engage with national politicians and stakeholders. The focus of this year's meetings was greenwashing. LAPFF has raised concerns about greenwashing, including in specific company engagements, and the fringe meetings provided the opportunity to raise such concerns with policymakers.

**Achieved:** Within the quarter, LAPFF held a meeting at the Lib Dem party conference. Alongside the chair of LAPFF, other speakers included Lord Robin Teverson, Lords Spokesperson Energy

and Climate Change, Cllr Keith Melton, Chair of the Green Lib Dems, and Sarah George, Deputy Editor of Edie. LAPFF outlined the work it undertakes, how investors can tackle greenwashing by companies, and the role governments and policymakers could play. The discussion covered how regulations can guard against greenwashing, green taxonomies and labels, the importance of transparency and the role of reporting.

**Progress:** Meetings at the Conservative and Labour party conferences were planned for the following quarter. LAPFF will also continue to engage national policymakers on the issue and around the importance of reporting and corporate governance standards.

## CONSULTATION RESPONSES

### UN Consultation on Investors, ESG, and Human Rights

LAPFF has responded to the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights consultation on investors, ESG, and human rights. The Working Group is tasked with identifying ways to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and has been increasingly interested in the role investors can play in this regard. LAPFF set out a range of measures it employs to supporting both ESG and human rights. You can find LAPFF's response posted here on its website.

## MEDIA COVERAGE

### Climate

Net Zero Investor: [UK stewardship stocktake: engagement at a gridlock?](#)

### Human Rights

Corporate Secretary/IR Magazine: [Trillion-dollar coalition calls for human and worker rights focus at ISSB](#)

Investments & Pensions Europe: [Investors urge ISSB to focus on human and labour rights](#)

Edie: [Investment giants press for new global disclosure standards on human rights](#)

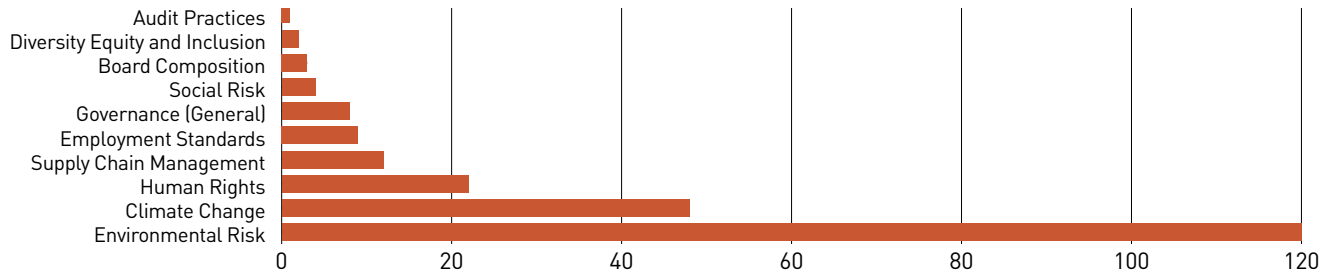
# COMPANY PROGRESS REPORT

182 companies were engaged over the quarter. This number includes collaborative engagement letters sent to companies as part of the LAPFF-led Say on Climate initiative and the Nature Action 100 initiative. Excluding these engagement letters, LAPFF engaged with 54 companies.

Company/Index	Activity	Topic	Outcome
AIA GROUP LTD	Sent Correspondence	Environmental Risk	Awaiting Response
ALLIANZ SE	Sent Correspondence	Environmental Risk	Awaiting Response
ALPHABET INC	Sent Correspondence	Diversity Equity and Inclusion	Awaiting Response
APPLE INC	Sent Correspondence	Diversity Equity and Inclusion	Awaiting Response
ASSOCIATED BRITISH FOODS PLC	Received Correspondence	Human Rights	No Improvement
AVIVA PLC	Sent Correspondence	Environmental Risk	Awaiting Response
AXA	Sent Correspondence	Environmental Risk	Awaiting Response
BARRATT DEVELOPMENTS PLC	Sent Correspondence	Climate Change	Awaiting Response
BAYERISCHE MOTOREN WERKE AG	Sent Correspondence	Supply Chain Management	Awaiting Response
BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY INC.	Sent Correspondence	Environmental Risk	Awaiting Response
BOOKING HOLDINGS INC.	Sent Correspondence	Human Rights	Dialogue
BURBERRY GROUP PLC	Meeting	Environmental Risk	Small Improvement
CENTRICA PLC	Received Correspondence	Social Risk	Dialogue
CHINA CONSTRUCTION BANK CORP	Meeting	Climate Change	Dialogue
CHINA LIFE INSURANCE (CHN)	Sent Correspondence	Environmental Risk	Awaiting Response
DEVON ENERGY CORPORATION	Sent Correspondence	Environmental Risk	Dialogue
FEDEX CORPORATION	Alert Issued	Climate Change	Dialogue
FORD MOTOR COMPANY	Sent Correspondence	Human Rights	Awaiting Response
GENERAL MOTORS COMPANY	Sent Correspondence	Human Rights	Awaiting Response
GRUPO MEXICO SA DE CV	Meeting	Human Rights	Dialogue
HENNES & MAURITZ AB (H&M)	Received Correspondence	Human Rights	Dialogue
J SAINSBURY PLC	Received Correspondence	Employment Standards	Satisfactory Response
KKR & CO INC	Sent Correspondence	Board Composition	Awaiting Response
LEGAL & GENERAL GROUP PLC	Meeting	Environmental Risk	Awaiting Response
LLOYDS BANKING GROUP PLC	Sent Correspondence	Environmental Risk	Awaiting Response
MARKS & SPENCER GROUP PLC	Received Correspondence	Employment Standards	Satisfactory Response
MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG	Sent Correspondence	Human Rights	Awaiting Response
META PLATFORMS INC	Sent Correspondence	Human Rights	Awaiting Response
METLIFE INC.	Sent Correspondence	Environmental Risk	Awaiting Response
MIZUHO FINANCIAL GROUP INC	Meeting	Climate Change	Small Improvement
MUENCHENER RUECK AG (MUNICH RE)	Meeting	Environmental Risk	Awaiting Response
NATIONAL GRID GAS PLC	AGM	Climate Change	Dialogue
NESTLE SA	Sent Correspondence	Climate Change	Awaiting Response
NORTHUMBRIAN WATER GROUP	Meeting	Environmental Risk	Moderate Improvement
OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM CORPORATION	Sent Correspondence	Environmental Risk	Dialogue
PERSIMMON PLC	Sent Correspondence	Climate Change	Awaiting Response
PING AN INSURANCE GROUP	Sent Correspondence	Environmental Risk	Awaiting Response
PRUDENTIAL PLC	Sent Correspondence	Environmental Risk	Awaiting Response
RENAULT SA	Sent Correspondence	Human Rights	Awaiting Response
RIO TINTO GROUP (AUS)	Sent Correspondence	Human Rights	Dialogue
RYANAIR HOLDINGS PLC	Alert Issued	Remuneration	No Improvement
SALESFORCE INC	Sent Correspondence	Board Composition	Awaiting Response
SEVERN TRENT PLC	Meeting	Environmental Risk	Moderate Improvement
SHINHAN FINANCIAL GROUP LTD	Sent Correspondence	Board Composition	Awaiting Response
SSE PLC	AGM	Climate Change	Dialogue
SUZANO SA	Meeting	Climate Change	Small Improvement
TAYLOR WIMPEY PLC	Sent Correspondence	Climate Change	Awaiting Response
TESLA INC	Sent Correspondence	Human Rights	Awaiting Response
THE PROCTER & GAMBLE COMPANY	Sent Correspondence	Environmental Risk	Awaiting Response
TOTAL ENERGY SERVICES INC	Sent Correspondence	Human Rights	Dialogue
UNILEVER PLC	Meeting	Human Rights	Small Improvement
UNITED UTILITIES GROUP PLC	Meeting	Environmental Risk	Moderate Improvement
VALE SA	Sent Correspondence	Human Rights	Dialogue
VOLKSWAGEN AG	Meeting	Human Rights	Small Improvement
VOLVO AB	Meeting	Human Rights	Small Improvement
WH SMITH PLC	Received Correspondence	Audit Practices	Satisfactory Response
WHITBREAD PLC	Received Correspondence	Employment Standards	Satisfactory Response
ZURICH INSURANCE GROUP AG	Sent Correspondence	Environmental Risk	Awaiting Response

# ENGAGEMENT DATA

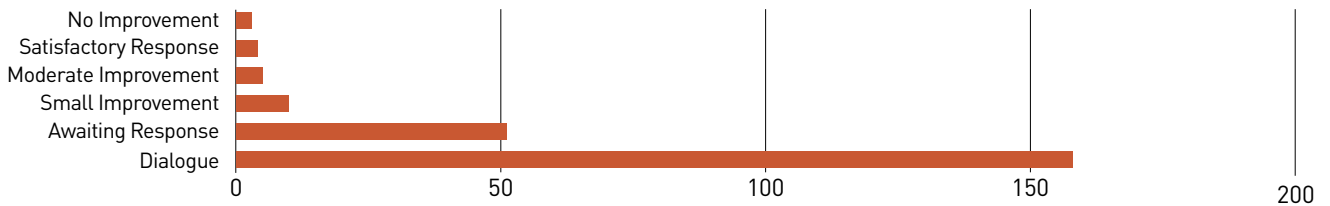
## ENGAGEMENT TOPICS



## ACTIVITY



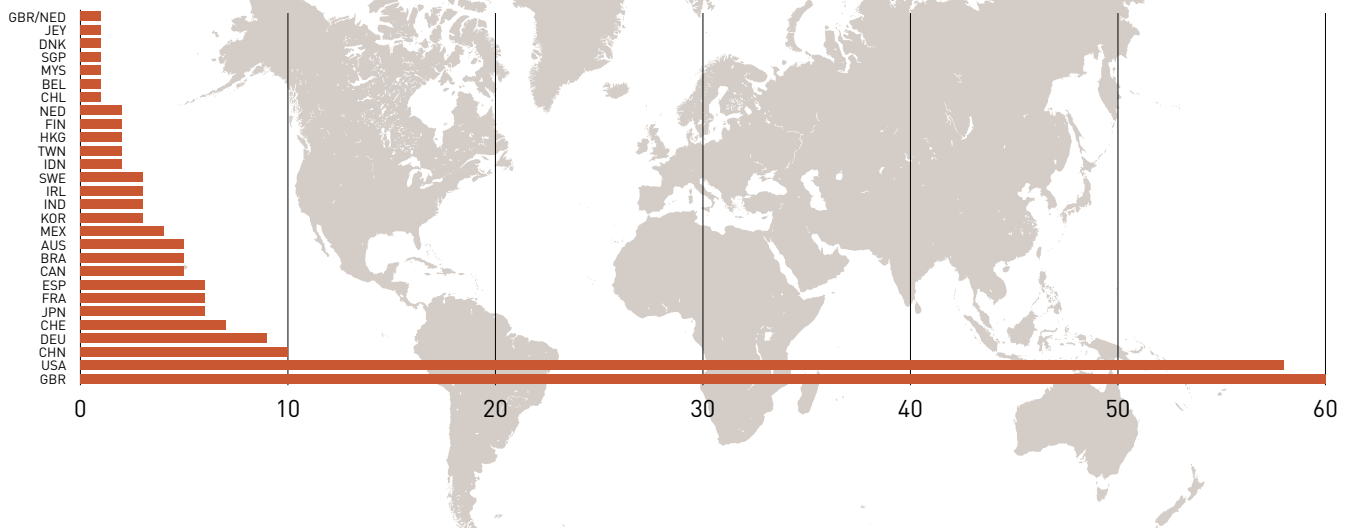
## MEETING ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES



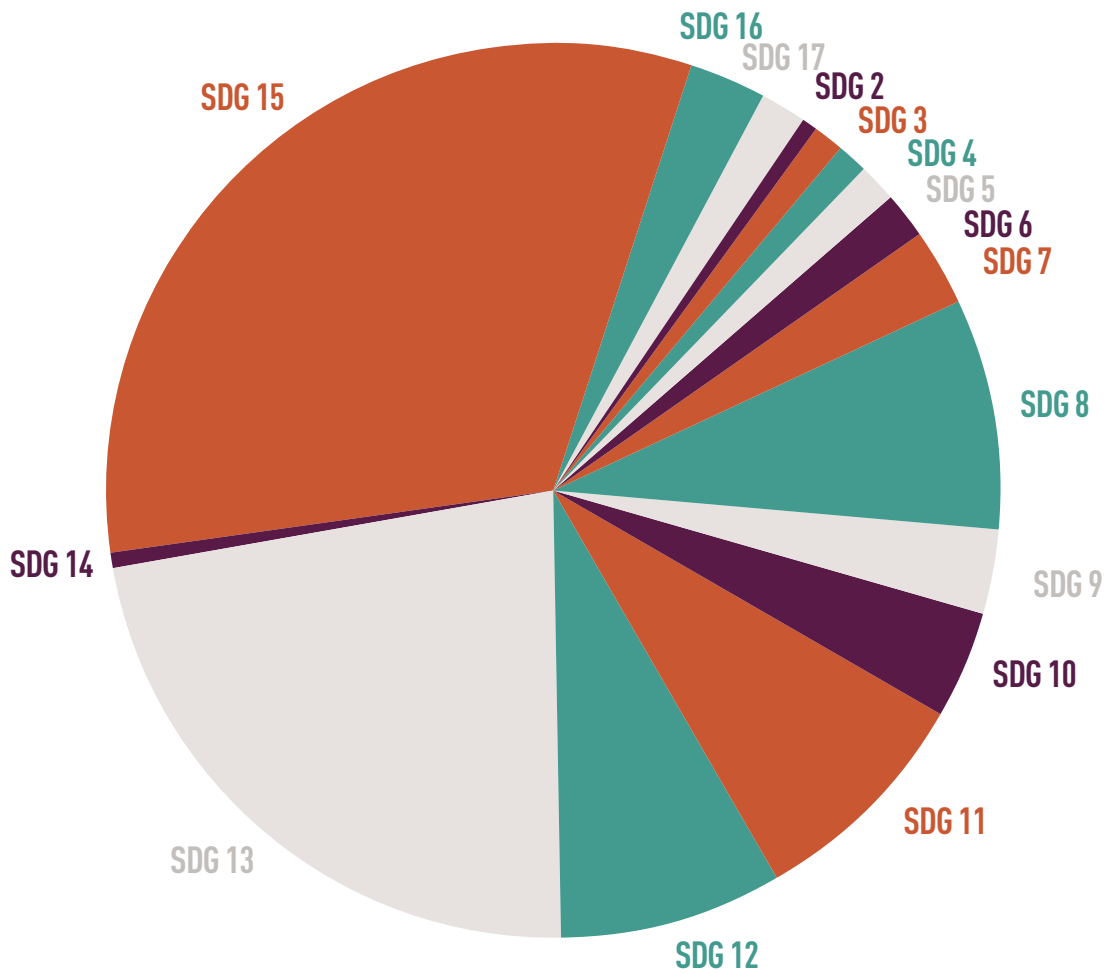
## POSITION ENGAGED



## COMPANY DOMICILES



# ENGAGEMENT DATA



## LAPFF SDG ENGAGEMENTS

SDG 1: No Poverty	0
SDG 2: Zero Hunger	2
SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being	4
SDG 4: Quality Education	4
SDG 5: Gender Equality	4
SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	6
SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	9
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	27
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure	10
SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	13
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	27
SDG 12: Responsible Production and Consumption	27
SDG 13: Climate Action	73
SDG 14: Life Below Water	2
SDG 15: Life on Land	106
SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	9
SDG 17: Strengthen the Means of Implementation and Revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development	5

## LOCAL AUTHORITY PENSION FUND FORUM MEMBERS

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Avon Pension Fund	Environment Agency Pension Fund	Lincolnshire Pension Fund	Swansea Pension Fund
Barking and Dagenham Pension Fund	Essex Pension Fund	London Pension Fund Authority	Teesside Pension Fund
Barnet Pension Fund	Falkirk Pension Fund	Lothian Pension Fund	Tower Hamlets Pension Fund
Bedfordshire Pension Fund	Gloucestershire Pension Fund	Merseyside Pension Fund	Tyne and Wear Pension Fund
Berkshire Pension Fund	Greater Gwent Pension Fund	Merton Pension Fund	Waltham Forest Pension Fund
Bexley (London Borough of)	Greater Manchester Pension Fund	Newham Pension Fund	Wandsworth Borough Council Pension Fund
Brent (London Borough of)	Greenwich Pension Fund	Norfolk Pension Fund	Warwickshire Pension Fund
Cambridgeshire Pension Fund	Gwynedd Pension Fund	North East Scotland Pension Fund	West Midlands Pension Fund
Camden Pension Fund	Hackney Pension Fund	North Yorkshire Pension Fund	West Yorkshire Pension Fund
Cardiff & Glamorgan Pension Fund	Hammersmith and Fulham Pension Fund	Northamptonshire Pension Fund	Westminster Pension Fund
Cheshire Pension Fund	Haringey Pension Fund	Nottinghamshire Pension Fund	Wiltshire Pension Fund
City of London Corporation Pension Fund	Harrow Pension Fund	Oxfordshire Pension Fund	Worcestershire Pension Fund
Clwyd Pension Fund (Flintshire CC)	Havering Pension Fund	Powys Pension Fund	
Cornwall Pension Fund	Hertfordshire Pension Fund	Redbridge Pension Fund	<b>Pool Company Members</b>
Croydon Pension Fund	Hillingdon Pension Fund	Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund	ACCESS Pool
Cumbria Pension Fund	Hounslow Pension Fund	Scottish Borders Pension Fund	Border to Coast Pensions Partnership
Derbyshire Pension Fund	Isle of Wight Pension Fund	Shropshire Pension Fund	LGPS Central
Devon Pension Fund	Islington Pension Fund	Somerset Pension Fund	Local Pensions Partnership
Dorset Pension Fund	Kensington and Chelsea (Royal Borough of)	South Yorkshire Pension Authority	London CIV
Durham Pension Fund	Kent Pension Fund	Southwark Pension Fund	Northern LGPS
Dyfed Pension Fund	Kingston upon Thames Pension Fund	Staffordshire Pension Fund	Wales Pension Partnership
Ealing Pension Fund	Lambeth Pension Fund	Strathclyde Pension Fund	
East Riding Pension Fund	Lancashire County Pension Fund	Suffolk Pension Fund	
East Sussex Pension Fund	Leicestershire Pension Fund	Surrey Pension Fund	
Enfield Pension Fund	Lewisham Pension Fund	Sutton Pension Fund	