

Local Government Pension Scheme – Northern Ireland

News story

GAD completed its report into the actuarial valuation of the Local Government Pension Scheme for Northern Ireland.



The Government Actuary's Department's (GAD) report [into the actuarial valuation](#) of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for Northern Ireland has concluded the scheme's in a strong financial position.

The Department of Communities appointed the Government Actuary to undertake the report under Section 13 of the Public Service Pensions Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. This covers the actuarial valuation of the LGPS NI as at 31 March 2019. Section 13 requires us to assess whether the scheme has achieved the following aims:

- compliance
- consistency
- solvency
- long term cost efficiency

Top level findings

GAD based its findings on the actuarial valuation of the LGPS NI, data from the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee and its actuary, Aon.

We found the funding position of the LGPS NI has improved since 31 March 2016 and the scheme appears to be in a strong financial position. Among our top-level findings are that the:

- total assets have grown in market value from £5.8 billion to £8.0 billion
- total liabilities disclosed in the 2019 local valuation report amounted to £7.2 billion (the local valuation is required to be completed using

prudent assumptions)

- aggregate funding level on the prudent local basis has improved from 96% to 112% (at 2019)
- improved funding level is due in large part to strong asset returns over the 3-year period to 31 March 2019

Funding level

Although the funding level had improved due to change in the demographic assumptions, this was offset by changes in financial assumptions. Furthermore, the funding level on GAD's best estimate basis has reduced from 122% (at 2016) to 114% (at 2019).

One of the report's authors GAD actuary John Bayliss said: "Our report into this actuarial valuation of the LGPS NI showed the fund continues in good health. The scheme has grown significantly over the 3 years since we last examined it."

Published 29 April 2022

[Foreign Secretary statement on the British Virgin Islands: 29 April 2022](#)

Press release

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss issues a statement ahead of the publication of the Commission of Inquiry report into governance in the British Virgin Islands.



Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

The arrest yesterday of the Premier of the British Virgin Islands

on charges related to drugs trafficking and money undering is extremely concerning and underlines the need for urgent action.

In January 2021, we set out significant concerns about the deteriorating state of governance in the British Virgin Islands, as well as the potential vulnerability of the islands to serious organised crime. The UK Government supported the then Governor's decision to launch an independent Inquiry into governance of the Territory.

The Inquiry report published today by the Governor shows clearly that substantial legislative and constitutional change is required to restore the standards of governance that the people of the British Virgin Islands are entitled to.

I have instructed the Minister for Overseas Territories to travel to the Territory immediately to speak to the Governor and key stakeholders. We will then announce a clear path forward.

The Overseas Territories are a core part of the UK family. The UK Government is committed to the security and wellbeing of the people of the British Virgin Islands.

Published 29 April 2022

[Blessing ceremony for WW2 airman, Arnold Hallas, in Italy.](#)

On Friday 29 April, 77 years after his final flight, a blessing ceremony was held for Flying Officer (Fg Off) Arnold George Raymond Hallas, RAF, at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's (CWGC) Padua War Cemetery, Italy. Several members of the family attended the service that was organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (MOD JCCC), also known as the 'MOD War Detectives'.

The ceremony took place to bless the additional remains of Fg Off Hallas, which were recovered by Aerei Perduti Polesine, an Italian aircraft recovery group in November 2020 and was conducted by the Reverend (Squadron Leader) Rebekah Cannon, Chaplain RAF Brize Norton.

Padre, RAF trumpeter and RAF NATO representatives. Crown copyright.

The RAF Air Historical Branch was able to review documents that confirmed Fg

Off Hallas was given a burial by the Padre who attended the crash site straight after but observed only partial remains were recovered. The aircraft parts and artefacts found by the recovery group enabled an identification to be made by MOD JCCC without the need for DNA testing.

Tracey Bowers, JCCC said:

“This case has highlighted the difficult conditions that were faced 77 years ago and the sad reality of war in that sometimes it was not possible to recover all of a casualty.

“We are grateful to the recovery group for the dignity and care that was taken during the excavation of Spitfire NH231 and the understanding of the family in this sensitive case.”

On 30 April 1945, Spitfires of No. 601 Squadron took off from Bellaria, Italy, on a reconnaissance operation. Fg Off Hallas was flying as Mustard 4 in Spitfire NH 231. Whilst looking for enemy transport, the formation was fired upon by light, but intense, fire from enemy positions. As they turned back, Fg Off Hallas called up and reported that he had been hit in the engine. After flying through bad weather, he reported that the temperature was rising and at 4,000 feet he took the decision to bail out. His aircraft dived several times and was seen to roll, finally diving straight into the ground. Fg Off Hallas was 24 when his Spitfire crashed just months before the end of the Second World War and two days before it officially ended in Italy.

The service for Flying Officer Hallas Crown copyright.

Heather Garden, 93, Arnold's only surviving sibling said;

“It is such a great pleasure to witness the return of the rest of Arnold's body to his grave. My grateful thanks to all those who made this happen. Arnold's sacrifice can now be fully recognised in perpetuity”

The Reverend Cannon said:

“Today's service was emotive for all involved and particularly moving to have so many family present here today to see Arnold their relative laid to rest”

CWGC Horticultural Supervisor, Francesco Migliosi, said:

“Flying Officer Hallas lies at rest alongside his comrades from the Italian Campaign in the CWGC's Padua War Cemetery. We are grateful that it has been possible to bring closure to the family and honoured to be able to care for his grave in perpetuity.”

Cambridgeshire man fined £5,000 after burning toxic waste at home

Adam Ivory, 38, of Magnolia Cottage, Tydd St Giles, stored and burnt waste without a permit between April 2019 and September 2020.

A neighbour reported that commercial waste was being burnt at the site every 3 to 5 weeks where it was being piled up with accelerants. Among the items set alight were plastics, pallets, polystyrene and plumbing waste.

Fires at the site were reported as lasting for hours on end, the air described as being “toxic” as a result. Concerns were reported about the impact of the blazes on a neighbour’s health as well as that of their animals.

The Environment Agency wrote to Ivory on 2 occasions providing advice and requiring him to remove all the waste on the site. Ivory told officers in March 2020 that the waste had been removed. However, further fires then took place in April 2020 and continued after he was questioned in July 2020.

In mitigation, Ivory said in court that he had been running his business legitimately for the past 18 months.

Ivory pled guilty to operating a regulated facility without being authorised by an environmental permit under regulation 12 of the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016.

He also pled guilty to keeping controlled waste on land in a manner likely to cause pollution of the environment or harm to human health. This is contrary to section 33(1)(c) of the Environmental Protection Act.

He appeared at Peterborough Magistrates Court on 27 April 2022 where he was fined £5,200. He was also told to pay a victim surcharge of £190 and costs totalling £4,302.

Sentencing, magistrates described the site as “unsuitable” and said it had been a serious risk to public health. They said Ivory had acted deliberately over a prolonged period and had continued to light fires, despite letters advising him to stop.

Peter Stark, Enforcement Team Leader, said:

Burning waste can have a serious impact on local communities and cause untold damage to the environment. Especially in the quantities and repeated waste fires in this case.

Ivory was given advice on a number of occasions and told to remove the waste legitimately from his property but failed to do so.

Anyone with suspicions of waste crime can call our incident

hotline, 0800 807060, or Crimestoppers, on 0800 555111.

- In 2019 we stopped illegal waste activity at 940 sites, 3% more than the previous year. We found 775 new illegal waste sites, 14% less than we found the previous year.
- We continue to close illegal waste sites. At the end of March 2020, 544 known illegal waste sites were still active. 21% less than at the end of March 2019 and the lowest number on our records.
- More information about waste permits can be found here: [Waste:](#).

[Royal opening for carbon neutral military dog training facility](#)

HRH The Princess Royal this week officially opened a new training facility for military working dogs and their handlers at the Defence Animal Training Regiment (DATR) at Remount Barracks, Melton Mowbray.

The Canine Training Squadron (CTS) is home to around 200 highly skilled working dogs, training in a variety of roles including police force protection, arms and explosives searches, Counter Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED), and drugs search operations in the UK and overseas.

DATR Commanding Officer Lt Col Mike Robinson RAVC said:

The Defence Animal Training Regiment provides innovative and crucial training for our personnel and military dogs.

I am pleased the Canine Training Squadron headquarters is officially open and can continue to provide a great learning environment for our Armed Forces whilst fulfilling our NetZero objectives.

Following £4.1 million investment, the new training centre will be carbon neutral and 96% self-sustaining.

HRH The Princess Royal met service personnel who showcased the training of military dogs and their handlers, and the range of capabilities they provide to the MOD. HRH was also invited to plant a tree on site as part of the Queen's Green Canopy. This initiative is part of the national celebrations to commemorate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Defence Infrastructure Organisation Area Delivery Manager for

Lincolnshire and East Midlands, Greg Piper, said:

The state-of-the-art new training facility will provide a modern and self-sustaining operating capability for the Unit going forward. The project was a complex and challenging piece of work, but excellent collaborative work with partners, stakeholders and the customer ensured successful delivery and we are delighted to see this very important facility now in full operation.

An Army Safety and Environmental Award was presented to the DATR in March, recognising the collaborative approach between the Unit, Defence Infrastructure Organisation and Amey in delivering the new, sustainable training facility.

The new facility includes three new classrooms, indoor and outdoor training areas, a new Station Headquarters office space and training accommodation.

Using its own solar panels and a battery generator the facility will fulfil its own electricity requirements, and an air source heat pump and recovery system will regulate heating across the entire site. A grey water harvesting system will recycle water for non-drinking requirements, reducing the main water supply by up to 60%.

The new facility has achieved a Defence Related Environmental Assessment Methodology (DREAM) rating of 'excellent' and will help the Army to achieve its net-zero carbon emissions targets for 2050. In addition, cost savings from the project will be invested into Army infrastructure.