

Update from English & Welsh SAB

Purpose

This paper provides an update to the SAB on issues considered by the English and Welsh SAB, following a recent call with its officers and the joint secretaries. There are a number of issues worth highlighting and where SAB Members/ advisers are invited to join E&W working groups.

Boycotts Divestments Sanctions Bill

This is a UK Government Bill and it applies to the whole of the UK. The Bill is to “make provision to prevent public bodies from being influenced by political or moral disapproval of foreign states when taking certain economic decisions, subject to certain exceptions; and for connected purposes.”

The Bill can be found here:

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3475>

The Bill has implications for Pension Funds (fiduciary duty/ ability to invest) and for Local Government decision making more widely.

Jeremy Hughes from E&W SAB will provide a verbal briefing at the 6th Sept SAB.

The SAB may wish to consider whether it should respond to the Bill – our understanding is this would need to be by mid-September.

Gender pensions gap

E&W SAB is looking at gender pensions gap, noting that there is a 40% gap in E&W pension scheme within a 70% female industry (GAD have reported on this).

There is a question of whether this is an employer matter and a Working Group is being set up to look at this.

The Scottish SAB is being offered a place on the Working Group.

Responsible Investment Advisory Group (RIAG)

There has been no recent progress on DLUHC climate reporting regulations. The Department has said that commencement (in England & Wales) will be 1st April 2024 "at the earliest." The RIAG postponed its meeting in August but is due to meet again on 11th September and is continuing to do work around climate issues.

Stephen Smillie is the SAB Member on the RIAG (along with Jonathan Sharma) and we have an observer role.

CIPFA Codes of Practice

Following the disbanding of the CIPFA working group to look at pensions codes of practice, the LGA are setting up alternative arrangements to continue work on revisions to codes.

A Working Group is being set up and the SAB is invited to join this (likely to be advisers rather than Members).