

Recommendations and Action from LGA Review

Noted below are the issues identified by the LGA when they reviewed the Pension Administration function, during October 2016 together with the actions taken to address each issue.

- 1) Delays in allocating incoming work as this task falls on team leaders

Action - Work allocation is now undertaken across the team to avoid delays.

- 2) Workflow processes within Altair are not sufficiently understood to enable activity to be monitored.

Action - Workflows have been redesigned to reflect the various steps within each procedure and enable more accurate monitoring of activity.

- 3) Checking of calculations and updates falls solely to one team leader. Processing of activity is sometimes completed without the checking being evidenced.

Action – The checking of activity is now undertaken by Pension Officers as well as the team leaders. It has been emphasised that checking processes completed must be recorded on Altair and tasks signed off as complete.

- 4) There have been delays in issuing new starter information to joiners. As a consequence requests to transfer in past service have been accepted after the normal 12 month deadline has passed.

Action - New joiner letters are now issued within two months of joining the pension scheme. Consideration is being given to writing to all scheme members offering to accept transfer of past service more beyond the normal 12 month request period for a limited time.

- 5) Workload planning is poor and training insufficient to allow staff to undertake a variety of tasks.

Action - The period when LGA visited coincided with the prolonged absence of the Pensions Manager and thus a lack of team planning is not a surprise. The four most senior members of the team have each been in post for over 10 years and are thus highly experienced. The two junior members have recently been replaced (one maternity leave) and cross training has been improved. Weekly team leader meetings and monthly team as a whole meetings seek to address concerns on communication and planning.

- 6) Monthly data from payroll requires manual input into Altair taking a significant portion of staff time

Action - A temporary interface between the Council's payroll and the most common external payroll provider used by schools has been implemented resulting in greater automation of the data transfer from payroll.

A longer term solution is the implementation of software provided from the supplier of Altair, which is called i-Connect. The process to acquire and implement this solution is discussed in the project section of the report.

- 7) Scheme guides, forms and the Council's intranet site are out of date.

Action - A standalone pension web site has been developed by the Council's pension investment team and is currently being populated. For this site, scheme forms and information provided to scheme members have been updated.

- 8) Reconciliations between Altair and the General Ledger (Agresso) are not up to date and when prepared are not checked.

Action - The delays in reconciliation are linked to workload issues due to the absence of the Pension Manager. Prior to the January 2017 Internal Audit visit, reconciliations were brought up to date and successfully reviewed as part of the audit. It is planned when resources permit to transfer responsibility for reconciliations to the treasury team to ensure that they are independently completed. In the meantime, reconciliations will be reviewed by the Interim Pensions Manager.