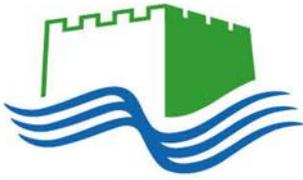


<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p><b>Pensions Committee</b></p> <p><b>Monday, 11 December 2023</b></p>		 <p><b>TOWER HAMLETS</b></p>
<p><b>Report of:</b> Julie Lorraine Corporate Director, Resources</p>		<p><b>Classification:</b> Open (Unrestricted)</p>
<p><b>Communications Strategy and Policy Statement</b></p>		
<p><b>Originating Officer(s)</b></p>	<p>Miriam Adams, Interim Head of Pensions and Treasury</p>	
<p><b>Wards affected</b></p>	<p>(All Wards);</p>	

### Executive Summary

This Policy Statement outlines the way in which the Administering Authority communicates with key stakeholders.

### Recommendations:

The Pensions Committee is recommended to:

1. Consider and approve the revised Communication Strategy and Policy Statement.

### 1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

1.1 In September 2021, the Pensions Committee approved the Communication Strategy and Policy Statement. The Pension Fund maintains a Communication Policy Statement which reflects:

- The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Regulatory requirement to maintain a Statement concerning how the Pension Fund communicates with its broad range of stakeholders (members, representatives of members, prospective members, and Scheme employers).
- The Pensions Regulator's (tPR) Code of Practice 14 which refers to necessary communications and their content. The Pensions Regulator has also issued a draft new Single Code of Practice (the New Code), which sets out proposed new governance standards for pension schemes. The New Code which is both a consolidation of 10 out of 15 existing codes of practice as well as a significant update and extension of the existing code also recommends that Governing bodies regularly review member communications.

- 1.2 By reviewing communications on a regular basis, the Committee and Board will be fulfilling their role in considering the effectiveness of communications with employers and members and any future activities, compliance with the Communication Policy Statement, Regulations, Guidance, or best practice and assisting with its knowledge and understanding of the Scheme.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 There are no alternatives to this report. Not producing and reviewing the Communication Policy for the Pension Fund potentially exposes the Fund and Council to action by the Pensions Regulator.

## **3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

- 3.1 The Fund has many stakeholders each with different communication needs. This report identifies the main means of communication with our key stakeholders which includes making the best use of technology where appropriate, to provide quicker and more efficient communication. The Fund will ensure that they provide communication methods that are accessible to all.
- 3.2 At National level, the LGPS Communications Working Group (CWG) a collaborative forum made up of representatives from 20 administering authorities in England and Wales. This group meets quarterly to develop communication for scheme members in the LGPS along with the Local Government Pension Committee (LGPC) who provide technical advice and information on the LGPS and related compensation matters.
- 3.3 The CWG priorities include the identification of best practice within pensions communications generally and the LGPS specifically, exploring the areas where centrally produced communications would save individual LGPS funds financial resources and staff time.
- 3.4 Documents produced by the CWG can be found on the LGPC's website for administering authorities and employers.
- 3.5 In September 2021, the Pensions Committee approved the Communication Strategy and Policy Statement.
- 3.6 The revised Communication Strategy and Policy Statement included as Appendix A outlines the Fund's planned communication activities and how the communication referred to within the Communications Policy Statement have been delivered in practice.
- 3.7 The Communications Policy is one of the four statutory statements that the Fund is required to have in place. It sets out the Fund's policies of information and publicity about the Scheme to members, representatives of members and scheme employers.

- 3.8 Officers are looking to update policy in future to ensure scheme documents are readily accessible to scheme members with impaired vision, cognitive impairments or learning disabilities.

#### **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

#### **5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

#### **Risk Management**

- 5.2 The administering authority is required by legislation to prepare, maintain, and publish a written statement setting out its policy concerning communications with members and scheme employers.
- 5.3 Mitigating risks associated with this report has been captured in the Fund's risk register as G3 – appropriate objectives are not agreed or monitored. Causes of this risk is as a result of policies not being in place or not being monitored.

#### **6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial and resourcing implications arising of this report and appendix. Ongoing communication costs will be contained within the administration budget.

#### **7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 7.1 Section Regulation 61 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 requires the administering authority to have a communication policy and strategy for communicating with its members and scheme employers. The attached strategy shows compliance with the law.

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## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

- List any linked reports
- NONE

### **Appendices**

- Communications Policy and Strategy (Appendix 1)

### **Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)**

#### **List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- These must be sent to Democratic Services with the report
- State NONE if none.

#### **Officer contact details for documents:**

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