



<u>Committee and date</u>	<u>Item</u>
Pensions Committee	9
23 February 2011	Public
10am	

PENSIONS ADMINISTRATION MONITORING

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Summary

The report provides Members with monitoring information on the performance of and issues affecting the Pensions Administration Team.

Recommendations

- A. Members are asked to note the report.

Report

Performance

1. The performance chart showing the team's performance to the end of January 2011 is attached at **Appendix A**.
2. The number of procedures completed peaked at approximately 1,300 during the month of November 2010 and stayed above 1,000 in January 2011. This is reflective of the number of redundancy quotations being produced by the team at the moment. A number of scheme employers are reducing their workforce.
3. The number of procedures outstanding at the end of January 2011 is very high by historical standards. This is as a result of office closure over the Christmas period, the adjustment to workloads resulting from the reduction of a Pensions Officers post at the end of December and an increase in the work coming in to the team.

Communications

1. A Newsletter was issued to all active scheme members in January 2011. It covered items such as combining previous Local Government pension scheme membership, opting out of the scheme, The Interim Hutton Report and the changes in Pensions Tax Relief. An electronic copy can be viewed at www.shropshirecountypensionfund.co.uk.
2. The previous newsletter sent during the latter part of 2010, was issued in paper format to approximately 15,000 members when alternatives to hard copy were being investigated.
3. Joint working was implemented with our neighbouring pension funds Worcestershire and Warwickshire to produce the most recent newsletter. Sharing expertise and design costs has made it more cost effective for all pension funds involved.
4. The newsletter will be made available to over 50,000 scheme members across the three funds.
5. In Shropshire the number of hard copies printed has been reduced to approximately 6,000 as the newsletter is available in electronic format. We are working with scheme employers to try and further reduce the need for hard copies. This has been a popular move. Hard copies are available on request for anyone without internet access.
6. The total print cost for this publication has been £930. If paper copies had been issued to all active scheme members the cost would have been in the region of £2,330.
7. By working with our neighbouring authorities our design costs have been reduced by half. The actual cost to the Shropshire Fund was £158.
8. Pension Consultations took place between 24 and 28 January for employees of Shropshire Council. These were held in various Council Offices around the County.
9. Appointments were booked by 180 staff and in around 100 people “dropped in” to the sessions. Staff were available to answer queries on individual entitlements as intranet facilities were available at all sites to on-line access to the Pensions Administration system.
10. The whole event proved to be very successful in terms of numbers attending and feedback received. The use of the administrator e-mail and the intranet advertising the sessions brought the consultations to the attention of staff.
11. The most popular issues raised by staff were the impact on individuals pension benefits should the proposals to the Terms & Conditions go ahead and benefits payable in the event of being made redundant.

Annual Meeting

12. The Annual Meeting for 2011 will be held on Tuesday 8 November. As usual there will be a meeting at the Civic Offices in Telford in the morning. However, the venue for Shrewsbury in the afternoon will be at the Walker Theatre, Theatre Severn.
13. Further details will be provided at the next Committee Meeting.

Independent Public Service Pensions Commission

14. At the last Committee I reported on the Independent Public Service Pension Commission, chaired by Lord Hutton, having published his interim report on 7 October 2010.
15. There is nothing more known at present as the final report is awaited. Probably now during March/April 2011.

Changes to Terms and Conditions of Shropshire Council Employees

16. Proposals for changes to Shropshire Council's staffs' Terms and Conditions were announced recently and are now under consultation. Included are changes to the working week and additional payments which have implications to the benefits of individuals as well as an impact to the work load of the Administration Team.
17. The Administration Team provides a service for all scheme employers. Due to changes in working practices the team has already downsized recently, losing a Pensions Officer Post at the end of December 2010 and a Pensions Assistants post is due to be lost at the end of April 2011. By reducing the weekly working hours of all the team, by 2 hours a week, the Team will further lose the equivalent of 1 full time post. This will impact on the service offered to scheme employers.
18. There will also be implications on the workload of the administration team resulting from the changes that will need to be made to individual pension records. This includes changes to hours and full time equivalent pay of all Shropshire employees in the pension scheme.
19. It is still unclear how the changes to all employees working week will be implemented. Should reduction mean employees are part time (i.e. 35/37) then all pension records will need to be changed to reflect this. Should the reduction be to the full time equivalent pay, this will devalue Shropshire Council scheme members' benefits already accrued.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Pensions Committee,

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The recommendations contained in this report are compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998

Environmental Appraisal

Impossible to quantify

Risk Management Appraisal

Performance is monitored to ensure regulatory timescales are adhered to.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

NA

Cabinet Member

NA

Local Member

NA

Appendices

Appendix A – Performance Monitoring

Task Statistics



