



Committee and Date

Pensions Board

8 November 2024

PENSIONS BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2024

In the Wilfred Owen Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

10.00 - 11.40 am

Responsible Officer: Michelle Dulson

Email: michelle.dulson@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257719

Present

Member representatives: John Hall, Rebecca Summerlin (remote), Dave Wright (Chair)

Employer representatives: Madeline Murphy

1 Apologies and Introductions

An apology was received from Liz Furey (Employer representative).

2 Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

None were declared.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

4 Public Question Time

No public questions were received.

5 Administration and Regulatory Updates

The Board considered the report of the Pensions Administration Manager which provided Board Members with the latest administration and regulatory updates affecting the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

The Pensions Administration Manager introduced and amplified her report which updated Members on team workloads and performance, including key performance indicators, projects such as McCloud, Pensions Dashboard, Annual Benefit Statements and the Pensions Regulator new code checklist. It also informed the Board that, following the 2023-24 internal audit of Pensions Administration, the assurance level remained at 'good', which was the highest rating.

The Pensions Administration Manager informed the Board that a business case for additional resources had been submitted to the Head of Pensions for review to help with the current workload which included some areas of backlog. The work across

the team had also been reviewed to ensure that the system was being utilised as much as possible using automated processes where available. She drew attention to the chart in Appendix A which, in line with the annual report guidance, set out the 17 key performance indicators (KPIs) and whether they had/had not met the deadline target. This supported the need for additional resource as there were areas where the targets were not being met.

She reported that McCloud had become mostly business as usual with checks in place for leavers to ensure that the underpin was applied where needed. However, some work was still required on the rectification cases, numbers of which were set out in paragraph 10.3 of the report.

The Pensions Administration Manager explained that the work on the Pensions Dashboard was picking up and they were in the last phases of signing the contract with an integrated service provider that would connect the current administration system to the dashboard allowing information to flow from it and be seen by Members. The next piece of work would then be around improving the data, address tracing etc to better match records. It was hoped to work on this data prior to the dashboard going live in order to limit the amount of partial match work undertaken by the team.

Turning to the Annual Benefits Statements, the Pensions Administration Manager explained that the team did a lot of work on this during the summer, getting all the year end data up to 31st March before then starting to create the statements. The deferred Statements had been released to members that week and the active member Statements would be done mid-August in order to meet the Pensions Regulator deadline of 31st August.

In response to a query, the Pensions Administration Manager explained how it was possible to have different records for the same person which could happen if eg the post number within payroll changed leading to a new record being created or if an employee undertook different jobs with the same employer a new record would be created for each role. For pensions purposes, these records needed to be merged and the team were working with developers to limit the number of new records being created for the same employee.

A query was raised about the difference between a customer target and a KPI as the figures appeared very similar. In response, the Pensions Administration Manager explained that within the system it was possible to set different targets. The 'customer' target dates set by the fund and listed in the administration strategy are much shorter than the legal target dates. Members requested a reminder of the target deadlines for future reports. A brief discussion ensued as to whether the targets were realistic and achievable. The Pensions Administration Manager explained that the higher volume areas of work eg transfers, deferred benefits etc were harder to achieve within target than those classed as a priority but that these areas would be monitored.

Concern was raised that some of the statutory deadlines were being missed and a query was raised as to whether the majority of the transfers out were to other local authorities. In response, the Pensions Administration Manager confirmed that a lot

of transfers were within the public sector, including to other local authorities, the NHS etc, with a small number transferring to private schemes. She went on to explain that transfers to other funds were treated on a like for like basis and that as such would have no financial loss on transfer and were guaranteed for three months. Also, those close to retirement age were not delayed.

A brief discussion ensued around the vast quantities of post, emails and calls received by the team along with the numbers accessing the website. It was confirmed that they had figures for those accessing the website separate to the bot. However, as only 67% of people's questions were being satisfactorily answered by the bot, the rest were going to the team. More analysis was being done on the website to ensure it was useful as well as developing the bot so it could answer more questions.

In response to a query, the Pensions Administration Manager confirmed that they had a project plan for the dashboard project that they were working to and she agreed to share this with Board Members.

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the report.

6 Pensions Committee Reports and Feedback

It was confirmed that the reports considered by the Pensions Committee at its meeting on 21st June 2024 had been received by the Board and also that the meeting had been observed by three members of the Board.

7 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Friday 8 November 2024 at 10am.

8 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with the provision of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, Section 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations and Paragraphs 3 of the Council's Access to Information Rules, the public and press be excluded during consideration of the following items.

9 Exempt Minutes (Exempted by Category 3)

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

10 Economic Update (Exempted by Category 3)

The Board considered and noted the exempt report of the Pensions Investment and Responsible Investment Manager which provided an update on the general economic conditions and of the impact on the pension fund investments in the second quarter of 2024.

11 Pensions Committee Exempt Reports and Papers (Exempted by Category 3)

The exempt reports considered by the Pensions Committee at its meeting on 21 June 2024 were received and discussed by the Board

12 Governance Update (Exempted by Category 3)

The Board considered and noted the report of the Communications and Governance Team Leader which provided an update on governance issues.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: