

# TEESSIDE PENSION FUND

Administered by Middlesbrough Council

AGENDA ITEM 7

## TEESSIDE PENSION BOARD REPORT

2 NOVEMBER 2020

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE – IAN WRIGHT

### Update on Work Plan Items - Communications

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present Members of the Teesside Pension Board (the Board) with information on items scheduled in the work plan for consideration at the current meeting.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Board Members note this report and provide any comments on the example member and employer communications included in the appendices.

#### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

#### 4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 At its meeting on 10 February 2020 the Board agreed a work plan for the coming months and years which set out areas for the Board to discuss or consider at subsequent meetings. These were typically areas that the Pensions Regulator and/or the Scheme Advisory Board had identified as important for Local Pension Boards to consider.
- 4.2 Included within the work plan for today's meeting were the annual review of Board training (covered separately at agenda item 6), communicating with members and publishing scheme information. The suggested activity for the Board (taken from the Scheme Advisory Board guidance) to cover this is a review of standard employer and scheme member communications. This is covered in the remainder of this report.

#### 5. COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

- 5.1 Under the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Regulations 2013, Administering Authorities are required to prepare, maintain and publish:

“a written statement setting out its policy concerning communications with-  
(a) members;

- (b) representatives of members;
- (c) prospective members; and
- (d) Scheme employers.”

The statement should set out the Administering Authority’s policy on:

- “(a) the provision of information and publicity about the Scheme to members, representatives of members and Scheme employers;
- (b) the format, frequency and method of distributing such information or publicity; and
- (c) the promotion of the Scheme to prospective members and their employers.”

The statement should be revised and published following a “material change” in the policy.

- 5.2 The Pension Fund’s communications policy is published on the Pension Fund website at:  
[https://www.teespen.org.uk/documents/content/policy/Communication\\_Policy.pdf](https://www.teespen.org.uk/documents/content/policy/Communication_Policy.pdf)  
 and a copy is enclosed at Appendix A. The policy was prepared in 2017 but is still relevant as, although some of the references need updating, no material changes have been made to the communication approach. However, the policy is due for its three-yearly refresh and this will be progressed, with an updated version taken to a future Pension Fund Committee meeting for approval.

## 6. REVIEW OF STANDARD MEMBER AND EMPLOYER COMMUNICATIONS

- 6.1 The Communication Policy lists the different methods of communication with the different categories of stakeholders as follows:

Stakeholder category	Method of communication
Scheme members (all categories) and prospective scheme members	Scheme literature – booklets and guides Website Member support (by phone and email) Member presentations Member self-service Benefit statements Pay advice / P60s Newsletters Notice boards Pension meetings Pensions taxation correspondence Report and accounts

<b>Stakeholder category</b>	<b>Method of communication</b>
Employers	Employer website Email updates Scheme literature Employer training Employer meetings Report and Accounts Valuation report
Pension Fund Committee and Pension Board	Attendance at and reports to all quarterly meetings
Pension administration team staff	Internet, email, employer database access Electronic document management system Induction, training, appraisal and assessment
<u>Other external bodies:</u> Actuary and other Fund advisers Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government Scheme Advisory Board Pensions Regulator Trade Unions Employer representatives Border to Coast Pensions Partnership Pension Fund Custodian Additional Voluntary Contribution (AVC) Provider Pension and Lifetime Savings Association Local Authority Pension Fund Forum Regional / National Forums	Email / phone / written communication / meetings as required
Prospective employers	Assistance on application process including liaison with Fund Actuary on costs and risks (if required)

6.2 Examples of the following scheme member and employer communications are included in Appendix B:

- Annual Benefit Statement for an active member
- Annual Benefit Statement for a deferred member
- Redundancy estimate cost information to scheme employer
- Retirement options letter
- Letter to retiring member confirming retirement benefits
- Pensions Savings Statement (issued to active members who have exceeded or are likely to exceed the HMRC annual allowance for pensions saving)
- Pensioner payslip
- Pensioner P60
- Pension increase letter

- LGPS in the Loop (Employer newsletter)
- Employer Briefing Note on the £95K exit cap
- Pension Awareness Presentation

6.3 The Board will be aware of the additional funding provided to XPS Administration to improve member communications. Recently XPS has recruited a communications team member who is developing the existing website with a view to improving its navigation, functionality and content. Appendix C contains screen shots of the latest proposed upgrade to the Pension Fund website.

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