

# London Borough of Barnet Pension Fund

## Communication Strategy (2018)

### **Background**

This document sets out the communication strategy for the London Borough of Barnet Pension Fund.

The London Borough of Barnet has outsourced the LGPS pension administration service to Capita.

This communication strategy is designed to ensure that all key stakeholders are kept informed of developments within the Pension Fund and in the appropriate medium. The aim being to ensure an effective communication process is in place to help maintain the efficient and effective running of the Scheme and better stakeholder and customer outcomes.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Fund Administration Strategy, and is subject to review and annual approval by the Local Pensions Board.

*This strategy is presented to the June 2018 Local Pensions Board for approval.*

### **Regulatory Framework**

This statement has been produced in accordance with Regulation 61 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013. The Regulation requires Administering Authorities to:

- Prepare, maintain and publish a written Statement setting out their policy concerning communications with:
  - o Scheme members (active, deferred, retired and dependant)
  - o representatives of scheme members

- o prospective scheme members
- o scheme employers

Set out their policy on:

- o the provision of information and publicity about the Scheme
- o the format, frequency and method of distributing such information or publicity
- o the promotion of the Scheme to prospective scheme members and their employers.

Keep the Statement under review and make such revisions as are appropriate following a material change in the policy on any of the matters included. If revisions are made, a revised statement must be published.

## **Branding**

Communication across all media are to be branded in line with the London Borough of Barnet standard.

## **Active, deferred and pensioner members and prospective members**

All members of the Scheme (active, deferred and pensioner members) will be kept informed about their benefits, developments in the Scheme and any changes to the Scheme of a regulatory or operational nature. This will be achieved through the following:

**Scheme Guides** – There are scheme guides available for members setting out the conditions of membership and main scheme benefits that apply under the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). A copy of these will be provided to new employees of the scheme and at other times on request.

**Annual Benefit Statements** – Active and deferred scheme members are entitled to an annual benefit statement detailing the benefits that they might expect at retirement. These are issued annually and would normally be issued within 5 months of the financial year end (31st

March). These contain vital information for scheme members and enable individuals to make informed choices about their retirement options.

In 2018, we will review the content of the Annual Benefit Statement and develop a FAQ document that answers common member queries about the format of the document and the benefits quoted.

□ **Newsletters** – In 2018, we will produce an annual Pensions Newsletter that can be adapted for specific members and their status in the Fund. For example, information relevant to active members is not necessarily relevant to those already in receipt of their pension. These will be sent to scheme members to communicate changes in regulations, developments in the Fund and to inform members of changes in policy.

□ **Pensioner Payslips** – All pensioners receive a payslip at stated intervals along with their P60 at the end of the year.

□ **Pension Increase Notifications** – The notification of the annual increase to pensioner benefits is sent out to every member in receipt of a pension each April.

□ **Customer Satisfaction Surveys** – Designated surveys will be issued every 6 months to obtain customer satisfaction results from members interacting with the Scheme.

□ **Council Website** – Communication in the form of the Pension Fund website that contains a wide range of information for not only scheme members but also scheme employers and other interested parties. During 2018, we will undertake a review of the content held on the Council's website relating to LBB and the Pension Fund. We will ensure that information has been brought up to date with changes to the regulations and there is appropriate information contained to help support members with relevant contact information. In addition, the Scheme will consider how an enhanced self-service website could help drive the digital strategy and enhance the service provided to members.

□ **Pension Fund Report and Accounts Summary** – This provides a summary of the Pension Fund during the financial year and will be published via the Council website and reporting into the Pension Fund Committee.

## **Scheme Employers**

We will keep employers in the Pension Fund informed about developments in the Scheme and consult on changes to the Scheme as required. Potential scheme employers will also have access to information about the Pension Fund to ensure that they are fully informed in their relationship with the Fund and requirements.

In 2018, it is proposed that we will develop further information on the website on key processes and further guidance to support employers regarding their role and responsibilities in relation to the administration of the Fund.

We will also work to improve the guidance and instructions provided to employers with regard to the provision of End of Year data that ultimately determines the accuracy of the benefits quoted in the Annual Benefit Statements.

□ **Fund Administration Strategy**– The administration strategy sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Administering Authority (the London Borough of Barnet), the third party administrator (Capita) and employers in the Pension Fund. It sets out the service level agreement and targets which all are expected to meet. This has been circulated to all employers during February 2018.

□ **Employer Forums** – Designated employer forums will be held at agreed intervals during 2018 to update employers of relevant current issues, policy changes and investment updates. The focus of activity during 2018 being around End of Year Submissions requirements and Annual Benefit Statements to ensure employers are fully supported and aware of their obligations to the Scheme. Individual meetings with separate employers will be held annually or as required. Employers will also be notified in writing of any changes which affect them or the way that the scheme is administered.

□ **Employer Manual** – An employer manual will be developed to encompass key LGPS processes / forms that require completion for key

processes. This will be circulated to all employers and made available on the Council's website.

□ **Technical Updates** – Periodic updates are sent to keep scheme employers up to date with topical pension matters, and payroll issues that may have an effect on pensions, including articles from LGA Circulars and Bulletins, and any relevant external training courses they may wish to attend.

□ **Employer Training** – The Fund offers all Scheme Employers training on the LGPS and their role in the administration of the scheme. This covers the full range of administrative and regulatory duties under the scheme regulations.

### **Other**

The Scheme will actively meet with Trade Union representatives via ad hoc meetings to discuss any member related queries raised by individual members (as required).

### **Communication and Engagement Plan with Stakeholders**

Appendix 1 of this statement provides a timeline of planned engagement activities for 2018.

### **Further Information**

If you require any further information or general administrative queries they should be addressed to:

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PO Box 319  
Darlington  
DL98 1A

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