



Local Pension Board

6 December 2021

Title	Communications Policy
Report of	Director of Finance
Wards	N/A
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	Appendix A – Communications Policy
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Summary

This paper provides the Local Pension Board with an update on the Communications Policy for the Scheme for 2022.

Officers Recommendations

The Local Pension Board is asked to note and consider if it would like to provide comments to the Pension Fund Committee on review the updated draft Communications Policy for 2022 and the plans for developing and improving the communication for both employers and scheme members.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 An effective communications policy is important as it helps maintain the efficient and effective running of the Scheme and better stakeholder and customer outcomes.
- 1.2 The draft updated Communications Policy is attached as Appendix A. This policy is based on the West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) Communications Policy which can be found at <https://www.wyvf.org.uk/publications/policy-home/wyvf-index/communications-policy/>
- 1.3 The policy sets out main areas that Officers will aim to deliver (most in conjunction with WYPF). These are:
 - 1.3.1 Continue to encourage members to register for the WYPF member portal – *MyPension*, where increasingly WYPF will post documents for members including Annual Benefit Statements.
 - 1.3.2 Ensure that a newsletter for all three member statuses is published at least twice during the year.
 - 1.3.3 Work with WYPF to ensure that the results of the Customer Satisfaction Surveys sent to members continue to be at a satisfactory level and develop and improve communications, based on feedback from members and employers.
 - 1.3.4 Work with WYPF to develop a Barnet Pensions website (on the WYPF platform) to provide improved information to both members and employers.
 - 1.3.5 Hold employer forums on at least two occasions during 2022 to update employers on actuarial, administrative and current pensions issues and policy changes. Currently, these forums are held remotely due to the Covid-19 pandemic. If conditions allow, Officers will consider holding at least one of these forums at a face-to-face meeting.
 - 1.3.6 Offer to visit employers to discuss the Barnet Fund (and LGPS in general) with members and hold “pension surgeries” with members to discuss individual pensions issues, if required.
- 1.4 The draft policy will be considered by the Pension Fund Committee at its meeting on 14 December 2021 and the Board may wish to provide comments to be passed to the Committee.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Not applicable in the context of this report.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

3.1 Not applicable in the context of this report.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Not applicable in the context of this report.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 The Local Pension Board supports the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives and priorities as expressed through the Corporate Plan, by assisting in maintaining the integrity of the pension Fund by monitoring the administration and compliance of the Fund.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 Not applicable in the context of this report.

5.3 Social Value

5.3.1 Not applicable in the context of this report.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

5.4.1 The LGPS Regulations 2013 place responsibility for the local administration of pensions and other benefits under these Regulations on the administering authority, which is the London Borough of Barnet. The Local Government (Amendment) (Governance) Pension Scheme Regulations 2015 inserts regulation 106 into the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 which requires the Council to establish a Pension Board, whose role is to assist the Council in securing compliance with legislation, regulation and best practice, including as set out in the Pension Regulator's Code of Practice to ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Scheme and any connected scheme.

5.4.2 Under the terms of reference for the Local Pension Board, the role of the Board is to assist with:

- compliance with LGPS Government regulations;
- compliance with the requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator.
- such other matters as the LGPS regulations may specify ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration
- ensure the Pension Fund's strategy and policy documents are maintained in accordance with the LGPS Regulations.
- ensure the Pension Fund's internal Risk Register is reviewed at least annually.
- review the Pension Fund's performance in complying with the requirements of

the LGPS Regulations

5.4.3 Regulation 61 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 requires an administering authority 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.

In particular the statement must set out its 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;
- (c) the promotion of the Scheme to prospective members and their employers

The statement must be revised and published when there is any material change in the policy.

5.5 Risk Management

5.5.1 Risk management is central to the LGPS. LGPS pension funds are in themselves risk management tools, managing the risk that future employer income streams will be able to meet future pensions liabilities by creating a reserve from which future liabilities will be met. Good governance is essential to managing the risks of the pension fund.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

5.6.1 Pursuant to the Equality Act 2010, the Council is under an obligation to have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share it; and fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' and persons who do not share it. The 'protected characteristics' are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy, and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership.

5.6.2 The rules governing admission to and participation in the Pension Fund are in keeping with the public-sector equality duty. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public authorities in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010. Good governance arrangements will benefit everyone who contributes to the fund.

5.7 Corporate Parenting

5.7.1 Not applicable in the context of this report.

5.8 Consultation and Engagement

5.8.1 Where relevant, consultation and engagement is discussed in the paper.

5.9 Insight

5.9.1 Not applicable in the context of this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

6.1 None

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None