



City of Westminster

Pension Fund Committee

Date:	17th November 2014
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Pensions Engagement Strategy up to 31st March 2016.
Report of:	Acting Director of Human Resources
Wards Involved:	Not Applicable
Policy Context:	Administration and communication of the LGPS to employees.
Financial Summary:	The implementation costs are estimated at 25K over 17 months which can be contained within existing budgets
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1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed strategy for pensions administration engagement up to 31st March 2016 (17 months) in respect to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).
- 1.2 Actions contained within the strategy will be undertaken jointly by WCC Human Resources and the new pensions administration provider Surrey County Council.
- 1.3 The proposed strategy contained within this report is submitted jointly with Surrey County Council and has a particular focus on the engagement of the 50/50 option.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee note and agree the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 During periods of organisational change there is always a significant increase in the amount and frequency of pensions information requested by employees both on a general and also a personal level.
- 3.2 In the last 12 months we have engaged with staff on two key areas of change in the provision of the pension scheme. Firstly the LGPS was amended from a final salary to a care scheme in April 2014. Secondly we moved pension administrators in September 2014.
- 3.3 Staff were advised of the changes to the LGPS in a communication programme that started in November 2013 with a seminar for WCC fund employers highlighting the implications of the changes.

Internal loop messages were sent out to detail the changes which were also included on the pension website. Presentations were held in City Hall in February 2014 with the then Pension Administrators which staff attended and were given the opportunity to ask questions.

Later staff received a letter containing the details of the changes and posters were placed in the lifts in April 2014. Lastly a message was added to the payslips so staff would have every opportunity to engage with the pension changes and make informed decisions.

- 3.4 Engagement on the change of the pension provider started in July 2014 with scheme employers and third party HR and payroll providers.

They were subsequently advised of the change so that they could amend relevant documents and processes for their members. All current fund members were advised of the change via their employer. All fund members not actively employed were informed by letter to detail the change of pension administrator and provided with the details of the new pension website.

- 3.5 This new proposed plan looks to build on the above and to continue to promote the scheme to new employees, promote the 50/50 option and to maintain the current level of membership of the LGPS scheme.

4. Proposed communications and engagement strategy up to 31st March 2016.

- 4.1 Life Time Allowance engagements with high earning staff will continue.

Additional written information and advice will be given twice in the period to high earners regarding their options for future membership to the LGPS. Telephone advice will be available from Surrey County Council outside of these interventions

Target dates for written advice to be given: February 2015 and February 2016.

- 4.2 Five one day employee pension surgery sessions will take place during the period at various locations. The sessions will provide the opportunity for employees to meet with pensions experts to address their particular pension queries.

They will be available to members and non members of the scheme. It is intended that the publicity material surrounding these sessions will highlight the potential options available to employees facing potential redundancy or nearing retirement.

Target dates for pension surgery sessions to be run: January 2015 x2, March 2015, October 2015, February 2016.

- 4.3 Outside of the surgery and open house sessions a telephone advice service for members and non members will be available via Surrey County Council.

Personal visitors are also welcome to visit the Surrey County Council offices in Kingston Surrey to discuss their options by appointment.

Target: Telephone service and appointments to be available by Surrey County Council during all the normal contracted hours.

- 4.4 One all day Admitted Body Forum will be held to which all of the admitted bodies and other employer representatives will be invited.

Target date for the Admitted Body Forum June 2015

- 4.5 The revised Westminster Pensions Website developed in 2014 www.wccpensionfund.co.uk will be continuously updated throughout the period. On at least three occasions during the period year the website will be brought to the attention of all staff.

Target dates for the updates April 2015, September 2015 and March 2016.

- 4.6 During this period the Pensioners Fund member Panel will be meeting. The fund member panel is made up of current and retired scheme members and will meet up to 4 times during the period. The panel will be asked to propose new innovative ways of engagement with current and retired members.

Target February 2015 May 2015 October 2015 and February 2016.

- 4.7 In addition a separate major information campaign will be put in place to highlight the benefits of the 50/50 scheme in outline this will consist of:

- All staff not in the pension scheme to be contacted regarding the option and benefits of joining the 50/50 scheme during May 2015
- Posters advertising the 50/50 scheme to be displayed in buildings during July/August 2015

- The 50/50 scheme to be featured strongly on the website during 2015
- All new starters to be made aware of the 50/50 scheme if they opt out of the LGPS during recruitment.
- Surrey County Council has a 45 minute video regarding the revised 2014 regulations that includes the 50/50 scheme this can be used during this time.

5. Costs

- 5.1 The costs to implement the above are estimated at £25,000 over 17 months these to be contained within existing HR budgets.

6. Summary of activity by month

6.1 2015

January - pension surgery sessions x 2

February - Life time allowance letter sent
- Pensioners Fund member Panel

March - Pension surgery session

April - Pensions Website developed

May - Pensioners Fund member Panel
- 50/50 scheme write to staff not in the LGPS

June - Admitted Body Forum

July - Poster advertising the 50/50 scheme

August - Poster advertising the 50/50 scheme

September - Pensions Website developed

October - Pension surgery session
- Pensioners Fund member Panel

6.2 2016

February - Life time allowance letter sent
- Pension surgery session
- Pensioners Fund member Panel

March - Pensions Website developed

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the
Background Papers please contact:**

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: