

Staff and Pensions Committee

Date: Monday 8 March 2021
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: Microsoft Teams

Membership

Councillor Kam Kaur (Chair)
Councillor Neil Dirveiks
Councillor Bill Gifford
Councillor John Horner
Councillor Andy Jenns
Councillor Bhagwant Singh Pandher

Items on the agenda: -

1. General

(1) Apologies

(2) Members' Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Members are required to register their disclosable pecuniary interests within 28 days of their election or appointment to the Council. A member attending a meeting where a matter arises in which s/he has a disclosable pecuniary interest must (unless s/he has a dispensation):

- Declare the interest if s/he has not already registered it
- Not participate in any discussion or vote
- Must leave the meeting room until the matter has been dealt with.
- Give written notice of any unregistered interest to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting

Non-pecuniary interests must still be declared in accordance with the Code of Conduct. These should be declared at the commencement of the meeting.

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7.	Employers joining and leaving the Warwickshire Pension Fund	73 - 76
8.	Revocation of the Exit Cap	Verbal Report

Monica Fogarty
Chief Executive
Warwickshire County Council
Shire Hall, Warwick

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Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

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These should be declared at the commencement of the meeting

The public reports referred to are available on the Warwickshire Web

<https://democracy.warwickshire.gov.uk/uuCoverPage.aspx?bcr=1>

Public Speaking

Any member of the public who is resident or working in Warwickshire, or who is in receipt of services from the Council, may speak at the meeting for up to three minutes on any matter within the remit of the Committee. This can be in the form of a statement or a question. If you wish to speak please notify Democratic Services in writing at least two working days before the meeting. You should give your name and address and the subject upon which you wish to speak. Full details of the public speaking scheme are set out in the Council's Standing Orders.

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Staff and Pensions Committee

Monday 14 December 2020

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Kam Kaur (Chair)
Councillor Neil Dirveiks
Councillor Bill Gifford
Councillor John Horner
Councillor Andy Jenns

Officers

Barnaby Briggs, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Neil Buxton, Technical Specialist - Pension Fund Policy and Governance
Sarah Duxbury, Assistant Director - Governance & Policy
Andrew Felton, Assistant Director - Finance
Liz Firmstone, Service Manager (Transformation)
Victoria Jenks, Pensions Admin Delivery Lead
Allison Lehky, Service Manager HR & OD
Isabelle Moorhouse, Trainee Democratic Services Officer
Chris Norton, Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Treasury, Pension, Audit & Risk)
Kate Sullivan, Lead Commissioner - Culture, Leadership and Performance
Rich Thomas, Strategy and Commissioning Manager (HROD)

1. General

(1) Apologies

None.

(2) Members' Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

(3) Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the 14th September 2020 were approved as a correct record.

2. Our People Strategy

Rich Thomas Strategy and Commissioning Manager (HROD) introduced the item stating that it included agile working. The Council's people strategy was refreshed to align with the 2020-2025 Council Plan. The strategy was developed with stakeholders including the council's 'How We Work Board' and Corporate Board who were operating as the Change Portfolio Board with HROD (human resources and organisational development), Trade Unions, the Senior Leadership Forum

and staff networks. Together they identified several priority items to deliver the desired outcomes, enablers and measures within the strategy. This was designed to create a great place to work where diverse and talented people are enabled to be their best. The strategy was developed around the council's five values and six topics from which the priorities were developed from. The strategy needed to remain agile because of Covid-19 and the changing service and staff needs. Permission was sought for HROD to develop the underpinning strategies and projects to deliver the people strategy and refine measures where necessary. In terms of agile working. The council's focus was to create an environment where work is what is done rather than focusing on where or how it was done. The council's agile working offer was developed to provide a choice for staff in how they deliver services and allows the council to review its office space management. The report was supported by Cabinet in December 2020.

The Chair noted that staff were being engaged by the 'check-in' surveys throughout 2020; the fourth survey closed in December 2020. Rich Thomas stated that the survey responses were being used to appropriately help colleagues mentally as well as ensuring they were not overworking and took breaks.

Councillor Neil Dirveiks agreed that staff engagement was paramount due to the change in work culture and that the social aspect of working will need to be protected to support mental and emotional wellbeing.

In response to Councillor Andy Jenns' concerns, Rich Thomas clarified that a robust approach was in place to ensure physical wellbeing for working at home with DSE (display screen equipment) assessments, all colleagues had £100 to spend on equipment which would allow them to operate safely at home but this cap was lifted as long as it was accompanied with a DSE assessment. Staff could also go into their office and take their equipment home.

Allison Lehky (Service Manager (HR Enabling) added that provisions were implemented for staff to have allocated desks in the workplace if they struggled to work from home; this included financial struggles from working from home too. The equipment for staff members was reviewed too, so needs could be accommodated better.

This was praised by members of the Staff & Pensions Committee. It was noted that Covid-19 accelerated change.

Following a query from Councillor John Horner, Rich Thomas clarified that there was a provision for employers to make an allowance payment to employees up to £6.00 per week on a tax-free basis. Or the employer could choose not to make the payment so the individual could claim tax relief on that amount themselves. Warwickshire County Council chose to do the latter option.

The Chair reiterated that the strategy will always be a 'work in progress' due to its need to be flexible.

Resolved

That the Staff & Pensions Committee

1. Endorses the Our People Strategy 2020 – 2025 (contained in Appendix 1)
2. Comments on the proposed delivery priorities set out in Appendix 2 and authorises the Chief Executive to finalise the delivery plan having regard to the views expressed by this Committee and by the Resources and FRS Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3. Endorses the Agile Working Offer and Online Protocols as part of the How We Work programme as set out in Appendices 3 and 4, to include the offer made to staff to move onto a new Agile Working Contract with new terms and conditions, with effect from 1st April 2021

3. Proposals for Mileage Rates

Kate Sullivan (Lead Commissioner - Culture, Leadership and Performance) introduced the report and said that an increase in the County Council's mileage rate from 40p to 45p was being recommended and that the proposal was interlinked with the agile working report. The Council's mileage rate had not been updated since 2009 but HMRC had increased the mileage rate to 45p/mile. Due to the increase in remote working it is expected that the amount of mileage claims will be reduced. For it to be cost neutral there would need to be 11% reduction in mileage and in 2020 there was a 64% reduction. Any changes by HMRC would be automatically applied in future. Further consultation with schools would need to be undertaken before progressing with increased mileage rate which applies to school-based staff.

Resolved

That the Staff & Pensions Committee

1. Approves the recommendation to increase the Warwickshire County Council employee (non-school based) mileage allowance from April 2021, to be in line with the HMRC rate, currently 45p on the proviso that this is a cost neutral recommendation and will not require additional funding.
2. Authorises the Strategic Director for Resources to consult with schools on the proposal that the increase applies to all community and voluntary controlled Warwickshire schools from April 2021 and to finalise those arrangements having regard to the outcome of that consultation.
3. Recommends to full Council that the increased mileage rate to align with the HMRC rate be applied to elected members through the Members' Allowance Scheme.

4. Cyber Security Policy

Neil Buxton (Technical Specialist Pensions Fund Policy and Governance) introduced the report and stated that the pension regulator required all pension schemes to have a cyber security policy in place to protect the integrity of member records and pension fund assets; this policy should be subject to review. The pension regulator specifically advises local authority pension funds that they cannot rely on their host authority's policies and must have something bespoke. Therefore, the pension scheme will contact the Risk and Compliance Officer to assess if external expertise in relation to the policies is needed.

In response to Councillor Dirveiks' concerns with external officers accessing meetings, Neil Buxton replied that the administration systems were created with external partners so there was a shared compliance. Councillor Bill Gifford noted the dangers with hackers of security systems.

Resolved:

The Staff and Pensions Committee comment on and approve the draft Cyber Security Policy in Appendix 1 and the associated Action Plan in Appendix 2.

5. The Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 2020

Neil Buxton introduced the report and stated the amended regulations were implemented in September 2020 and were focused on greater flexibility for employers leaving the pension fund and for the fund to revisit employer contribution rates between valuations. The regulations enable the fund to spread out the exit payments for unfunded liabilities over a longer period. The regulations also allowed an employer to become an '83rd employer', which meant that they could continue contributing to the fund even if they no longer have any active members. The revisiting of employer contributions focused on changes, for example if an employer is having difficulties through the Covid-19 pandemic they could approach the fund and request a change to the amount that the employer pays into the fund. Statutory guidance from central government will be needed to implement this. Once this has been received and assessed along with the guidance from the Scheme Advisory Board, the funding strategy statements, admissions and termination policy will be amended and presented to the March 2021 meeting.

Resolved:

The Staff and Pensions Committee notes and comments on the report.

6. Fire Pension Schemes McCloud-Age Discrimination remedy and immediate detriment guidance

Vicky Jenks (Pensions Admin Delivery Lead) introduced the report and confirmed that the Home Office had released guidance documents for fire authorities. Members of fire schemes who had not transferred into the care scheme from the 1st April 2015 would have been able to retire from their final salary scheme. The instruction from the Home Office was to calculate the benefits based on their legacy schemes and ignore that they moved across the care scheme and calculated the benefits so that they are not detrimentally affected by having to wait for the change in regulations on the 1st April 2022. Legal advice was sought from Warwickshire County Council and the Scheme Advisory Board. The approach will be to follow the guidance where possible for individuals and set out clear instructions for members to show what had been done and why. If this guidance could not be applied to a specific case, then that member will be informed.

Following Councillor Dirveiks' concerns with the workload, Vicky Jenks noted that there were not a lot of members in the fire pension schemes but there was a concern that the change in the scheme could influence fire officers to retire now. There was an ongoing McCloud project with additional resources that could be used to help with the fire schemes.

In response to the Chair, Vicky Jenks clarified that no additional staff will be brought in to help with this scheme, but the Pensions Administration team reshuffled so more officers were available to help with fire queries; 27 cases affected by the guidance have been identified.

Following a query from Councillor Gifford, Vicky Jenks replied that there are different elements included in calculating the benefits, so the payroll team will collect the data needed to calculate this. However, the pension team had a system to work out the benefits calculation which reduced the manual time needed for each calculation. It will take about a day to get the information from the pension and payroll teams for each case.

In response to Councillor Horner, Vicky Jenks stated that the guidance received was just one element of the McCloud work. There will be a separate project to manage this and additional resources will be available throughout.

Resolved:

That the Staff and Pensions Committee note and comment on the report.

7. Assessing Employer Covenant in the Pension Fund

Chris Norton (Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Treasury, Pension, Audit & Risk) introduced the report and stated that the report focused on the fund proactively looking at risks around employer financial viability, i.e. their contributions to the pension fund. Policies were already in place to address these risks, so the funding strategy statement was already in place which set out how to deal with employer contributions regarding their risk level. A document which set out roles and responsibilities between the fund and employers was in place, but the report set out the outcome of the review which had been undertaken in response to Covid-19 and the risk it presented. These actions will allow officers to take a risk-based approach to individual employers where necessary, and review contribution rates between valuations. Steps that will need following up after this include reviewing the admission agreements to ensure they are fit for purpose, undertaking a risk base set of actions with at risk employers and reviewing security arrangements.

In response to Councillor Gifford, Chris Norton confirmed that the fund remains in frequent contact with at risk employers and despite the pandemic there was nothing systematic expressing itself in the activity.

Resolved:

The Staff and Pensions Committee comment on and approve the pension fund's policy and approach to assessing the covenant of employers in the Pension Fund.

8. Schedule of Pension Fund Policies

Chris Norton stated that the report attempted to raise profile of all fund policies which were due to be reviewed. The schedule covered investment, administration and governance related policies and was designed to keep all policies up to date. The capacity was increased in teams to support the pension fund. This had allowed more work to be done but if more significant policy changes were required the resourcing of this work would be reviewed.

Resolved:

That the Staff and Pensions Committee review and comment on the attached schedule of Pension Fund policies.

9. Pensions Administration - Preparations for McCloud

Liz Firmstone (Service Manager (Transformation) informed the committee of the government consultation which took place in 2020 which focused on McCloud and Sargent and the proposals to remedy the discrimination issues following various legal challenges. Final details from government are yet to be received but should be available early 2021. Preparations need to be

started for both the local government pension scheme (LGPS) and the fire pension scheme. The schemes require things to be done differently; the consultation circulated for the fire schemes asked for views on whether members should make an immediate choice following implementation of the remedy, or a deferred choice at the point of retirement, about which scheme they want their benefits to be calculated on to give them least detriment. It was unknown which option central government would opt for. The LGPS was a slightly different proposal as members will be protected by an underpin. The approach states that all scheme membership benefits need to be reviewed. This will affect 25-30% of members and require a lot of resources from the pension and payroll teams. It will also affect all 190 employers in the LGPS. The Pension Fund will need to pay for costs relating to the LGPS. The extra resources needed to deal with the fire pension schemes had been obtained and governance arrangements will be implemented for data to start being collected in January 2021.

In response to Councillor Dirveiks, it was clarified that Corporate Board have approved the business case and funding and that a procurement process is being progressed. Liz Firmstone added that final resource requirements can only be confirmed once all the data is collected.

Following a question from Councillor Gifford, Liz Firmstone replied that seven extra staff members in pension team and four in the payroll are estimated be needed over a 12-month period to review the LGPS cases.

Resolved:

That the Staff and Pensions Committee note and comment on the report.

10. Administration Activity and Performance update

Vicky Jenks stated that the pension administration team had made good progress on the Governance Action Plan and the I-Connect project's first phase went live to the correct employee numbers and timescales. Warwickshire County Council's payroll was moved from phase four to phase two because of the good progress it was making. All payrolls will be live on the system in January 2021. Phase three employers have been contacted to ensure their extracts are ready to go live in February-March 2021. The GMP (good manufacturing practice) reconciliation work will be complete by 31st January 2021 however KPIs (key performance indicators) had been affected by staff absence. The team completed 32,000 tasks since the 1st March 2020, averaging 2774 task per month but they were still working through backlogs; however, training provided in March 2020 has helped with this. The breaches process was updated on the website, so a RAG was available for employers. The team started a tracing service with a tracing company to find members of the fund who cannot be contacted. The internal dispute resolution procedures were being updated by legal and a new Chair of the Fire Pension Board would be appointed by full Council in December 2020.

Resolved:

That the Staff and Pensions Committee notes this report

11. Briefing note for £95K exit cap regulation change

Sarah Duxbury (Assistant Director – Governance & Policy) stated that the note was an update of the situation and little had changed. The exit cap regulations had already come into force and there had been a consultation on the technical formula for working out people's

entitlement in the event of an exit situation where the cap was exceeded by the virtue of the redundancy payment along with the pension actuarial payment. Further consideration will be given to this as the guidance emerges and individual matters dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Andrew Felton (Assistant Director – Finance) added that the Council will adopt early advice from government about how the pension regulations will change for employers. It will also create a risk awareness with the two conflicting sets of legislation.

Resolved

That the Staff and Pensions Committee notes the briefing note.

12. Reports Containing Confidential or Exempt Information

Resolved

That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the items mentioned below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

13. Exempt Minutes

The exempt minutes of the 14th September 2020 were agreed to be a correct record.

The exempt minutes of the 13th October 2020 were agreed to be a correct record.

The meeting rose at 15:09

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Chair

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Staff and Pensions Committee**Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures**

8 March 2021

Recommendation(s)

1. That the Staff and Pensions Committee note and comment on the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 All pension schemes are required by the Pensions Act 1995 and the Pension Regulator to have in place a formal dispute resolution procedure.
- 1.2 The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations, also require scheme employers and administering authorities to have formal procedures in place to address and resolve grievances scheme members and other interested parties may have in how their membership of the scheme or how their benefit entitlement has been dealt with either by their employer or the administering authority.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 There are potential fines or awards of compensation which can be levied either by the Pension Regulator or the Pension Ombudsman for cases of maladministration.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 None

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations specify that both the scheme employer and the administering authority have specific areas of responsibility concerning a scheme member's pension entitlement. A scheme employer for example, will decide:
 - Whether an employee is eligible to join the scheme.
 - What rate of contribution the member will pay,

- The pay used in calculating a member's benefit
- The benefit a member is entitled to on retirement

The administering authority will decide on matters such as, but not limited to:

- Previous pensionable service
- The amount of benefit due to the member

These are known as 'first instance decisions' and the member must be notified by either their employer or the administering authority of any decision affecting their pension record or entitlement.

- 4.2 On receiving notification from the employer or the administering authority the member has the right to question and seek clarification of the decision about pension entitlement. If they are not satisfied by the answer, they may appeal by way of the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure.
- 4.3 It is however, hoped that many questions can be resolved before the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures are enacted. This is known as the 'informal stage' and many cases are resolved with the member receiving confirmation that their case has been dealt with correctly in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations.
- 4.4 If a member remains dissatisfied and instigates an Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure appeal their grievance can potentially go through a formal two stage process. For example, if a member is not satisfied with the benefit awarded by their employer, they can appeal to the employer for their case to be reviewed by a 'nominated person' appointed by the scheme employer. The nominated person must be independent and not have been involved in the original decision.
- 4.5 If the member is not satisfied by the Stage One decision their grievance can be escalated to Stage Two with the Administering Authority who appoints an adjudicator to review the case.
- 4.6 In rare cases where they remain aggrieved the member can refer their case to the Pension Ombudsman and potentially make a claim to the High Court.
- 4.7 Appendix 1 is the guide available for members.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 The Local Pension Board reviewed the procedure and documentation at their meeting on 26th January and any comments have been incorporated.

Appendices

1. Appendix 1 – Employees guide to the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures.

Background Papers

1. None

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Neil Buxton	neilbuxton@warwickshire.gov.uk
Assistant Director	Andrew Felton	andrewfelton@warwickshire.gov.uk
Lead Director	Rob Powell	robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk
Lead Member	Peter Butlin	peterbutlin@warwickshire.gov.uk

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): None

Other members: Councillors Kaur and Gifford

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WARWICKSHIRE pension fund



2021

Warwickshire Local Government Pension Scheme

Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure

This booklet provides a straightforward guide to how the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure operates and is provided for general information only. It does not cover every aspect. It is not an interpretation of the relevant legislation. In the event of any unintentional differences, the relevant legislation will prevail. This booklet does not confer any contractual or statutory rights.

Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure

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Introduction

During the employment relationship and afterwards, certain decisions may be made in respect of Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) members which can impact upon their benefits.

The law provides an opportunity to challenge any decisions which individuals disagree with, through an Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) which is a formal complaints procedure designed to resolve disputes locally and avoid recourse to the Pensions Ombudsman.

The purpose of this guide is to explain how decisions are made and to set out Warwickshire's Local Government Pension Scheme's Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure.

Who may use the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure

The following people may use the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure:

- members of the Warwickshire LGPS who currently pay into the scheme
- people who have deferred benefits in the Warwickshire LGPS
- people who receive a pension from the Warwickshire LGPS
- prospective members of the Warwickshire LGPS
- widows, widowers, civil partners, children or other dependants of a person who fell into one of the categories above before he or she died;
- people who think that they either might or should fall into one of the above categories;
- people who do not fall into one of the above categories now but did at some time during the previous six months.

Informal Enquiries

It is important to remember that most problems or queries can be dealt with informally and put right where necessary, without recourse to the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure. If you are not sure about which benefits you are entitled to, or if you have a problem or query over your benefits, please either phone the number on the letter your employer or administering authority has sent you or contact the Pensions Section in the first instance:

Warwickshire Pension Fund

Pension Services

Shire Hall

Market Square

Warwick CV34 4RL

(01926) 412984

Email: vickyjenks@warwickshire.gov.uk

Please also refer to the "Additional Help" section for other sources of advice.

Decision making

Throughout your membership of the Warwickshire LGPS, the scheme rules require decisions to be taken by scheme employers or by Warwickshire County Council as the administering authority of the Warwickshire LGPS.

Such decisions may affect the benefits that you or your dependants may be entitled to receive and are referred to as **'first decisions'** in this document.

The key first decisions and who makes them are summarised below:

Employer decisions

- Whether an employee is eligible to join the scheme;
- What elements of a person's pay are to be treated as pensionable;
- Calculating final pay to be used in calculating pension benefits;
- Deciding an employee's contribution rate;
- Deciding an employee's entitlement to benefits on leaving the scheme for whatever reason;
- Exercise of a number of employer specific discretions (e.g. entitlement to early release of pension benefits, waiving actuarial reductions).

Employers may also *"decide any question concerning any other matter relating to the person's rights or liabilities under the Scheme"*.

It is for scheme employers to decide who should make first decisions.

Administering authority decisions

- Questions concerning an individual's previous pensionable service or employment
- Questions regarding the counting of additional periods as membership or crediting additional pension;
- The amount of any benefit, or return of contributions, an individual or their dependants become entitled to under the regulations;
- The exercise of a number of discretionary elements to the scheme that have impact across all scheme employers (e.g. payment of lump sum death grants).

Administering Authority first decisions will usually be made by Warwickshire County Council's Strategy and Commissioning Manager – (Treasury, Pensions, Audit, Insurance and Risk).

First Decisions

When you (or your dependents) are notified of a first decision you should check insofar as possible, that it is based on the correct details and that you agree with the decision. First decisions should be notified in writing and should contain details of who to contact if you are unhappy with the decision and details of the IDRP. Similar information will be given to dependants and/or personal representatives upon the death of a LGPS member.

Complaints

If you are not satisfied with a first decision made in relation to membership of the LGPS, you have the right to ask for it to be looked at under the IDRP. You also have the right to use the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure if a first decision should have been made by your employer or the administering authority, but it has not been.

You can ask someone to take your complaint forward on your behalf. This could be, for instance, a trade union official, spouse, partner or friend.

No charge is made at any stage for investigating a complaint under the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure but you will have to meet your own expenses (or those of your representative) including travel costs and postage.

The Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure has two stages. Many complaints are resolved at the first stage.

The Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure will not apply in circumstances where the matter is already being investigated by the Pensions Ombudsman or is the subject of existing court or tribunal proceedings.

Stage 1

If you need to make a formal complaint, you should do so within 6 months from the date when you were notified of the decision. The timescale for referring the matter to Stage 1 is also set out at Appendix A.

Your complaint will be considered carefully by an independent person (i.e. someone who has not previously been involved in the matter for consideration) nominated by the body that took the first decision against which you wish to complain. This person is referred to as the **nominated person** in this document.

Each scheme employer has a nominated person. You should contact your employer for details of their 'nominated person'. Alternatively, you can contact the Pension Administration team who will get this information for you.

For employers that no longer exist, Warwickshire County Council's Assistant Director - Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer) is the nominated person.

You should make your complaint in writing, to the relevant nominated person using the Stage 1 application form at Appendix B.

You should include any information that you consider relevant to your complaint and you can attach any relevant documents including copies of letters you have received.

The nominated person will assess your complaint in light of the scheme rules and the applicable law. You may be asked to provide more information about your case.

The nominated person's decision should be given in writing. They will usually communicate their decision within two months of receiving the complaint. Where this is not possible, you should receive a letter which explains the reasons for the delay and gives an estimated timescale for a decision. This letter is referred to as an **interim letter**.

If the nominated person upholds your complaint, their decision is binding on the employer or the administering authority who made the first decision, unless you refer the matter under Stage 2 of the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure.

However, if the decision you complained about concerned the exercise of a discretion by the employer or administering authority, the nominated person may not overturn the first decision but

shall decide whether discretion was exercised reasonably. If the nominated person decides that discretion was not exercised reasonably, then they shall notify the person who made the first decision and the decision shall be reconsidered.

Stage 2

You can ask the administering authority to review your complaint where:

- you are not satisfied with the nominated person's first-stage decision
- If you have not received a decision or an interim letter from the nominated person at Stage 1 and more than three months have passed since you lodged your Stage 1 complaint
- If the nominated person told you in an interim letter that they would give you a decision under Stage 1 and more than one month has passed without receipt of that decision.

The relevant timescales for referring the matter to Stage 2 are also set out at Appendix A.

The review shall be undertaken by an **adjudicator** appointed by the administering authority. The adjudicator is the Chief Executive of Warwickshire County Council (or their nominee) who may seek advice or guidance from external advisers.

You will need to send the administering authority your complaint in writing, using the Stage 2 application form at Appendix B. You should include all of the information that was supplied for Stage 1, together with the outcome letter. You should also set out the reasons why you are dissatisfied with the Stage 1 decision.

The adjudicator will consider your complaint and give you their decision in writing. They will, within two months of the date they receive your Stage 2 application form, either confirm their decision, or confirm when a decision is likely to be reached and the reason for any delay.

When the adjudicator writes to inform you of the decision, they will also confirm whether the decision upholds or replaces the first stage decision and shall refer to any particular legislation relied upon in reaching their decision.

However, if the decision you complained about concerned the exercise of a discretion by the employer or administering authority, the adjudicator may not overturn the first stage decision but shall decide whether discretion was exercised reasonably. If the adjudicator decides that discretion was not exercised reasonably, then they shall notify the person who made the first stage decision and the decision shall be reconsidered.

The adjudicator's decision is final, unless subsequently overturned by the Pensions Ombudsman or High Court.

The Pensions Ombudsman

If you are still unhappy following the Stage 2 decision, you have the right to refer your complaint to The Pensions Ombudsman free of charge.

The Pensions Ombudsman deals with complaints and disputes which concern the administration and/or management of occupational and personal pension schemes.

Contact with The Pensions Ombudsman about a complaint needs to be made within three years of when the event(s) you are complaining about happened – or, if later, within three years of when you first knew about it (or ought to have known about it). There is discretion for those time limits to be extended.

The Pensions Ombudsman can be contacted at:

10 South Colonnade, Canary Wharf
London, E14 4PU

Tel: 0800 917 4487

Email: enquiries@pensions-ombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.pensions-ombudsman.org.uk

You can also submit a complaint form online:

www.pensions-ombudsman.org.uk/our-service/make-a-complaint/

Additional Help

If you have general requests for information or guidance concerning your pension arrangements contact:

The Pensions Advisory Service

11 Belgrave Road
London, SW1V 1RB

Tel: 0800 011 3797

Website: www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk/

Appendix A – Table of timescales

Your situation	To complain to	Time limit
You have received a decision on your benefits under the pension scheme from your employer/administering authority, and there seems to be good grounds for complaining.	The nominated person under the first stage of the procedure.	6 months from the date when you were notified of the decision ¹ .
You have received a first stage decision on your complaint from the nominated person, but you are not satisfied.	The relevant administering authority under the second stage of the procedure.	6 months from the date of the nominated person's decision.
You made your complaint in writing to the nominated person, with all the information they needed but, 3 months later, you have not received their decision on your complaint or any interim reply.	The relevant administering authority under the second stage of the procedure.	9 months from the date when you submitted your complaint.
You received an interim reply to your complaint to the nominated person, within 2 months of applying to them. Their reply promised you a decision by a specified date but, 1 month after that specified date, you still have not received their decision.	The relevant administering authority under the second stage of the procedure.	7 months from the date by which you were promised you would receive a decision.
Your complaint is that your employer or administering authority has failed to make any decision about your benefits under the pension scheme.	The nominated person under the first stage of the procedure.	6 months from the date when your employer or administering authority should have made the decision ² .
Your complaint went to the administering authority under the second stage of the procedure. You received their decision but you are still not satisfied.	The Pensions Ombudsman.	3 years from the date of the original decision about which you are complaining.

¹ The nominated person can extend the 6-month time limit for a reasonable period where there are special circumstances.

² The nominated person can extend the 6-month time limit for a reasonable period where there are special circumstances.

You have taken your complaint to the administering authority under the second stage of the procedure but, 2 months after your complaint was received by the authority, you have not received their decision on your complaint or any interim reply.	The Pensions Ombudsman.	3 years from the date of the original decision about which you are complaining.
You received an interim reply to your second stage complaint to the administering authority, within 2 months of applying to them. Their reply promised you a decision by a certain date but, by that date, you still have not received their decision.	The Pensions Ombudsman.	3 years from the date of the original decision about which you are complaining.

Appendix B – Application forms

Application under the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (STAGE 1)

Please use this form to: apply to the person nominated by your employer at stage one of the internal dispute resolution procedure if you want them to investigate a complaint concerning your pension.

YOUR EMPLOYER/FORMER EMPLOYER.....

My disagreement is with a decision made by – (tick one box only)

The employer named above

☐

Warwickshire Pension Fund

☐

1. Member's details:

If you are the member (the person who is or was in the Scheme), or a prospective member (a person who is eligible to be a member of the Scheme), please give your details in this box. You can go straight to box 4.

If you are a member's dependant (for example, their husband, wife, civil partner, cohabitee or child), please give the member's details in this section, and then go to box 2.

If you are representing the person with the complaint, please give the member's details in this section, and then go to box 3.

Full Name	
Date of Birth	
Address	
National Insurance Number	

2. Dependant's details:

If you are the member's dependant and the complaint is about a benefit for you, please give **your** details in this box and then go to box 4.

If the complaint is about a benefit for a dependant and you are the dependant's representative, please give the dependants details in this box and then go to box 3.

Full Name	
Date of Birth	
Address	
National Insurance Number	

3. Representative's Details:

If you are the member's or dependant's representative, please give your details in this box.

Full Name	
Date of Birth	
Address	
National Insurance Number	

4. Your complaint

Please give full details of your complaint in this box. Please try to explain exactly why you are unhappy, giving any dates or periods of Scheme membership that you think are relevant.

If there is not enough space, please go onto a separate sheet and attach it to this form. Remember to write your name and national insurance number at the top of any separate sheet if you are a

--

member. Or, if you are not a member, put the member's name and national insurance number at the top of any separate sheet.

5. Your signature

I would like my complaint to be considered and a decision to be made about it. I am a:

- Scheme member/former member/prospective member*
- Dependant of a former member*
- Member's representative/dependant's representative*

*delete as appropriate

Signed:

Date:

Please remember to enclose a copy of any notification of the decision you are complaining of which has been issued by the employer or administering authority. Also enclose any other letter or notification that you think might be helpful.

PLEASE SEND THIS FORM TO:

Warwickshire County Council

Pension Services

The Shire Hall

Market Square

CV34 4RL

Application under the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (STAGE 2)

Please use this form to: apply to the adjudicator at stage two of the internal dispute resolution procedure if you want them to investigate a complaint concerning your pension.

YOUR EMPLOYER/FORMER EMPLOYER.....

My disagreement is with a decision made by – (tick one box only)

The employer named above

☐

Warwickshire Pension Fund

☐
1. Member's details:

If you are the member (the person who is or was in the Scheme), or a prospective member (a person who is eligible to be a member of the Scheme), please give your details in this box. You can go straight to box 4.

If you are a member's dependant (for example, their husband, wife, civil partner, cohabitee or child), please give the member's details in this section, and then go to box 2.

If you are representing the person with the complaint, please give the member's details in this section, and then go to box 3.

Full Name	
Date of Birth	
Address	
National Insurance Number	

2. Dependant's details:

If you are the member's dependant and the complaint is about a benefit for you, please give **your** details in this box and then go to box 4.

If the complaint is about a benefit for a dependant and you are the dependant's representative, please give the dependants details in this box and then go to box 3.

Full Name	
Date of Birth	
Address	
National Insurance Number	

3. Representative's Details:

If you are the member's or dependant's representative, please give your details in this box.

Full Name	
Date of Birth	
Address	
National Insurance Number	

4. Your complaint

Please give full details of your complaint in this box. Please try to explain exactly why you are unhappy, giving any dates or periods of Scheme membership that you think are relevant.

If there is not enough space, please go onto a separate sheet and attach it to this form. Remember to write your name and national insurance number at the top of any separate sheet if you are a member. Or, if you are not a member, put the member's name and national insurance number at the top of any separate sheet.

5. Your signature

I would like my complaint to be considered and a decision to be made about it. I am a:

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme member/former member/prospective member* • Dependant of a former member* • Member's representative/dependant's representative* |
|---|

*delete as appropriate

Signed:	Date:
---------	-------

Please remember to enclose a copy of any notification of the decision you are complaining of which has been issued by the employer or administering authority. Also enclose any other letter or notification that you think might be helpful.

PLEASE SEND THIS FORM TO:

Pension Services

Warwickshire County Council

The Shire Hall

Market Square

CV34 4RL

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Staff and Pensions Committee**LGPS Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure - Employer Decisions**

8 March 2021

Recommendation(s)

That the Committee approves initial stage employer decisions under the Pensions Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDPR) being made by Tier 3 Managers (or their nominee) and Stage 1 employer decisions being made by Assistant Directors (or their nominee) as set out in Section 4.5.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Warwickshire County Council ("the Council") as the administering authority for the Warwickshire Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) has updated its Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) for its members, former members and others who are entitled to use it.
- 1.2 Certain decisions concerning pension matters are reserved to scheme employers in the first instance and then at Stage 1 of the IDRP.
- 1.3 This presents an opportunity for the Council as a scheme employer to consider and confirm the identity of those who will be responsible for making the decisions reserved to the scheme employer under the scheme rules.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report
- 2.2 Members may be interested to note that the Pensions Ombudsman has discretion to award compensation for distress and inconvenience for maladministration even where no legal rights have been infringed (for instance in cases of excessive delay or misapplication of the IDRP). Such awards range between a nominal sum and £2,000 with exceptional cases exceeding that sum.

3. Environmental Implications

None

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 Most employer pension decisions under the LGPS are straightforward matters such as ill health retirements and contribution bands. However, more complex issues occasionally arise, which require careful interpretation of scheme rules and relevant case law.
- 4.2 In order to ensure consistency and transparency in decision making on pension matters, the Council as a scheme employer needs to decide:
- (a) who shall be responsible for making the initial decisions about pension matters which are reserved to scheme employers under the LGPS rules; and
 - (b) who shall be the Council's 'nominated person' at Stage 1 of the IDRP.
- 4.3 It is important that the level of seniority of decision makers is consistent and appropriate to the importance of pension matters, to avoid any future challenge relating to the independence of officers. In this regard, officers have taken into account that IDRP Stage 2 decisions made by the administering authority are reserved to the Chief Executive (on terms acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources), as authorised by Staff and Pensions Committee in 2016.
- 4.4 It is also recognised that HR officers should continue to support decision makers, in order to minimise any potential for conflicting decisions in pension matters and also to ensure that legal advice is sought at an early stage where cases are complex.
- 4.5 It is therefore proposed that:
- (a) Initial decisions should be made by the Tier 3 Service Manager of the relevant service or someone nominated by them (with support from HR);
 - (b) The nominated person at Stage 1 of the IDRP should be the Assistant Director of the relevant service or someone nominated by them (with support from HR).

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 The decision can be implemented with immediate effect.
- 5.2 It is intended that a record of decisions will be maintained by HR, which will be reviewed annually by Corporate Board.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Sarah Cowen	sarahcowen@warwickshire.gov.uk
Assistant Director	Sarah Duxbury	sarahduxbury@warwickshire.gov.uk
Lead Director	Strategic Director for Resources	robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk
Lead Member	Portfolio Holder for Customer & Transformation	cllrkaur@warwickshire.gov.uk

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): n/a

Other members: Councillors Kam Kaur and Bill Gifford.

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Staff and Pensions Committee

Employee Engagement

8 March 2021

Recommendation(s)

1. That the Committee notes this update on employee engagement during 2020-2021 and celebrates the progress that has taken place through the pandemic, particularly around our approach to staff wellbeing and engagement.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Prior to the pandemic, the approach for employee engagement included an annual Your Say Survey. Over the last year we have taken a different approach to employee engagement in recognition of the professional and personal challenges presented to our people during the pandemic and our need for more regular insight and feedback. Corporate Board has undertaken regular broadcasts for staff from the start of the pandemic and we have completed more regular check-ins and have focussed on wellbeing, understanding what support is required and obtaining views on the new ways of working.
- 1.2 Engagement surveys provide us with key information about the views of our people, how they are feeling and are also used to inform some of our Key Business Measures (KBMs) and indicators.
- 1.3 This report provides a review of the check-in process to date and details the increases in employee engagement during this difficult time.
- 1.4 Each of the check-in surveys have been themed and have provided valuable feedback on how our people are feeling and their views and suggestions on certain topics/ issues.
- 1.5 Response rate for the check-ins has fluctuated over the year, between 34% and 46%, but averaging out at around 45%, which is consistent with Your Say surveys in the past. This is an increase on the response rate that we have traditionally seen to the annual staff survey.
- 1.6 How our people are feeling has steadily declined over the year from 88% feeling ok or better down to 82% in our latest survey, which although concerning, is not surprising, and is in line with broader national trends.
- 1.7 In combining the responses to several key questions, we produce an employee engagement score. This employee engagement score has increased by 6% to 76% during the last year, which given the context, is a

positive result and recognises the importance that we have placed on employee engagement throughout the pandemic.

- 1.8 The results from each of the check-ins have been shared across the Council in the form of headline infographics and more detailed reports. The infographics have been attached as appendices for information.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 None

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 None

4. Supporting Information

4.1 Check in 1 - April 2020

Focus: How people are feeling and what support they require to continue to work during the pandemic.

Highlight Results:

- 46% response rate
- 88% feeling ok or better
- 87% adapting to new ways of working and 83% have access to the systems and the technology to work from home
- The support from colleagues and the more informal social contact were most important to wellbeing.
- Most were working from home and generally felt well supported and positive about our new ways of working, and felt our technology was holding up well and helping them to stay connected.
- Our people told us that they have learnt a lot of new skills by adapting to the new ways of working and they wanted to share this with colleagues across the organisation to continue this learning.
- The role of our leaders was identified as key to supporting our people during this time, both from direct line managers and valuing the live broadcasts from senior leaders with the opportunity to ask questions.
- The survey told us that awareness of support services was not consistent across the council.

Actions:

- Developed a series of communication and training/learning campaigns to build confidence, knowledge and behaviours to enable our people to work from home safely and effectively.

- Developed a range of resources and development to support managers with leading in a virtual world, including a Thrive at work toolkit to support people with their wellbeing.
- Skills to Thrive sessions delivered to T3 managers.
- Regularly promoted wellbeing support available to our people.
- Continued with live broadcasts from senior leaders.
- Provided option for people to request to be contacted by a Listening Mate (for confidential support) in subsequent check-in surveys.
- Supporting Staff Yammer group was created to encourage informal and social interactions between colleagues across the organisation, and also promote wellbeing support.

4.2 Check in 2 - July 2020

Focus: how our people are feeling and their mental health; what has worked well and what have been the challenges during the COVID response, and; suggestions for areas to focus on during recovery.

Highlight Results:

- 45% response rate
- 83% feeling ok or better
- The mental health of our people was slightly below the average score of the general population.
- Our people reported the things that are working well when working from home/working more flexibly, technology, Corporate Board briefings, positive support from managers and colleagues, quicker decision making and less bureaucracy.
- Our people reported the challenges to be lack of face-to-face interaction both for work and socially, isolation, juggling working from home with caring responsibilities, access to equipment, workload and work/life balance.
- Our people suggested the focus for recovery could be prioritising those finding it difficult to work from home to return to the office safely for part of the week; consider making agile working more permanent and support staff to work safely from home; make buildings safe to work in and rationalise our property portfolio; build on innovation that is underway; prioritise services for vulnerable and reinstate home visits safely.

Actions:

- Suggestion provided to the Recovery project for consideration.
- Continued to share guidance and tips on how to enhance home working to create a healthy working environment that supports wellbeing, including sharing wellbeing support and information in W4W, promoting Employee Assistance Programme.
- Updated Individual Wellness Plans to reflect remote working.

- Personal resilience course redesigned and made available online.
- Continued with senior leadership live briefings.
- Continued to build content and learning resources around using M365 to help balance home and work life.
- Redesigned Coronavirus intranet pages based on user testing with a group of our people and created an FAQ section to help with regular queries.
- Contacted managers of staff without easy access to information electronically to explore what would help with this.

4.3 Check in 3 - August/September 2020

Focus: How people are feeling, and those working from home to understand their productivity and what they miss most about being in the office.

Highlight Results:

- 34% response rate
- 85% feeling ok or better
- 86% felt productivity was the same or greater while working from home, 11% not as productive, and 3% were not working from home.
- Our people reported the benefits of working from home and positive impact on their productivity; having less distractions at home compared to the office; having a better work/life balance, and; not having to commute or struggle to find parking.
- Some reported that they felt isolated and less motivated when working from home and felt the need to always be available.
- Many expressed a preference to combine home and office working when we return to normal after the pandemic.
- The top three things our people missed most about working in the office were social interaction, face to face collaboration and learning from others.
- The top three things our people missed least from working in the office were commuting, having quiet time to focus, and access to personal files and equipment.

Actions:

- Results were shared with Recovery and Workspace Redesign project for consideration.
- Loneliness spot check completed in October 2020 to explore further how we can support our people with feelings of loneliness.
- Continued to promote wellbeing support.
- Continued to promote Supporting Staff Yammer group to encourage informal social interactions between colleagues.
- Created and shared guidance on how to spot the signs that someone may not be okay in a virtual world.

- Continued with senior leadership live briefings.

4.4 Check in 4 – November/December 2020

Focus: How our people are feeling and Your Say questions relating to employee engagement, wellbeing and access to learning and development opportunities. Results are available to Management Tier 3 level.

Highlight Results:

- 46% response rate.
- 82% feeling ok or better, with 33% saying that their wellbeing has declined.
- 76% engagement score, a 6% increase on the previous year and all engagement questions either stayed the same or saw an increase on the 2019 results.
- 86% believe wellbeing is promoted at work, an increase of 14%.
- 84% of our people believe WCC is a good employer an increase of 9% and 81% are proud to work for WCC an increase of 8%.
- When asked what would improve working for Warwickshire County Council the following themes were identified:
 - Adopt agile working principles, choice of work location, ground-up decision making, better communication in and between teams.
 - Reduction in workload and less demand, increase in staffing resource, better staff retention and faster recruitment, absence management.
 - Better communication and support from managers, better and more confident decision making, management time spent on managing rather than on admin/HR responsibilities.

Actions:

- Share and celebrate the results with our people through an interactive dashboard and other communication methods and encourage our managers to have conversations at a team level regarding:
 - How we can continue to support people with their wellbeing
 - What we have learnt from 2020 and what can do to further improve our engagement score.
- Link the results with the priority activities in the Our People Strategy and ensure the feedback is built into the ongoing work programme, particularly concerning Sustainable and Resilient Workforce, Agile Working, High performance culture, Employer Value Proposition and leadership. Where results are not being covered by the priority activities, we will consider how these can be covered in future work programmes.
- HROD will cross reference with other metrics to shape and inform programmes of work and to provide bespoke support where it is needed
- Report to be taken to the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group to discuss priority actions relating to demographics, being treated with fairness and respect and bullying and harassment.

- Supporting Staff Change Hub are using results to shape and inform work on supporting our people with their wellbeing.

4.5 Thrive Health Needs Assessment

As a result of the decline in how our people are feeling and in order to achieve Bronze Accreditation for the West Midlands Combined Authority Thrive at Work Programme, we are currently asking colleagues to complete the Thrive Health Needs Assessment. The assessment has a number of questions about wellbeing and will provide a detailed report to enable us to develop a wellbeing action plan. The survey closed on the 26th February and we await the findings.

5. Next steps

- 5.1 The check in approach will be continued over the coming months with the following focus:

Check in 5	8-26 March 2021	High Performing Culture
Check in 6	June	Leadership
Check in 7	September	Our People

- 5.2 In line with the Our People Strategy, employee engagement is a priority activity. Scoping our long-term approach to engagement is currently underway and will be agreed in the coming months.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Check-in 1 infographic.

Appendix 2 – Check-in 2 infographic.

Appendix 3 – Check-in 3 infographic.

Appendix 4 – Check-in 4 Infographic.

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Kate Sullivan and Rebecca Sachet	katesullivan@warwickshire.gov.uk rebeccasachet@warwickshire.gov.uk
Assistant Director	Sarah Duxbury	sarahduxbury@warwickshire.gov.uk
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Lead Member	Kam Kaur - Portfolio Holder for Customer & Transformation	kamkaur@warwickshire.gov.uk

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): n/a

Other members: n/a

Appendix 1



Appendix 2

Staff wellbeing check-in 2 July 2020



WCC staff continue to work in very changed circumstances and we are committed to checking in with you on a regular basis.

Check-in 2 launched in July focusing on wellbeing and recovery.

Who responded

April's figures brackets

2,066 (2,101)
responses =
response rate

45% (46%)

55% (51%)
identified as
key workers

90% (89%)
working from home



How are you feeling?

April's figures brackets

83% (88%)
feeling generally
positive

Feeling ok
or better

(rating 3-5)

17% (12%)
finding things
harder

Finding things
harder

(rating 1-2)



Worked well during Covid-19 response

- Working from home/working more flexibly
- Technology
- Corporate Board briefings
- Positive support from managers and colleagues
- Quicker decision making and less bureaucracy

Challenges during Covid-19 response

- Lack of face to face interaction both for work and socially
- Isolation
- Juggling working from home with caring responsibilities
- Access to equipment
- Workload and work/life balance

Mental wellbeing scale

We used the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale.

This consists of 7 questions with 5 response options which produce an individual score. Scores can range from 7 – 35 with higher scores indicating positive mental wellbeing.

Average score for general adult population = **23.6**

WCC scores

WCC average score = **22.3**

- **15.4%** scored high (26-35)
- **16.2%** scored average-high (23.6 – 26)
- **28%** scored low-average (21.5 – 23.6)
- **39.3%** scored low (7 – 21.5)

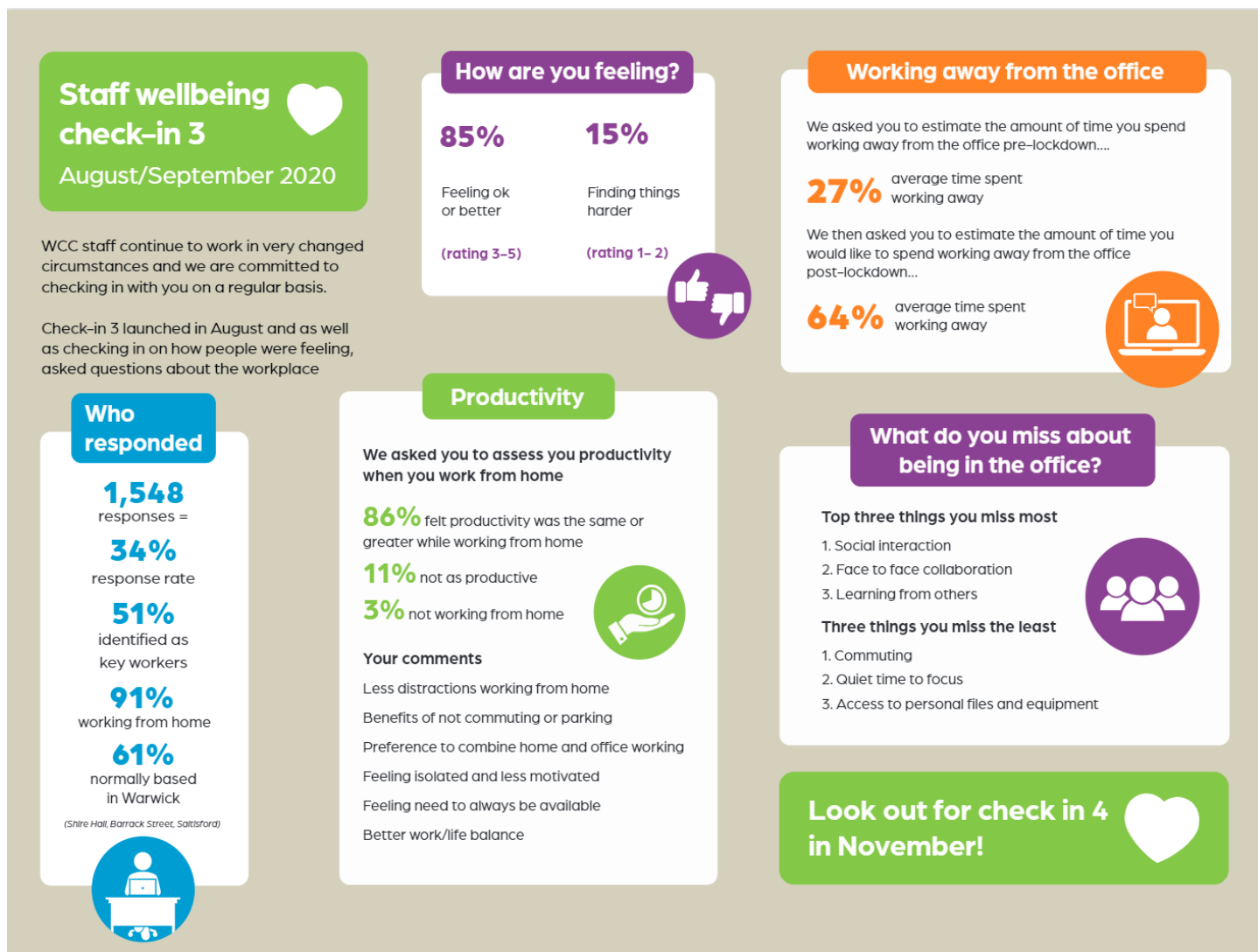
Your suggested actions for recovery

- Prioritise those finding it difficult to work from home to return to the office safely for part of the week
- Consider making flexible working more permanent and support staff to work safely from home
- Make buildings safe to work in and rationalise our property portfolio
- Build on innovation that is underway
- Prioritise services for vulnerable and reinstate home visits safely

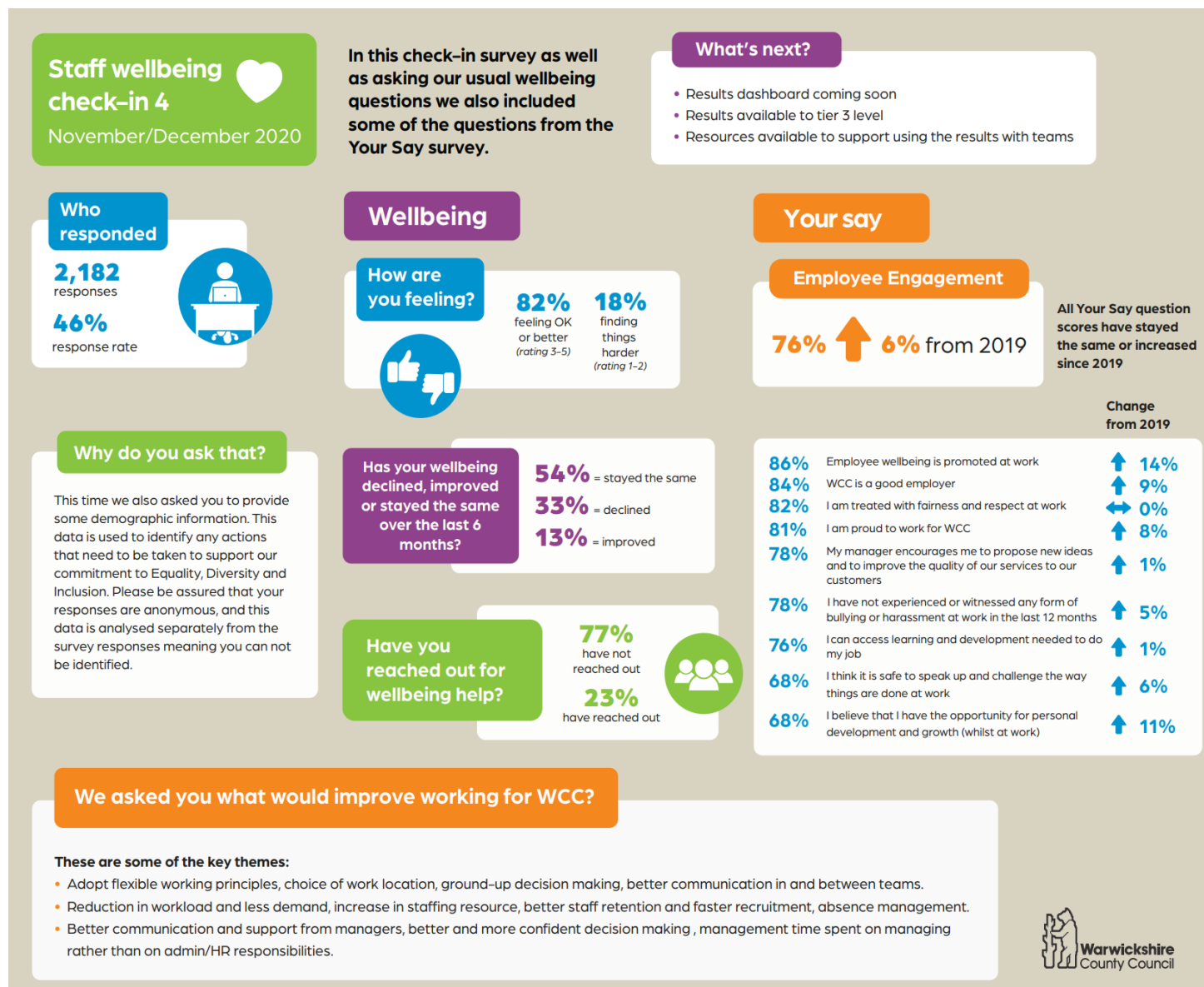
Look out for
check-in 3 which
will help us with our
workplace redesign



Appendix 3



Appendix 4



Staff and Pensions Committee

Communications Policy

8 March 2021

Recommendation(s)

1. The Staff and Pensions Committee are asked to review and approve the updated Communications Policy.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the policy for the Pension Fund's communication policy to all its stakeholders.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 None

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 None

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Pension Fund is required to have a communications policy relating to all stakeholders
- 4.2 The policy has been updated to reflect the anticipated use of a member self-service platform, resulting in more digital communications being sent to members. This will replace paper-based communications where applicable.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 None

Appendices

1. Communications Policy

Background Papers

None

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	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Neil Buxton, Liz Firmstone, Victoria Jenks, Chris Norton	neilbuxton@warwickshire.gov.uk, lizfirmstone@warwickshire.gov.uk, vickyjenks@warwickshire.gov.uk, chrisnorton@warwickshire.gov.uk
Assistant Director	Andrew Felton	Andrewfelton@warwickshire.gov.uk
Lead Director	Strategic Director for Resources	Robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk
Lead Member	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property	Peterbutlin@warwickshire.gov.uk

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): None

Other members: Cllrs Kaur & Gifford

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

WARWICKSHIRE

pension fund



Communications Policy Statement

This statement has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 61 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations 2013 by Warwickshire Pension Fund (the 'fund'). It sets out its communications approach with scheme members, employers, and other interested stakeholders.

Any enquiries in relation to this policy statement should be made to:

Warwickshire Pension Fund

Shire Hall

Warwick

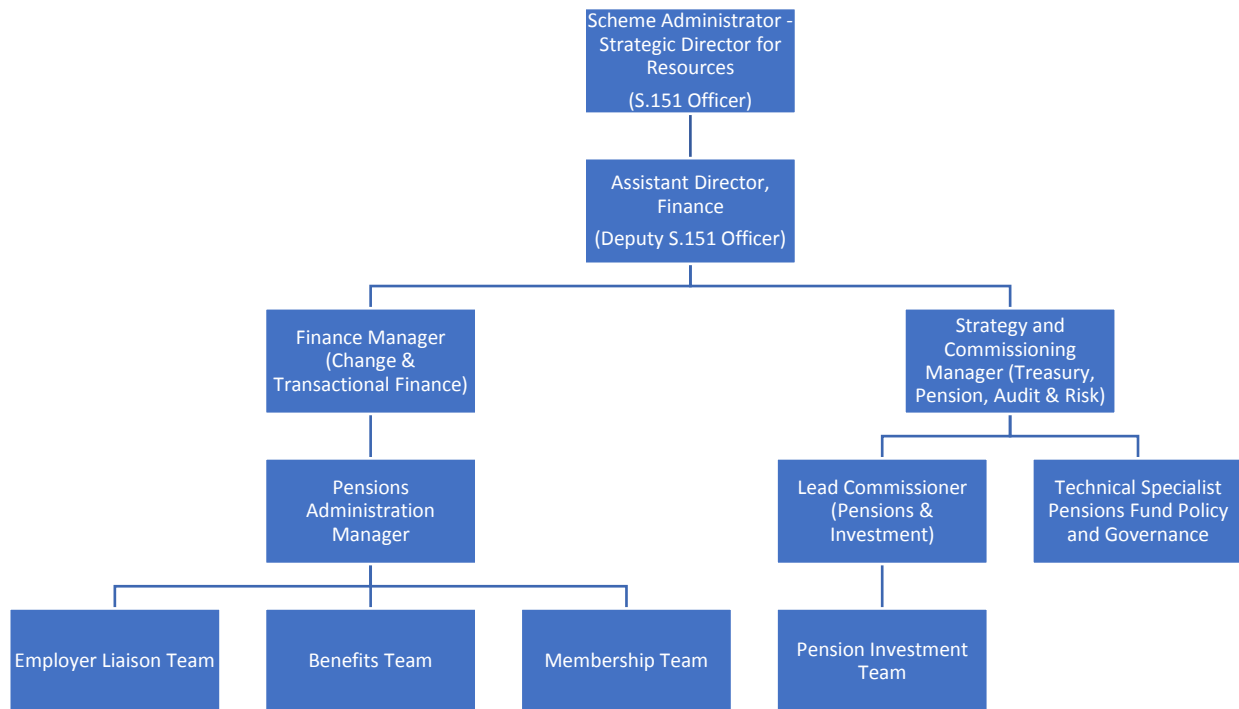
CV34 4RL

pensions@warwickshire.gov.uk

1. Introduction

The Fund deals with approximately 196 employers and just over 50,000 members. The Fund's main aim is to provide accurate pensions effectively and in a timely manner, whilst delivering a customer-focused service. Our communications play a key role in achieving this.

2. The Pensions Administration Management Team



- The Scheme Administrator (s 151 officer) is responsible for the Pensions Administration Team (PAS) and the Pension Investment Team. The Pensions Administration Management Team meets on a weekly basis to discuss items in relation to the running of the team and regulation changes. It comprises the Pensions Administration Manager and Team Leaders. Any items raised from such meetings can be escalated to the Finance Service Manager and Strategy and Commissioning Manager.
- The PAS are responsible for communications to scheme employers and members.
- The PAS work to maintain a thorough knowledge of the regulations to keep the confidence of its members. The PAS should always be the first-place members turn to for LGPS pension information during their working life and in retirement.
- The fund also takes part in several national groups, with the aim of sharing best communication practices.
- The Joint Communications Group allows the fund to work with other Local Government Authorities, giving group members the chance to share communication resources and develop joint projects, such as newsletters and member guides. The fund is also part of the Local Government Pensions Committee (LGPC), which publishes national communication material.

3. Principles of Communication

The Fund has five key principles that support all its communications. We are committed to ensuring that:

- Communication is factual and presented in plain language

- Communication is designed in a manner appropriate to its audience
- Communication involves dialogue with others
- Communication uses the developments and improvements in new technology
- Communication is planned, co-ordinated and evaluated

The Fund will make every effort to make communication materials available in large print, Braille, audio tape and different languages on request.

The PAS are committed to responding quickly to member requests for information, whether by face-to-face, email or letter. Information is given within set internal and regulatory timescales taking into consideration The Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2013 and other overriding legislation.

Face to face meetings have been suspended during the pandemic and have been replaced with telephone and electronic meetings.

The turnaround time for dealing with all requests from both employers and members is normally ten days.

When a request for information has been made, an acknowledgement receipt will be given. If it is going to take longer than ten days to provide the information, members will be told when they are likely to receive it.

4. Who are the Fund's Key Stakeholders?

The Fund has a wide range of stakeholders who have different communication needs. The key stakeholders are:

- Active Scheme members
- Deferred Scheme members
- Scheme pensioners and their dependents
- New employees
- Employees who are not Scheme members
- Scheme employers
- Pension Actuaries
- Border to Coast Pension Partnership
- Custodians
- Investment Advisers
- Government Departments

Section 6 sets out the information and specific communications that are provided to these different stakeholders.

5. How Does the Fund Communicate?

- Scheme Literature

The Fund produces and updates a wide range of literature including brochures, guides, and information sheets. PDF documents can be found on our website with paper copies being provided upon request.

It is proposed in 2021, that the Fund will initiate a project to introduce a secure online portal, where members can access their pension scheme records, update their details, and run benefit estimates. This will be known as Member Self Service (MSS).

- Drop in service

For those members who prefer 'face to face' communication, the Fund's office is centrally situated in Warwick and easily accessible. Appointments can be made to discuss specific pension options or problems but generally this is not necessary as a member of the team is usually available. In exceptional circumstances, members of the team are available for home visits or to other council or scheme employer offices in Warwickshire. Note: These are currently suspended due to coronavirus restrictions.

- Telephone

Fund communications list a telephone number for the team member dealing with the request and other contact numbers for enquires can be found on our website.

- Website

The Fund has a website: www.warwickshirepensionfund.org

The site is available for all and can be used as a main source of information and contains on-line forms for members to complete.

The website has been adapted to make sure it is accessible to view on all forms of electronic device and has been developed in line with accessibility standards. Our compliance statement is held on the website.

- Email and Post

For general communications, the Fund has an email account and postal address. These are listed on page 2.

Newsletters

The Fund produces regular newsletters to keep members informed of changes to pension legislation, and the latest information about the service. These are available in electronic format on the Fund's website and are currently sent to members as either a paper copy or pdf.

Ragged Staff is the Fund's newsletter for retired members and provides updates on relevant changes in legislation, topical news, and members' articles.

Deferred members also receive a newsletter, again providing updates on relevant changes in legislation, and reminding members to keep the Fund notified of changes in personal circumstances and address.

Employers receive updates regarding changes to pension legislation, training, and employer events via email.

Once MSS has been launched member publications will be shared via this digital platform.

- Training

The fund seeks to continually improve the ability of staff to communicate effectively and to understand the importance of good communication. Both general and pension-specific training is provided to all staff as part of the fund's commitment to staff

development. This includes the Public Sector Pension Scheme modules on the Pensions Regulators online e-portal. The fund conducts performance appraisals for its entire staff.

- **Intranet and E-Mail**
Each member of staff has access to e-mail and the storage drive which contains electronic copies of many of the Key documents, manuals, minutes, and circulars.
- **Local Authority Pensions Web**
All senior members of the pension's team have access to the Local Authority Pensions Web where information can be exchanged with other Local Authority Pension colleagues.

6. Communications Specifically for Members

- **New Scheme Members Scheme Booklet**
The Fund produces an information booklet on the Local Government Pension Scheme which is available on our website and links can be found on the starter packs which are sent out when members join.
- **Active Members Certificate of Membership**
When we become aware of a member joining the Fund, they will get a Certificate of Membership detailing the information recorded on the Pension Administration System about them, such as date they joined the Scheme and if they have transferred service into the Fund from elsewhere.
- **Annual Benefit Statement**
An Annual Benefit Statement is sent direct to the home address of all active and deferred members. When MSS is in place, these will be sent electronically. If a member does not have access to a computer, they will have the option to receive a paper copy. The Statements include various pension details including the current value of benefits within the scheme. The format of the statements is continually being developed to provide members with the information they require in a clear and concise manner. The notes that accompany the statements have the crystal mark awarded by the Plain English campaign.
- **Retired Members Payslips**
Every retired member and/or their dependents will receive a P60 each year normally at the end of April.
Every month, members will receive an email alert from Warwickshire County Council payroll with a link to view their payslip or receive a paper copy. New members have the option to provide an email address when returning their option forms for retirement and existing members can email us to request to be signed up for e-payslips.
- **Annual Pension Increase**
Retired members will receive a pension increase notification each year to inform them of the inflation increase on their pension.
Validation - Retired Members Living Abroad - The fund will, when appropriate, undertake to establish the continued existence of pensioner members living abroadP60

notification Each member receiving a pension will have a P60 issued each year by the statutory deadline of 31 May.

7. Communications Specifically for Employers and Stakeholders

- **Presentations and Courses**
The Fund delivers standard or tailored presentations on a range of subjects for employers and their staff. These presentations may be provided at the request of Employers or may be instigated by the fund. Where possible these will be hosted virtually.
- **Annual Report, Accounts and Meeting**
The aim of the Annual Report is to highlight the important issues affecting the Fund over the previous twelve months, along detail on investments and administration performance. The Report and Accounts are summarised at the Annual Meeting held in November. Employers are invited to the Annual Meeting of the Fund.
The Fund holds a further meeting in November / December for all employers to attend. This is aimed at scheme employers who are responsible for administering the LGPS. The meeting is tailored to their needs with the aim of resolving queries they may have and to keep them up to date with any developments.
From time to time the Fund will host meetings for specific groups of employers, for example, academies, which are significant proportion of scheme employers. These meetings will deal with specific areas affecting that sector.
Where possible these will be hosted virtually.
- **Promotional Campaigns**
Occasionally the Fund produces dedicated marketing literature that is sent to those who choose not to join or opt to leave the Scheme. This literature promotes the benefits of having an occupational pension and gives an option to join the Scheme.
- **Corporate Induction Courses**
Officers of the fund are invited to attend or to contribute to Corporate Inductions (including e-learning) for prospective members.
- **Employers' Guide**
A link to the LGPS regulations and guidance page is available on our website. This includes the up-to-date versions of guides I.e., for HR and Payroll.
- **The Funds Administration Strategy** is published on the website and available to all employers, detailing the processes, procedures and forms required to effectively discharge their pension administration responsibilities.
- **Employers Bulletin**
A technical newsletter/bulletin is periodically sent out to all employers. It aims to inform employers on common problems, issues, and regulatory changes. The bulletin is also used to inform employers of consultations about policy and regulations that have been issued.
- **Staff & Pension Committee/ Pensions Fund Investment Sub Committee/Pension Board**

An ongoing training programme is in place for members and officers to ensure that decision making is on an informed basis.

- Knowledge building and training is provided via the fund's officers, advisors, and external training courses.
- The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations.
- Any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the Scheme, and.
- Requirements imposed by The Pensions Regulator in relation to the Scheme and to ensure the effective governance and administration of the Scheme.
- The Pension Board consists of an equal number of employee and employee representatives. Training forms part of the Pensions Board meeting

8. Communication with Other Bodies

- **Fund Managers**
The fund will liaise with fund managers including through direct meetings from time to time.
- **Border to Coast**
The fund liaises with the Border to Coast Pension Partnership – providing input into the development and management of new funds.
- **Custodians**
The fund has arrangements in place to communicate with BNYM, its custodian.
- **Advisers**
The fund is in regular contact with its investment advisers and its independent financial advisers.
- **Government Departments**
The Fund communicates with Government departments on proposals for change to the scheme and about providing information under disclosure regulations.
- **Trade Unions**
The Fund will communicate with Trade Unions where appropriate, for example in supporting continued access to the Local Government Pension Scheme.
- **Actuaries**
The Fund performs an Actuarial Valuation every three years as required by the Regulations. The actuary deals with valuations and information and advice on a range of issues affecting the Fund, such as new employers, bulk transfers, and regulatory changes.
- **Press & Media**
The Fund in conjunction with the Council's communications staff will respond to and engage with the press and other media organisations to ensure clarity of facts and fair representation.
- **Shrewsbury Regional Pension Officer's Group (SPOG)**
The Shropshire County Pension Fund (SCPF) hosts the Shrewsbury Pension Officers Group which meets on a quarterly basis. The group, comprised of several local authority funds, discuss technical queries and legislation matters of common interest.

- Software provider group
Members of the team attend user group meetings with the pensions administration software provider, to make sure the administration system can deal with regulation changes when they happen, and to discuss how the system is used on a day-to-day basis
- Compliments, Complaints and Comments
Compliments and complaints are recorded. The fund aims to learn from the feedback received and make improvements to the service provided.
- Member satisfaction survey
Surveys will be issued to members periodically with various correspondences, including retirements and benefit quotes. Surveys will also be published to the website and via email. This allows the fund to evaluate the service provided. Survey responses will be collated and reviewed at regular intervals when running a satisfaction exercise.
- Employer satisfaction survey
A survey will be given to employers, periodically to allow the fund to review the service and methods of communication provided to employers. The responses will be collated and used to identify any employer requirements and possible areas for improvement
- Breaches of the Law
The Breaches Policy and a summary of breaches are available on our website.
- Investments
The fund publishes an investment strategy statement and funding strategy statement. These are available on the website and form a part of the Annual Report.
- Data Protection
To protect personal information held in relation to Scheme members, the Fund is registered under the Data Protection Act 2018, as part of Warwickshire County Council. The Fund is fully compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) introduced in May 2018.
- Disclosure
The Fund may, if necessary, pass certain details to a third party, if the third party is carrying out an administrative function of the Fund, for example, the Fund's Actuary. Pensions staff also receive regular training on data protection issues.

9. Dealing with freedom of information requests

- The Freedom of Information Act (FOI) means that members of the public and organisations have rights of access to information held by public bodies. Requests for information under the *Freedom of Information Act or similar legislation should be sent to:* inforights@warwickshire.gov.uk

10. National Fraud Initiative

- The Fund participates in the National Fraud Initiative exercise by passing information about pensions in payment on to the Audit Commission. The information is matched to

national databases to help prevent and detect fraud. The Fund's participation in this exercise is mandatory.

11. Annex: Publications and Communications Summary

Fund Publications and Communications

Fund Publications and Communications

Communication Document	When issued	Available to	Format	Reason when reviewed
Guides and Booklets	Available	All	Online	Regulation changes
Scheme leaflets	Available	All	Online	Regulation changes / periodical review / new leaflets introduced
Benefit statements	Annually	Active / Deferred members	Email / Paper (with a view to moving online through MSS)	Annually
Poster campaigns E.g. Death benefits, 50/ 50, Encouraging new members.	Occasional / When requested	All	Online Poster	Updates
Members newsletters	As required	Active / Deferred / Retired members	Online / Paper (with a view to moving online through MSS)	Annually / regulation changes
Pension consultations	When required	Active / Deferred members	Face to face (suspended) / Telephone	Updates
Serious health consultations	When required	Active / Deferred members	Face to face / home visit (suspended)	Updates

Presentations / Training / Courses	When required / requested	All	Presentation (online via MS Teams / face to face)	Updates
Service statements	When member joins	Active members	Online / Paper (with a view to moving online through MSS)	Updates
Website	Available	All stakeholders		Updates
Annual meeting	Annually in November	Employers	Presentations	Annually
Employer Forum	Annually November / December	Employers	Presentations	Annually
Annual report	Annually	All	Online	Annually
Correspondence	Available (within office hours)	All	Email / Paper	Updates
Pension Advice slip	Monthly	Retired members	Online / Paper	Monthly (issued by Payroll Services)
P60	Annually	Retired members	Online / Paper	Annually (issued by Payroll Services)
Pensions Increase	Annually	Retired members	Online / Paper	Annually (issued by Payroll Services)

Age 100 pensioners	As required	Retired members	Birthday card	As required
Pensioners living abroad - Proof of Life Certificate	Annually	Retired members	Paper / Email	Annually
Abridged Reports and Accounts	Annually	All	Online	Annually
Valuation report	Every 3 years	Employing authorities	Online / Annual meeting	Every 3 years

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Staff and Pensions Committee

Pensions Administration Activity and Performance update

8 March 2021

Recommendation(s)

1. Staff and Pensions Committee note this report.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report updates the Committee on the key developments affecting pensions administration and the performance of the Pensions Administration Service (PAS).

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 All financial implications are dealt with in the body of this report.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 None

4. Governance Action Plan

- 4.1 The Governance action plan has been completed, except for the implementation of i-Connect. This project is scheduled to run until June 2021 and is on track.
- 4.2 Going forward items listed on the plan will become part of business as usual for the PAS and investment teams and have been included in the business plan for 2021-22.

5. i-Connect

- 5.1 The first live data transfer has taken place and 66 of our 195 employers have submitted data using the i-Connect system by 31st January 2021. WCC is the payroll provider for 29 different payrolls, all of which went live by 31 January

2021. This means that 11,539 out of 15,072 (77%) of member records are now being updated by i-Connect following phase 2 of the implementation.

- 5.2 Three employers expressed a wish to change the date they will start to use i-connect. We have agreed that all 3 can move from Phase 3 to Phase 4.

Phase	Testing phase commences	Live Date Deadline
Phase 1 (Multiple payroll providers already using i-Connect data portal)	9 October 2020	1 December 2020
Phase 2 (Warwickshire County Council employers)	12 October 2020	31 January 2021
Phase 3 (District and Borough Councils, colleges)	1 March 2021	30 April 2021
Phase 4 (remaining employers - Police and Crime Commissioner support staff, North Warks BC, Warwick DC, Warwick Independent Schools)	23 April 2021	18 June 2021

6. Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) reconciliation

- 6.1 GMP reconciliation is the process used to ensure that the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) records agree with those of the National Insurance Contribution Office (National Insurance Contributions Office part of HMRC). This enables a scheme to consider its data as clean and reliable.
- 6.2 Data comparison work has been undertaken and work continues to update records where this does not match with HMRC data. Most records have been updated; however, the project has taken longer than expected due to having to check the information held on both the pensions administration system and the payroll system for pensioner members.

7. Pensions Increase

- 7.1 Each year pensions in payment are uprated by the Pensions Increase.
- 7.2 This year the increase is 0.5%. Work has begun by both the payroll and pension teams to apply this increase from 12th April 2021.

8. Key Performance indicators (KPIs)

- 8.1 Appendix 1 shows the KPIs for the period 1st May 2020 to 31st January 2021.
- 8.2 KPIs where a payment is to be made are treated as highest priority.

- 8.3 From the chart it shows there are 6 out of 14 targets being consistently achieved. Of the remaining indicators where performance is below target the following explanations and actions are highlighted:
- Letter Detailing Transfer in Quote - we have recently updated the workflow process and for November this has resulted in a dip in performance. This has been investigated and a training need has been identified and remedied from December onwards. It should be noted that the drop in performance only related to 3 cases.
 - Payments of Refunds – the team that deals with the payment of refunds experienced a change in staff for this period, leading to a loss of productive time due to training, and a consequent dip in the number of cases processed within the target timescales. As a result of further training, this has now been remedied.
- 8.4 At the last committee meeting we reported that in September there was an influx of new scheme members, which impacted on the number of cases processed in the target timescales. For context, in the first 3 quarters of 2020/21 the team has processed over 3000 new starters. With the implementation of I-connect most of this work will be automated, freeing up capacity to address those areas of performance that are currently below target.
- 8.5 In October we not only saw an influx of retirements but have also noted a spiked increase in deaths in both April and October, which has impacted on the number of death grant and dependants benefits we are currently processing. This has affected the number of cases processed in the target timescales, relating to information going out to dependants.
- 8.6 The Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) is collecting data on the number of deaths being recorded by pension administrators to understand the impact of COVID19 on the LGPS.
- 8.7 With regard to staff welfare, the team management are paying attention to the possible impact of higher bereavement levels on team members and support is available should this be required.

9. Workloads

- 9.1 The PAS has been monitoring the tasks outstanding and completed by the service since the 1 March 2020. The chart at appendix 2 shows the volume of outstanding work across the service and indicates that the service had 2,859 tasks as at the 31st January 2021. Since March, 45,129 tasks have been completed.
- 9.2 On an average weekly basis, we create between 800-1000 tasks and we are starting to see the team complete slightly more than the volume coming in. As more of the team become fully trained, we expect to continue to see the number of tasks being completed exceeding the number being created. It is

encouraging to see that the chart continues to show that the reduced volume of tasks outstanding is being sustained.

10. Breaches

<i>Table 1: Breaches 2020/21</i>	Red	Amber	Green	No Breach	Total
Number of Employers	0	106	22	65	193

- 10.1 In accordance with the Breaches Policy, any Amber breach results in direct contact with the employer to resolve the issue, and further escalation if required.
- 10.2 With the introduction of i-Connect, we expect to see a reduction in the number of breaches for the submission of monthly contribution returns, which is by far the most common reason for breaches occurring.
- 10.3 We are currently reviewing how breaches are recorded and reported and will be updating the format in which these are presented to the committee at the next meeting.

11. Tracing service

- 11.1 JLT Mercer were appointed as a 3rd party tracing service and commenced work on a project to trace members for whom the service does not have current contact details on 22nd October 2020.
- 11.2 Of the 2,724 records, we have been able to trace 2,443 members (90%), leaving just 281 where no trace has been made. We are currently looking at the profile of these cases, to see what date these benefits would be due and the value; this will help to determine if we should put these through a higher-level trace.
- 11.3 66 members have been returned as deceased, 27 of these were for members in receipt of their pension and checks are being made to ensure any pension payments have been suspended and contact has been made with a next of kin. 39 of these are for members with deferred benefits, so there is no payment being made to these individuals, and again we are making contact with next of kin for these.

12. McCloud project

- 12.1 The McCloud project has now begun and meetings with Aon, who we have appointed as Project Manager, have commenced.
- 12.2 The project charter has been created and identifies the success criteria and risks involved in delivering the project for both the Local Government Pension Scheme and the Firefighter Pension Schemes. The PAS are now planning resources and workstreams, starting with data collection from April.
- 12.3 The Government's response to the unfunded public sector schemes consultation, which covers firefighter pension schemes, was released on 4th February. The government has indicated that it will follow the deferred choice underpin option. This means that members will decide whether to take benefits based on either the legacy (final salary) scheme or reformed (CARE) scheme for the remedy period, 1st April 2015 to 31 March 2022, or date of leaving, only when they leave the pension scheme.
- 12.4 The response from the Government, for the Local Government Pension Scheme is expected imminently and this will help to determine the timescales involved for the implementation of changes to the regulations.
- 12.5 It is suggested that the regulations will be implemented on 1st April 2022, but administrators will have up to 31st October 2023, to implement the changes.

13. Exit Payment update

- 13.1 The Restriction of Public Sector Exit Payments Regulations 2020 ("the regulations") impose a cap of £95,000 on the payments which specified public sector exits.
- 13.2 LLG (Lawyers in Local Government) and ALACE (the Association of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers) have been given permission to bring a judicial review challenge over the Exit Payment Cap Regulations. This is to be heard in March 2021.
- 13.3 Several "procedural flaws" in bringing the regulations forward and also substantive issues as to the basis on which the regulations had been made have been identified, which also affect the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local government's (MHCLG) draft pension regulations on which consultation outcomes have not yet concluded.
- 13.4 This will mean further delays to the change in the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013, which were expected at the beginning of 2021.

14. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

None

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

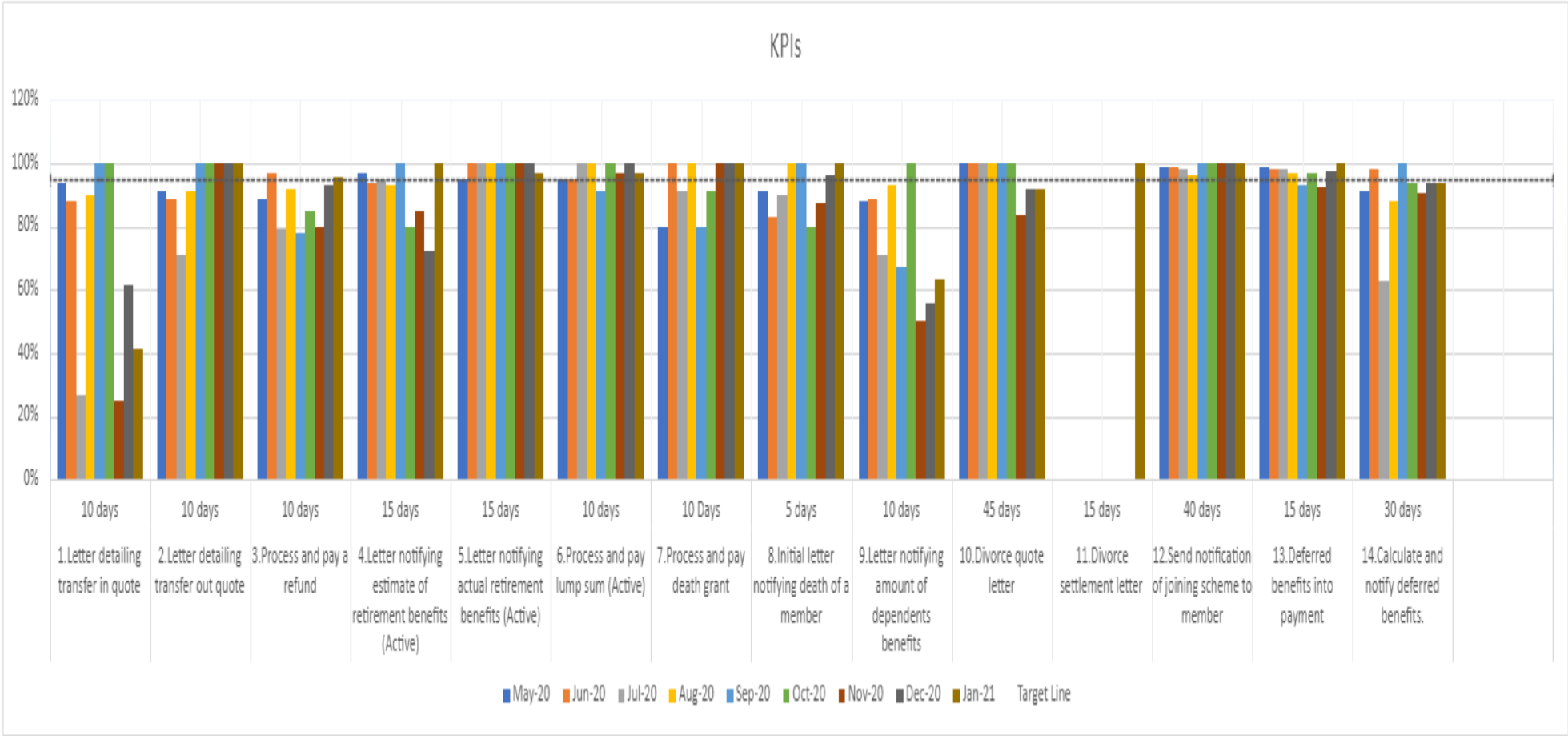
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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

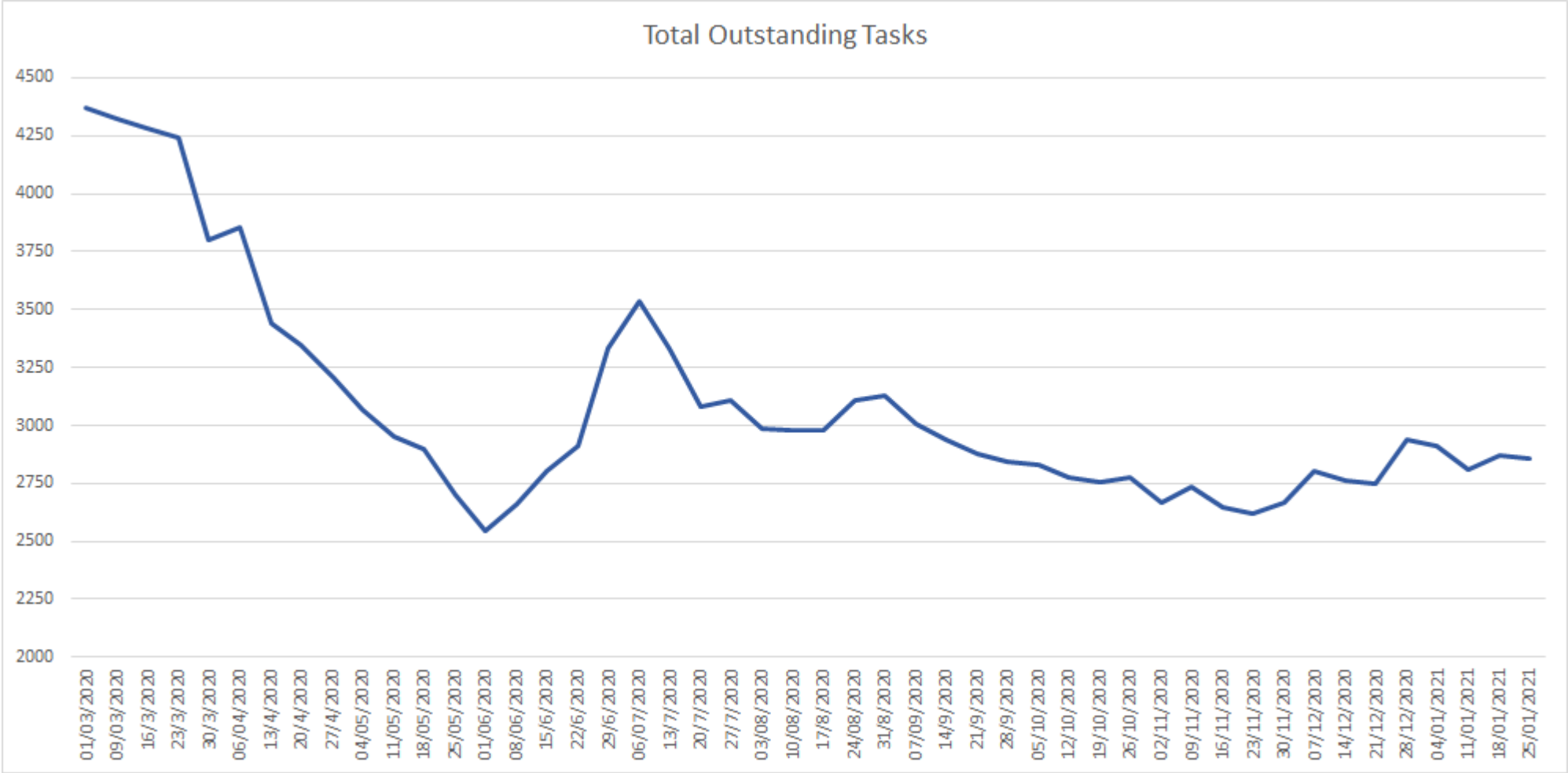
Local Member(s): None

Other members: Councillors Kaur & Gifford

Appendix 1



Appendix 2



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Staff and Pensions Committee

Employers joining and Leaving Warwickshire Pension Fund

8 March 2021

Recommendation(s)

1. That the Staff and Pensions Committee delegates authority to the Strategic Director for Resources to approve applications from the listed employers subject to the applications meeting the criteria:
2. New Academies
 - Kingsway Primary (Part of Community Academy Trust) 1/120/21
 - Lillington School (Finham Park Multi Academy Trust) starts 1/1/2021
 - Trinity School (part of Our Lady of Lourdes MAT starts) 1/1/2021
 - All Saints Bedworth school (part of Coventry Diocese MAT) start date 1/2/2021
3. New Employers
 - Sure Maintenance 21/12/2020
 - Caterlink start 1/1/2021
 - Baileys Catering (Shottery) 1/1/2021

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Pension Fund must accept applications from scheduled bodies where the requirements of the regulations are met.
- 1.2 An academy is automatically a Scheme Employer on the basis that it meets the criteria of paragraph 20 of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 i.e. it is a 'scheduled body'.
- 1.3 When submitting an application for membership each academy will be required to confirm:
 - That it has internal authority to be admitted to the Pension Fund.
 - The number of members to join the Pension Fund.
 - That the academy will comply with the relevant LGPS Regulations.
- 1.4 The Pension Fund must accept an application from an applicant body made under paragraph 1(d) of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 where that body has undertaken to comply with the Regulations.

- 1.5 North Warwickshire Borough Council are the letting authority for the contract with Sure Maintenance, Coventry Diocese School are the letting authority for Caterlink and Shottery Primary school are the letting authority for Baileys Caterings.
- 1.6 All three have made an application on the basis that they meet the criteria of paragraph 1(d) of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 i.e. it is a 'transferee body'.
- 1.7 The Applicant Bodies has a contract with another Scheme Employer within the Pension Fund and has LGPS admission in respect of this contract.
- 1.8 The Applicant Bodies will be carrying out a function or service on behalf of the Scheme Employer under a contract.
- 1.9 The Applicant Bodies has confirmed that the Scheme Employer will be party to the admission agreement.
- 1.10 The Applicant Body has undertaken to comply with the relevant LGPS Regulations.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 New entrants to the scheme will be required to cover their own costs and the actuarial process will ensure that employer contributions are appropriate to ensure this is the case.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 None

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 Warwickshire Pension Fund, Admissions and Terminations Policy 2020

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 At the moment the dates for the academies listed are provisional, next steps will be decided once the admission date is confirmed.
- 5.2 The Pension Fund must accept an application from an applicant body made under paragraph 1(d) of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 where that body has undertaken to comply with the Regulations

- 5.3 Provided that the Committee is satisfied that the requirements of the regulations are met, the application should be granted.
- 5.4 In the event that the application is accepted, arrangements will be made for the Applicant Body to enter into an admission agreement with the Pension Fund. Should admission commence prior to any admission agreement being completed, the Applicant Body has agreed to be bound by the terms of the standard form admission agreement appended to the Pension Fund's Admissions and Termination Policy

Background Papers

1. Warwickshire Pension Fund, Admissions and Terminations Policy 2020

	Name	Contact Information
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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): None

Other members: Cllrs Kaur & Gifford

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