

Staff and Pensions Committee

Date: Monday 13 December 2021
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: Committee Room 2, Shire Hall

Membership

Councillor Andy Jenns (Chair)
Councillor Bill Gifford (Vice-Chair)
Councillor John Horner
Councillor Christopher Kettle
Councillor Sarah Millar
Councillor Jill Simpson-Vince

Items on the agenda: -

1. **General**
 - (1) **Apologies**
 - (2) **Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**
 - (3) **Minutes of Previous Meetings** 5 - 16
To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 13 September 2021 and 2 November 2021.
2. **Proposal to Adopt E-Payslips for LGPS Pensioners** 17 - 20
3. **Pensions Administration Activity and Performance Update** 21 - 30
4. **Regulatory and Policy Update** 31 - 34
5. **Employers Entering and Leaving the Warwickshire Pension Fund** 35 - 38
6. **Review of the Minutes of the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Local Pension Board Meeting of 9 June 2021** 39 - 44

7. Reports Containing Exempt or Confidential Information

To consider passing the following resolution:

‘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 3 and paragraph 4 of Schedule 12A of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.’

8. Exempt Minutes of the Previous Meetings

45 - 48

To confirm the exempt minutes of the meetings held on 13 September 2021 and 2 November 2021.

Monica Fogarty
Chief Executive
Warwickshire County Council
Shire Hall, Warwick

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Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Members are required to register their disclosable pecuniary interests within 28 days of their election of appointment to the Council. Any changes to matters registered or new matters that require to be registered must be notified to the Monitoring Officer as soon as practicable after they arise.

A member attending a meeting where a matter arises in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest must (unless they have a dispensation):

- Declare the interest if they have not already registered it
- Not participate in any discussion or vote
- 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 relevant to the agenda 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>

COVID-19 Pandemic

Any member or officer of the Council or any person attending this meeting must inform Democratic Services if within a week of the meeting they discover they have COVID-19 or have been in close proximity to anyone found to have COVID-19.

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Staff and Pensions Committee

Monday 13 September 2021

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Bill Gifford (Vice-Chair)
Councillor John Horner
Councillor Kam Kaur
Councillor Christopher Kettle
Councillor Sarah Millar
Councillor Jill Simpson-Vince

Officers

Barnaby Briggs, Deputy 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
Isabelle Moorhouse, Democratic Services Officer
Chris Norton, Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Treasury, Pension, Audit & Risk)
Keira Rounsley, Senior EDI Practitioner
Kate Sullivan, Lead Commissioner - Culture, Leadership and Performance
Gary Summerfield, Health, Safety & Wellbeing Technical Specialist

1. General

The Chair updated the committee on Councillor Jenns' recovery.

(1) Apologies

Councillor Andy Jenns was substituted by Councillor Kam Kaur

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None

(3) Minutes of previous meeting

Councillor Christopher Kettle notes that it should say 'officers' instead of 'officer' on page one.

The rest of the minutes were approved as a true and correct record.

2. Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report 2020/21

Barnaby Briggs (Assistant Chief Fire Officer) informed the Committee that the report covered the Covid-19 pandemic. He noted that the incident mentioned in 3.4.2 was an ongoing investigation in another Brigade but there was no suggestion of equipment failure or other fault.

In relation to Warwickshire, the HSE (Health and Safety Executive) and HMICFRS (HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services) had both been complementary and had praised the WFRS Covid-19 working arrangements. Barnaby Briggs noted that the two RIDDORs (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations) in 8.1 of the report, involved breathing apparatus used in controlled training environments, which is more continuously used than the equipment used in conventional operational settings so faults identified in the training environment help to provide a warning of what might happen in operational settings. Barnaby Briggs praised the work of Occupational Health (who had continued with the face to face and medical special screening, that they are required to do by law, to keep the fire service going) and Health and Safety teams over the past year.

The Chair praised the work of the fire service following the fire in Leamington.

Councillor Kettle raised the issue of trying not to contaminate water courses when trying to put out a fire in high-risk areas, for example the Ettington Recycling Centre fire.

Barnaby Briggs confirmed that the post fire contamination mentioned in the report was smoke absorbed by the fire fighter's clothes but that contamination from firefighting activities was always a concern. For significant fires (like Ettington), a discussion is normally held with Public Health England (for air contaminants) and the Environment Agency (for water course contaminants) to decide the best course of action.

The Chair noted the complexity of issues that firefighters deal with, especially in difficult locations.

Resolved

That the Staff and Pensions Committee notes and comments upon the report.

3. Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report 2020-21

Keira Rounsley (Senior EDI Practitioner) outlined the purpose of the report and confirmed that the decisions requested related to the publication of the annual equality information and the gender pay gap to meet statutory government requirements. This report also included the new style Annual Review for EDI

The mean and median gender pay-gaps reduced since last year and are lower than the national average for gender pay-gap figures including the public sector. Ethnicity pay-gap figures also slightly decreased since last year but both were in negative measure which indicated the extent which Black, Asian, and minority ethnic employees earn on average more than their white British or not sated colleagues. This report for the first time, also reported on the Council's disability pay-gap figures where the mean reduced and median increased because there was a less even split of employees with and without a declared disability across all the pay band quartiles, i.e. there were more employees with a declared disability in the lower quartiles than the upper quartiles.

Employee diversity increased across all groups but to increase this further it will be a priority for the 'Our People Strategy' and for the revamped Council equality diversity and inclusion group to consider. Staff network groups had been better attended because of homeworking and had been able to contribute to this area of work. Keira Rounsley commented that the pandemic caused a shift in prioritising EDI nationally.

Paragraph 3.3 of the report set out EDI related information around engagement taken from the check-in surveys. 83% of survey participants felt that Warwickshire County Council valued EDI, which is an increase of 2% compared to the previous year.

In response to Councillor Simpson-Vince, Keira Rounsley stated that the benchmark figures came from comparing with other authorities; the low national benchmark showed how well the Council was doing in comparison. Following a supplementary from Councillor John Horner, Keira Rounsley confirmed that the national benchmark included all types of local authority including the London boroughs. Councillor Kaur suggested also using government benchmarks as well as local authority.

Resolved

That the Staff & Pensions Committee:

1. Approves the publication on the Council's website of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Annual Review 2020/2021 at Appendix A, to meet the statutory requirement to publish annually equality information relating to employees, including gender pay gap information.
2. Approves the publication on the Government's gender pay gap website of the Council's gender pay gap figures, based on 31 March 2021, as required by the gender pay gap regulations. Appendix B outlines what the Council is required to publish.
3. Notes the performance information in relation to EDI during 2020/2021 and endorses our targets outlined at 3.5, in recognition that continued improvement will take time.
4. Notes the work in our approach to EDI and supports the priority actions for 2021/2022 at 2.7.

4. Sustainable and Resilient Workforce Annual Review 2020/21

Kate Sullivan (Lead Commissioner - Culture, Leadership and Performance) stated that this was a new way to report on health and sickness absence in Warwickshire County Council's workforce and that it replaces the traditional style review presented previously. The report presents to the Committee a focussed annual review, in the new format, which highlights the achievements over the last 12 months, next year's priorities, and the workforce performance data. The new approach supports a focus on continual development, as well as our employer value proposition and ongoing drive around recruitment and retention.

In terms of the headlines from the review, Kate Sullivan advised that absences had significantly reduced from 10.9 days per FTE (full-time equivalent) to 7.45 days in 2020/21 which overachieved against last year's target of a 7% reduction; this was the lowest level in a decade and below the public sector and other local authorities' comparatives for the first time in five years. Regular check-ins had been undertaken with staff which helped track how people were feeling and tailor any support they needed. At least 80% of staff were managing well and 86% of staff felt that wellbeing was being promoted at work. Sustainable and resilient workforce groups had been set up with managers and professionals driving actions to maximise wellness at work. Homeworking and increased hygiene had also contributed to the sickness absence reductions.

Absence caused by stress and mental health reasons made up over 1/3 of absences and this will remain the focus for 2021/22 along with long-term absences which made up 70%. Mental health

absences increased in terms of percentage but reduced in terms of FTE from 3.172 days to 2.47. Two thirds of staff took no absent days in the last 12 months which was an increase from 50% the previous year. Cancer related sickness absence has seen an increase over the last 12 months. Covid-19 related absences did not significantly impact the absence reasons overall however there may be long-term mental health affects which we are yet to see.

Councillor Kam Kaur praised the report but noted that it took a pandemic to reduce absences in the authority. She stated that eight days per FTE was a good benchmark and that the People Directorate would benefit focus and extra support due to their higher absence rates.

In response to Councillor Sarah Millar, Kate Sullivan stated that a paper had been brought to December's Staff and Pensions meeting which focused on agile working. This offer was based on trusting people to work from home effectively; people work at their best in different ways so some may work better at home or the office or a mixture of both. The offer for staff to choose where they wanted to work remained during the pandemic as staff could not come into the office normally. Workforce pilots were ongoing where specific teams would work in a different way, and this will inform our future use of office space and our property assets.

In response to Councillor Jill Simpson-Vince, Kate Sullivan stated that it was hard to collect data showing that absence went down because staff were not commuting but this would be attempted. Following a supplementary from Councillor Millar, Kate Sullivan confirmed that we are not yet sure of the long-term mental health implications of Covid-19, but this would become a priority for consideration in 2021/22. She added that we do expect to absences start to rise as people got out more.

In response to a question from Councillor Kettle, Kate Sullivan stated that the People Directorate likely had more face-to-face contact with the public compared to the Communities Directorate. The cohort of the Communities Directorate was also different to the previous year due to changes in organisational structure, so this made it difficult to compare like for like information from the previous year.

In response to Councillor Millar, Kate Sullivan said that they do not report on schools because they operate independently from the County Council.

The Chair commented that the reduction in absences demonstrated that the Council had been prepared for the pandemic in so far as the fact that staff had access to IT equipment which enabled them to work from home when the need arose.

The Committee agreed that the charts provided were useful and they would like to continue to see them as part of this report.

Resolved

That the Staff & Pensions Committee

1. Notes the performance information in relation to the management of employee sickness absence during 2020/21 and endorses an overall target of 8 days per FTE (with a +/- 1 day tolerance).
2. Notes the work in our approach to developing a sustainable and resilient workforce and supports the priority actions for 2021/2022.

3. Considers for future years whether the use of the charts in section 3 are a complementary addition to the Annual Review, or whether the annual review information would be sufficient.

5. Wellbeing and Volunteering Day

Kate Sullivan informed the Committee that the Chief Executive Officer had requested this item be brought forward for consideration. The pilot scheme was intended to improve staff's physical and mental health post-pandemic, the proposal being to offer staff the opportunity to participate in a meaningful activity where they will learn something new or give something back to the community. Kate Sullivan commented that other private sector companies operate similar schemes for example, Jaguar-Landrover's (JLR) scheme. These schemes are aimed at improving self-esteem and resilience and providing a sense of worth as well as local communities benefitting from the activities. The proposed pilot aligns with the Council's corporate goals and supports the Our People Strategy by providing a development opportunity which also supports personal and emotional wellbeing. Kate Sullivan concluded that if the scheme is successful then proposals would be brought forward for a longer-term approach.

In response to Councillor Millar, Kate Sullivan stated that there is a clear connection between community engagement and personal wellbeing so although the two aspects may seem at first glance to be distinct there is the potential for overlap between them. Kate Sullivan confirmed that a six-month review would take place to see if staff are engaging in the scheme and if so, what sorts of activities and initiatives they are undertaking.

Councillor Simpson-Vince noted that most volunteering sectors want people to commit to volunteering for more than one day. Kate Sullivan recognised the point and added that the Council also supported longer term volunteering which it would promote alongside this initiative.

Councillor Millar suggested that one day volunteering every so often as part of a longer-term commitment would be more welcomed by organisations and would potentially be less stressful for individuals.

Councillor Horner suggested that as it was common to get a group of volunteers working on a small project in areas, the Council could form groups to carry out projects cross-county on a specific day. Kate Sullivan stated that they wanted teams to have the flexibility to do this, but they would like different teams to cooperate with each other.

Sarah Duxbury (Assistant Director – Governance & Policy) added that the pilot scheme would work with staff and other organisations to see what could be achieved in support of the Council's organisational priorities. For example, Cabinet had recently approved the Canal Strategy which this initiative could provide opportunities for staff to support. As part of the implementation of the scheme we would look for similar cross Council initiatives which support our priorities.

Councillor Kettle noted that if the pilot scheme went well then, a more structured approach would be needed for the future i.e. staff are assigned jobs. In response to Councillor Kettle, Kate Sullivan confirmed that feedback on the scheme would be sought as part of the pilot review, and this would feed into future proposals in support of wellbeing.

In response to the Chair, Kate Sullivan agreed to contact JLR to see how they carried out their volunteering scheme and whether the Council could learn anything from their experiences.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that schools and other partner/contracting organisations will not be included in the scheme as they are not run by the council.

Resolved

That the Staff & Pensions Committee supports the proposal to offer a Wellbeing and Volunteering Day to all Warwickshire County Council employees (excluding schools) to be taken by 31st March 2022.

6. Health, Safety & Wellbeing Annual Review

Gary Summerfield (Health and Safety Tech Specialist) presented the report on health, safety and wellbeing which followed the same new style as the previous two items. He reiterated that EDI, absence, and safety were reported on jointly to present a holistic picture, to engage better with staff and to make more informed decisions going forward. Gary Summerfield highlighted the main points as set out in Section 2 of the report

In response to Councillor Horner, Gary Summerfield stated that any accidents that happen at home (while the person is working) should be reported to see if there are any steps that the Council as the employer should be taking to ensure safe home working and to identify if there were any trends. Each matter reported would be considered on a case-by-case basis, but the information would feed through to ensure an overview could be maintained and monitored. Gary Summerfield concluded that muscle-skeletal and posture were the main concerns for the year as people worked more hours at home with fewer breaks away from the screen.

In response to Councillor Kettle, Gary Summerfield stated that the Council had a duty of care to its officers so staff would be provided with any equipment that they reasonably need to do their jobs. Andrew Felton (Assistant Director – Finance) added that additional funding was available to members of staff, with the support of their line manager, so that any extra equipment required to do their job could be purchased i.e. display screens.

Resolved

That the Staff & Pensions Committee:

1. Notes the achievements in relation to the services response to the COVID Pandemic. Highlights of these achievements are summarised in the annual review report.
2. Notes the ongoing work to develop a new health, safety and wellbeing delivery framework outlined in the annual review report
3. Notes and supports the development of our technology platforms to improve essential data collection as outlined in the annual review report.
4. Supports the key focus areas for 2021/2022 as set out in the annual review report.
5. Considers for future committee reports whether the need for the summary health & safety performance data is required to be included as part of this cover sheet, or whether the annual review report would be sufficient for the committee.

7. Pensions Administration Activity and Performance

Vicky Jenks (Pensions Admin Delivery Lead) informed the Committee that the I-Connect project was completed with 179 employers and 16,909 employees on the system. Five employers were not on the system yet due to changes in their payroll providers and one struggling with the I-

Connect system. Support was being provided with this. Vicky Jenks thanked the pension, payroll, and ICT teams for their help with the I-Connect roll out.

10 out of 14 KPIs (key performance indicators) were being achieved and the four not achieved were being addressed. Due to the additional work created by the annual benefit statements project some KPIs were missed. Resources have been moved around to clear any work building up.

I-Connect has reduced the number of breaches due to a better engagement and escalation policy with fund employers.

The McCloud Project (age discrimination remedy) is progressing and further information regarding changes to the local government pension scheme is expected towards the end of the year.

Further legislation regarding exit payments is also expected towards the end of the year.

Annual benefit statements have been produced during the summer; however, 189 statements were not produced at the time of the meeting due to employers needing to correct data submitted. However, 99% of statements were sent out on time. Due to the small number not sent out, this was not deemed of material significance and will not need to be reported to the Pensions Regulator.

There was one stage 1 appeal under the internal dispute's resolution procedure (IDRP), but this was not upheld.

The Chair praised the progress on the I-Connect system and the benefits of it. Vicky Jenks stated that they were consulting with the software supplier of I-Connect to initiate member self-service and allow people to view their pension records, update their personal details and run their own estimates.

Resolved:

Staff and Pensions Committee note and comment on this report.

8. Firefighter Pension Schemes Internal Dispute Resolution Policy

Vicky Jenks informed the Committee that in 2016 it was agreed how stage 1 and 2 appeals would be resolved by the Fire Service and this report was to present for approval updates made to the policy.

Resolved:

That the Committee approves the updated version of the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) policy document, which reflects that Stage 1 decisions are to be made by an officer nominated by the Chief Fire Officer and that Stage 2 disputes will be dealt with by the Chief Fire Officer, in relation to:

- Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992 (FPS 1992) Rule H3 (as amended by SI 2013/1392)
- Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2006 (FPS 2006) Part 8 Rule 5
- Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 (FPS 2015) Regulation 163
- Firefighters' Compensation Scheme 2006 (FCS 2006) Part 6 Rule 3

9. Review of the Minutes of the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service Local Pension Board meeting of 9th June 2021

Neil Buxton (Technical Specialist Pensions Fund Policy and Governance) and Chris Norton (Strategy and Commissioning Manager (Treasury, Pension, Audit & Risk)) clarified for the Committee that these minutes were for information sharing and transparency.

Resolved:

That the Staff and Pensions Committee notes the minutes of the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service Local Pension Board meeting.

10. Policy and Regulatory update

Neil Buxton noted that there had been an amendment to the admissions and terminations policy and funding strategy statement (FSS) to reflect changes to legislation that enabled the fund to accept an application to amend employers' contribution rates and more flexibility on how to deal with cessation payments for employers leaving the pension fund. It was noted that there had as a result been a minor amendment to the admissions and terminations policy reflecting that change.

There is an ongoing governance review nationally with the Scheme Advisory Board and the Pension Regulator (TPR) is reviewing its Code of Practice. The consultation by TPR of the code of practice is delayed and the new legislation for this should be implemented in Spring 2022. Officers will, however, start to review policies and practices in anticipation of expected changes from the governance review and code of practice.

There is a consultation on special severance payments (non-statutory payments such as garden leave etc) where the government expects greater transparency and sign-off by local authorities for such payments. Although there is no change to statutory redundancy payments the Government is continuing its review of exit payments.

HM Treasury asked the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) to review the cost management mechanism (where LGPS costs can be shared more equally between employers and members); costs were expected to rise but in fact, the cost of benefits was reduced. Several recommendations were made following this review including a minimum death in service benefit, reduced early retirement factors (that would have meant higher benefits payable on retirement, etc), and possible changes to the contribution rates. These amendments were put on hold because of the potential costs caused by the McCloud settlement. The consultation by GAD has proposed changes to the process of review and includes an amendment to the ceiling and floor before a review takes place from 2% to 3% and greater emphasis on current market conditions. It is unknown if the suggested amendments from the last review (the benefit improvement mentioned above) will be implemented.

Resolved:

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

11. Employers joining and leaving the Warwickshire Pension Fund

Vicky Jenks presented the report and referred to the recommendations.

In response to Councillor Kettle, Vicky Jenks clarified that Sodexo was the firm that applied to the fund and that checks would be made to ensure the firms full company name would be listed on the admission agreement.

Resolved:

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 set out in the Local Government Pensions Scheme Regulations 2013.

1. New Academies

- Brailes C of E Primary School (1st August 2021)

2. New Employers

- Sodexo (1st August 2021)
- Prime Facilities Services (8th June 2021)

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 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Staff and Pensions Committee

Tuesday 2 November 2021

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Andy Jenns (Chair)
Councillor Bill Gifford (Vice-Chair)
Councillor John Horner
Councillor Jill Simpson-Vince

Officers

Sarah Duxbury, Assistant Director – Governance & Policy
Isabelle Moorhouse, Democratic Services Officer
Tina Riley, Senior People Practitioner - Strategic People Improvement
Rich Thomas, Strategy and Commissioning Manager (HROD)

1. General

(1) Apologies

Councillor Sarah Millar
Andrew Felton, Assistant Director - Finance

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

2. 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

3. Pay award for Warwickshire County Council Employees on School Teachers' Pay and Conditions

The recommendation as set out in the report was approved.

The meeting rose at 13:06

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Chair

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Staff and Pensions Committee

Proposal to adopt e-payslips for LGPS pensioners

13 December 2021

Recommendation

That the Staff and Pensions Committee approves the adoption of e-payslips as the default position for pensioners who are members of the Warwickshire Pension Fund.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Until January 2018 the Pensions Administration Service issued monthly paper payslips to all pensioner members of the Warwickshire Pension Fund. Since that date, newly retired members of the scheme have received their payslips by email unless they have chosen to opt out, and so receive a paper payslip while existing pensioners have continued to receive paper payslips by post.
- 1.2 This report sets out the case for moving to e-payslips as the default for all pensioners, while retaining the option for them to opt out. There is no legal requirement to issue paper payslips and the saving from moving to e-payslips are calculated to be £7,430 for every 1000 members per year, who transfer to the new method.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The current cost of issuing paper payslips is £70,000 per year. This is the cost of printing and postage, which are contracted out to a third party.
- 2.2 9,061 paper payslips are sent out each month (108,732 per annum), representing 65.80% of pensioner scheme members. 4,710 pensioners, which represents 34.2%, already receive their payslips by email.
- 2.3 The table below shows the potential saving, depending on the proportion of pensioners who choose to opt out of e-payslips:

	Current	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
*Total no. pension payments	13771	13771	13771	13771	13771
Pensioners receiving e-payslips	4710	5,000	6000	8000	12,000
Pensioners receiving paper payslips	9061	8771	7,771	5,771	1771
Cost of paper payslips per pensioner	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64
Total cost	£70,000	£61,229	£59,681	£44,321	£13,601
	Estimated saving:	£8,771	£10,319	£25,679	£56,399

* this is the total number of payments made, some pensioners have more than one pension in payment, so those with multiple pensions will have only 1 payroll record

3. Environmental Implications

3.1 There is clearly an environmental benefit from reducing the number of paper payslips sent out each month. A reduction in paper payslips would contribute to the Council's target of becoming net zero by 2030. It is estimated that 1 tonne of CO2 is currently produced by sending out paper payslips.

4. Other Considerations

4.1 E-payslips would enable pensioners to receive information about their monthly pension payments more quickly, as they would be issued automatically when the pension payroll is run.

4.2 Using a third party to produce paper payslips is less efficient, as a monthly file has to be submitted to the printing company, who then have to print, envelope and post the payslips. There is an greater data protection risk with files being submitted to a third party. There is also an additional burden on the Council in monitoring that the contractor is issuing accurate and complete information, and managing any errors, including communications with individuals.

4.3 E payslips are sent to members email addresses that they have registered on their payroll account, they can only access the information with a secure password.

4.4 For context. the majority of other LGPS Pension Funds have already adopted e-payslips as their primary method. Most funds will only send out a payslip when the value of the pension payment varies by £5 or more. The majority have made e-payslips the default, but a member can opt out and still request to receive a paper payslip. For funds that haven't yet moved to e-payslips it is on their plans to do so in the near future.

- 4.5 Over time, the number of the Fund’s pensioners who have access to a computer has increased, and a greater proportion are therefore equipped to be able to access their payslips in this way.
- 4.6 The process to sign up to and access e-payslips is relatively simple. Pensioners have to register an email address, and payslips are sent by email. For security purposes the individual can only open the payslip by using their national insurance number.
- 4.7 Historically, one way for the PAS to be notified that a pensioner has died has been for their paper payslip to be returned. However, the DWP’s “Tell Us Once” service now provides an assurance that the PAS is notified on these occasions. As a backstop. The National Fraud Initiative helps the team to identify any other instances when a member has died but where the team has not been informed.

5. Implementation

- 5.1 Should the Committee approve this recommendation, the PAS will arrange a communication campaign to inform those pensioners currently receiving paper payslips that it is our intention in future to issue payslips by email. This campaign will include all of the information they need to register or opt out.
- 5.2 To ensure that pensioners are receiving the most important information about their pensions, the intention would be to continue to issue annual P60 statements in paper form; to send a paper payslip annually when the Pension Increase is paid each April; and also if there is a change to the pension being paid of £5 or more for any other reason.

6. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 6.1 Subject to approval, it is proposed to implement this change from the start of the 2022/23 financial year.

Appendices

- 1. None

Background Papers

- 1. None

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Liz Firmstone, Victoria Jenks	lizfirmstone@warwickshire.gov.uk, vickyjenks@warwickshire.gov.uk

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Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property	peterbutlin@warwickshire.gov.uk

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

Local Member(s): n/a

Other members: n/a

Staff and Pensions Committee

Pensions Administration Activity and Performance Update

13 December 2021

Recommendation

That the Committee note and comment on this report.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report updates the Board 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. Member Self Service

- 4.1 The Pensions Administration Team currently spends 16% of its time responding to queries from members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).
- 4.2 This reduces capacity to deal with more complex or urgent cases, can create workload backlogs, and impacts progress to deliver other significant areas of work, such as ensuring good governance and scheme compliance, and implementation of legislative and regulatory changes.
- 4.3 Member Self-Service (MSS) provides internet and intranet facilities to enable all employees, past and present, to access their individual information, update data, view documents and carry out “What if...” modelling. Functionality includes:

- Full support for multiple devices, such as tablets and mobile phones, delivered in a modern looking, clean, and responsive design;
- Full integration with the existing Pensions Administration system, ensuring the member has access to their current membership data;
- Online benefit calculations for members;
- Online benefit statements;
- General scheme documentation can be uploaded for members to access along with system-generated documents;
- Members can view and update personal details such as address, benefit nominations and bank details. The updates can write straight back to the system database, start a workflow, or notify administrators via e-mail;
- Strict security controls. Members register and manage their own passwords and security questions and answers;
- Option to combine the existing static Warwickshire content website with Member Self-Service; and
- Option for Social media integration.

4.4 The accurate calculation and payment of pensions is dependent on holding accurate member data. MSS improves data quality as members are able to view and update their details 24/7, reducing reliance on the Pensions Administration Team to identify and correct errors.

4.5 The implementation of MSS has begun; the PAS are working with our software suppliers and internal ICT teams to deliver this project. The project has a 'go live' date of 1st April 2022.

4.6 Under disclosure requirements, members have been notified twice of the Fund's intention to move to digital communications. A communication will be sent out to all members via their employers, which will provide instruction on how to create an account on MSS. There will be an option to opt out of receiving digital communications if a member cannot access MSS.

4.7 To coincide with the move to digital communications for members, approval will be sought from Staff and Pensions Committee to cease sending paper payslips to our pensioner members. (See report elsewhere on this agenda). Currently 9,617 pensioners out of approx. 13,771 still receive a paper payslip. This costs the fund over £70K a year.

4.8 Pensioners will be able to view payslips online and for anyone requiring a paper payslip they can contact the pensions team to request one.

5. Key Performance indicators (KPIs)

5.1 Appendix 1 shows the KPIs for the period 01st April 21 to 31st October 21.

5.2 KPIs where a payment is to be made are treated as highest priority.

5.3 From the chart it shows there are 11 out of 14 targets being consistently achieved. For KPI 11 we have had no cases to report on.

5.4 For KPIs that are not being achieved:

- KPI 1 - providing transfer information: we have seen an increase in the number of transfers being requested. This is because we are seeing members wishing to request more than one transfer due to a change in the way people work. Previously employees tended to stay in one job and retire, we are now seeing people move employment more frequently. We have increased support in this area and when the Fire Pensions administration transfers to a new provider with effect from 1st April 2022, this will free up resource which can assist with this work. For reference, in October there were 59 cases processed with 24 completed within the KPI timescale.
- KPI 4 - relating to estimates: unfortunately, due to staff sickness with covid during October we did not fully meet the KPI this month. Of 30 cases 4 were processed outside of time. Once MSS goes live, members will be able to run their own pension estimates.
- KPI 9- relating to the notification of benefits sent out to dependants, there were 11 cases and 1 was processed out of time. This was a case which required extra checking and retrieval of file from storage.

6. Workloads

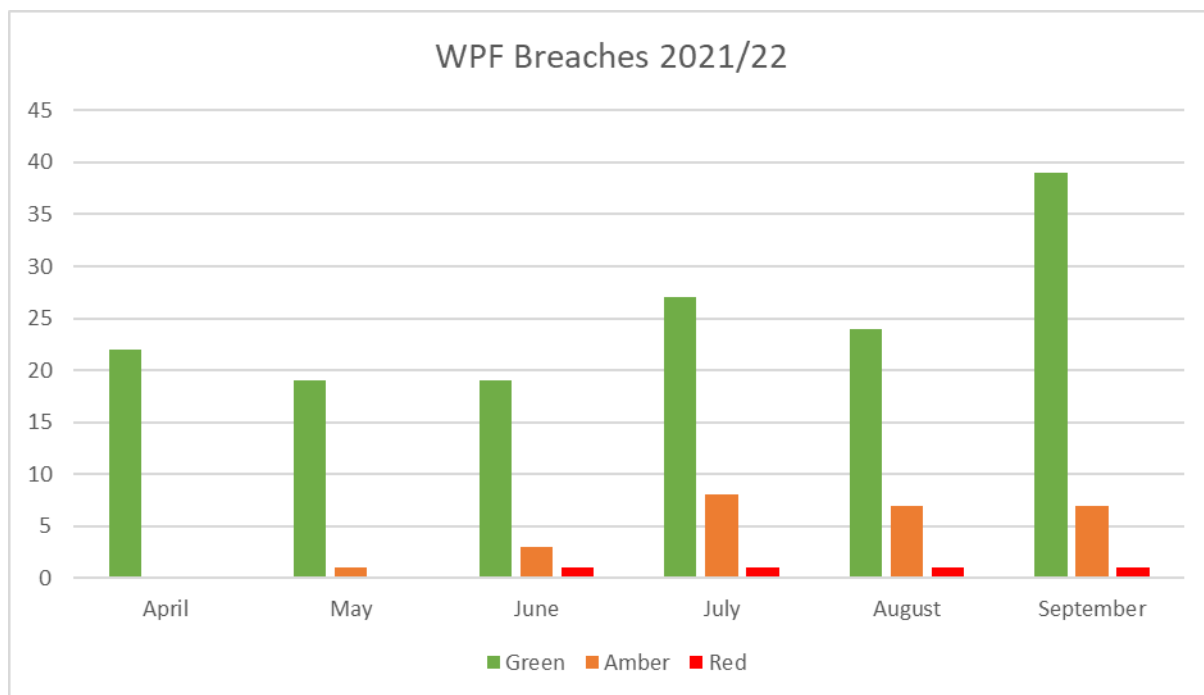
6.1 The PAS has been monitoring the tasks outstanding and completed by the service since the 1 April 2020. The chart at appendix 2 shows the volume of outstanding work across the service and indicates that the service had 2604 live tasks as at the 31st October 2021.

6.2 Although in the short- term work coming in slightly exceeds work completed, this is due to a smoothing out of demand over the year following the introduction of I-Connect, rather than peaks of work being created at year end. The team has a number of new staff whose productivity is increasing with experience, and together with outsourcing of firefighter pensions administration and the introduction of Member Self-Service, we expect capacity to be created to manage workloads going forward.

6.3 It is anticipated that with the introduction of “Insights”, a new reporting tool will be available in the new calendar year, and this will allow us to report more granular information to the board regarding workloads and KPIs.

7. Breaches

- 7.1 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.



- 7.2 Through regular reviews of the breaches being logged we have identified an issue with admissions for contracts being let by Academies for catering and cleaning. Issues include delays in signing of the admission agreement, late payment of contributions and monthly data submissions. For one particular case, the fund has had an issue with a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) who let a contract for cleaning services back in 2019. Due to a dispute between the MAT and the contractor over the rate for pension liabilities an admission agreement is not in place for the employees who transferred. A letter was sent to the Contractor, the School, and the MAT, which highlighted that no pension cover was being provided for employees whilst the admission agreement is outstanding and that the fund could choose not to back date the agreement. The admission agreement has been now signed and collection of the outstanding contributions is being made. The new process of escalating issues to senior officers is helping to complete admissions where letting employers and contractors are slow to act.
- 7.3 The fund has escalated an employer to red breach status for failing to provide financial and member data for the first six months of the 2021/22 financial year. The breach has been reported to the Pensions Regulator (tPR), who is being kept informed of the actions being taken to resolve the issue. The employer has now sent the outstanding contribution reconciliation sheets

while working to build an i-Connect submission and will be charged for the additional work required from the fund.

8. McCloud Project

- 8.1 The McCloud project is continuing, and information is beginning to be received from employers. There is a growing risk that data from employers may not be provided within set timescales, and this has been recorded in the project risk register and highlighted to the project management group, who will be directing the necessary communications with employers to ensure information is supplied in a timely fashion.
- 8.2 The legislation which is intended to remedy the discrimination in pension provision following McCloud is contained within the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill, which will have retrospective effect from 1 April 2015. The Finance Bill 2021-22 and supporting regulations will contain technical changes to ensure that the pensions taxation framework can operate as intended to the McCloud reforms, and are expected to clarify the actions the Pension Fund can take if, for example, an individual would receive a tax charge as a result of the recalculation of their benefits. Work has commenced in identifying where our processes will require changes to accommodate the additional checks that will need to be done for members who are affected by the underpin..
- 8.3 The pensions software provider has notified officers of the indicative costs the fund may have to pay to cover the development of the software required. There are enquiries underway as to whether central funding can be granted to pay for this to help administrators cover the cost.

9. Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP)

- 9.1 The Fund has no outstanding IDRP cases.

10. Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) reconciliation exercise

- 10.1 The work to complete the GMP reconciliation and rectification continues, and targeted resources have now been in place since August 2021. Priority is being given to members already in receipt of their pension where the amount they are receiving needs to be amended.
- 10.2 The total number of outstanding cases was 2,618. The number of cases that have been rectified is 729, of which 526 overpayments and 30 underpayments have been identified. For all overpayments a letter has been sent out to the member to confirm that the pension in payment needs to be amended. If there is a significant change to the value, we work with the member to ensure that the reduction does not create any financial hardship. For underpayments the

payment is adjusted for the next available payment to the member, and this will include an arrears that are due. 173 have resulted in a change to the GMP information held on the member record but this has not affected the pension in payment as the member has not yet reached state pension age.

11. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

None

Appendices

Background Papers

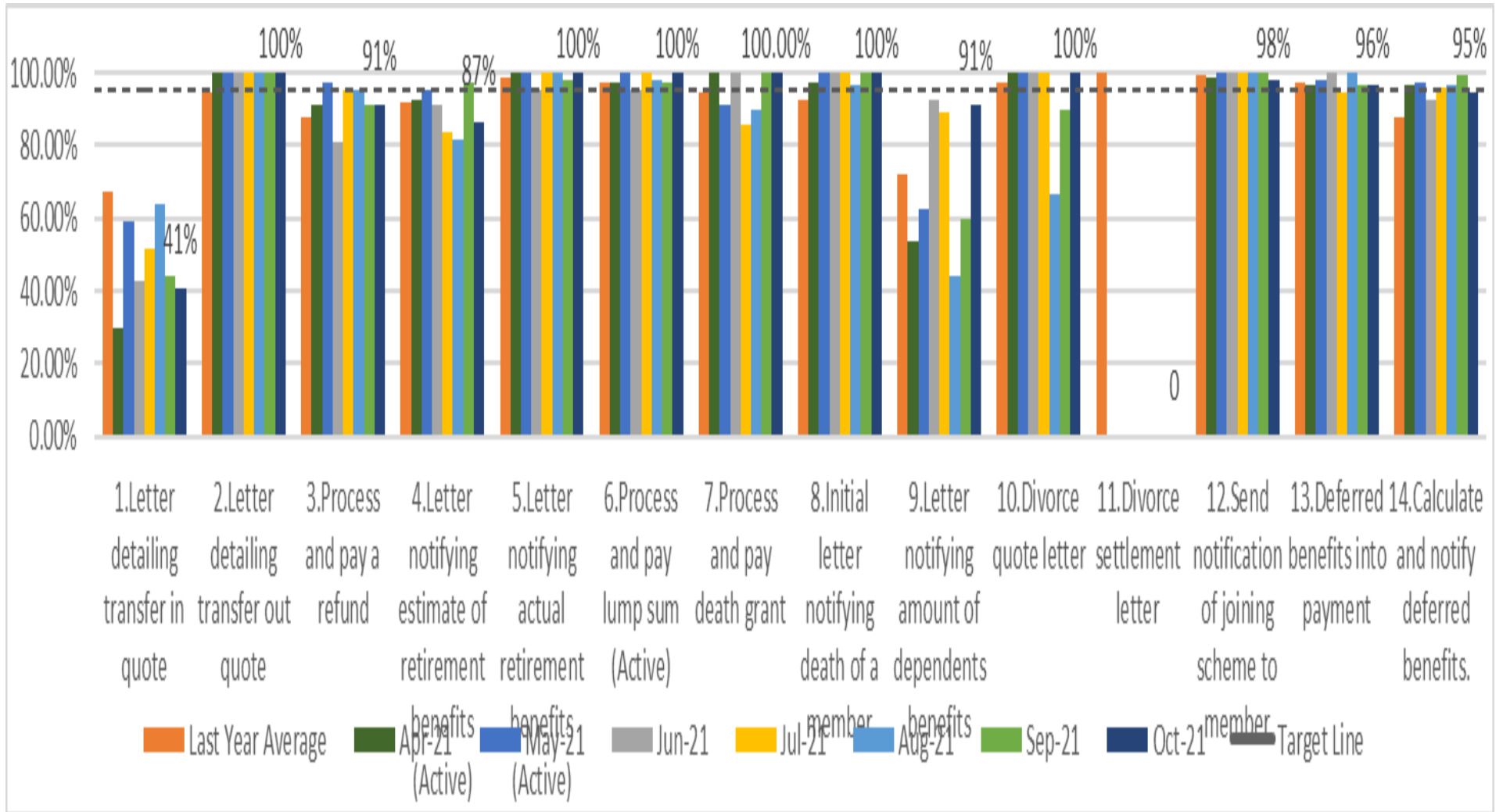
	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Liz Firmstone, Victoria Jenks, Chris Norton	lizfirmstone@warwickshire.gov.uk, vickyjenks@warwickshire.gov.uk, chrisnorton@warwickshire.gov.uk
Assistant Director	Andrew Felton	andrewfelton@warwickshire.gov.uk
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Lead Member	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property	peterbutlin@warwickshire.gov.uk

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

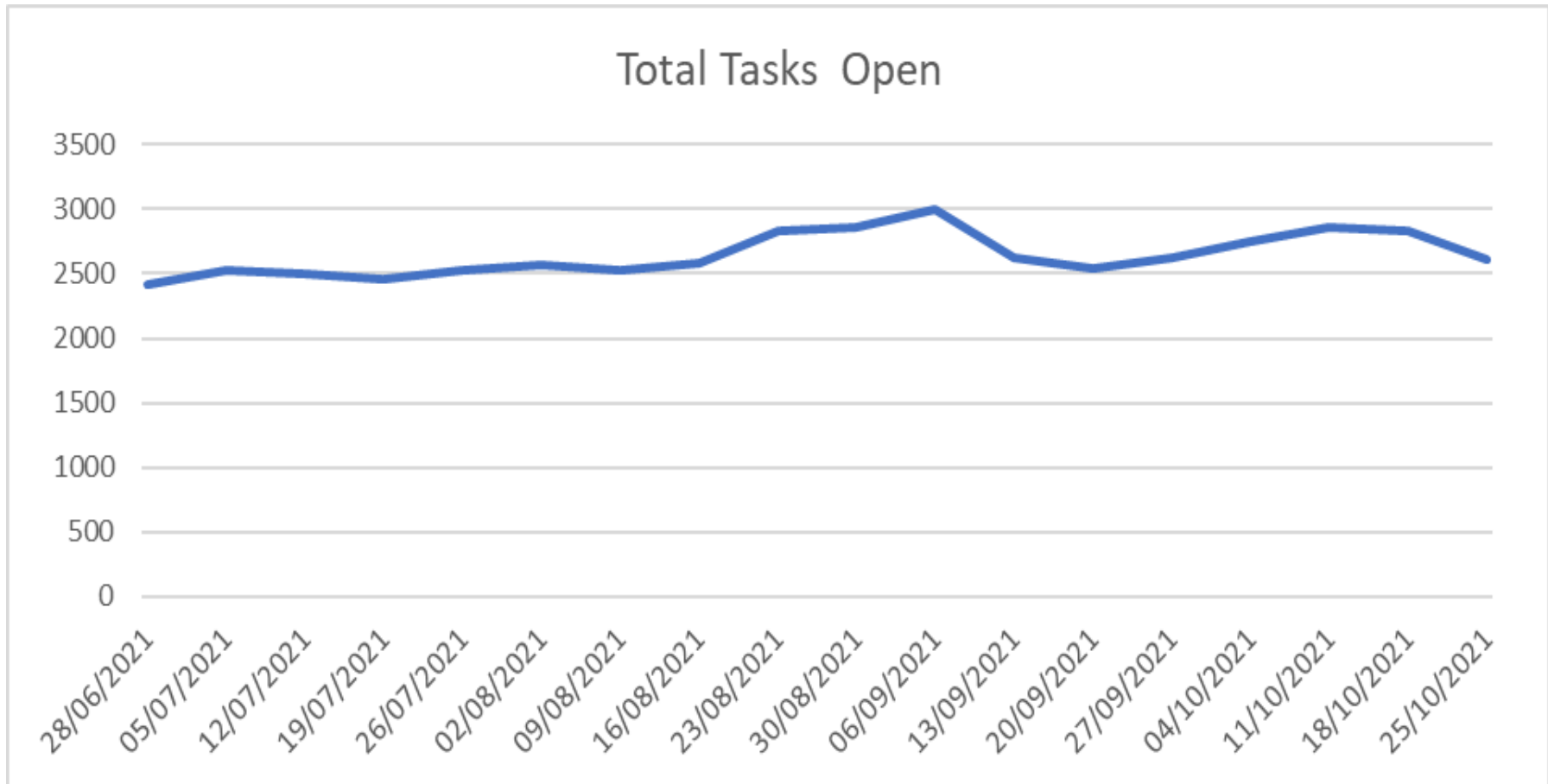
Local Member(s): Cllr Andy Jenns

Other members: n/a

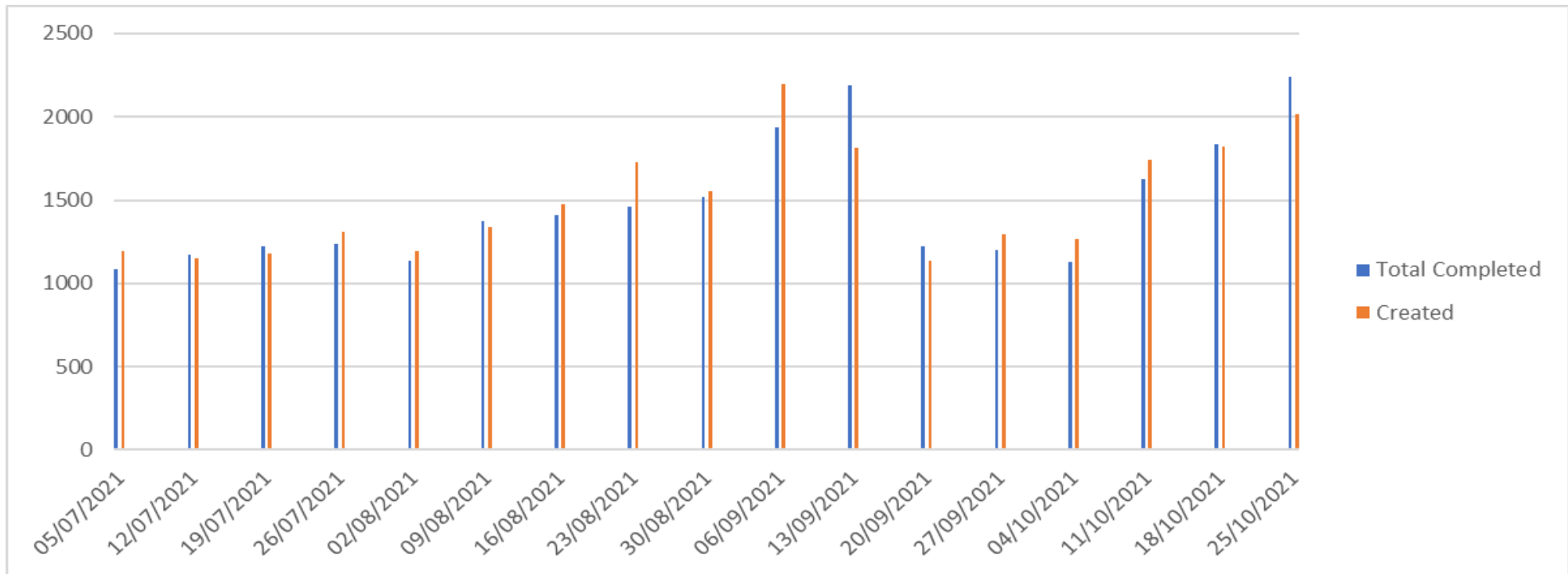
Appendix 1 Key Performance Indicators



Appendix 2 total outstanding work



Appendix 3 Comparison of work created to work completed



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Staff and Pensions Committee

Regulatory and Policy update

13 December 2021

Recommendation(s)

1. That the Staff and Pensions Committee notes and comments on the content of the report.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the policies reviewed either as part of an annual review or where there have been minor amendments required.
- 1.2 The report also updates the Committee on regulatory developments in the pension arena.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 None.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 None.

4. Supporting Information

Cyber Security Policy

- 4.1 Officers have reviewed the Cyber Security Policy and are content that it does not require any amendments.
- 4.2 Officers continue to liaise with colleagues in ICT to ensure that the Pension Fund's ICT infrastructure remains robust. This will include future penetration exercises and an audit of the safeguards in place.
- 4.3 The Fund has also contacted all its external consultants and contractors where data is shared requiring the completion of System Specific Risk Assessment pro-forma to receive assurance that their systems comply to an expected standard for the County Council.

5. Regulatory Update

Cost Management Mechanism

- 5.1 The Cost Management Mechanism (the mechanism) was introduced following the Hutton review with the aim of providing protection to taxpayers and employees against unexpected changes (expected to be increases) in pension costs.
- 5.2 The Local Government Pension Scheme is subject to two cost management processes which are designed to manage some of the LGPS costs and risks to employers.
- 5.3 These processes can result in changes to the scheme benefit structure and/or scheme members contributions where the costs are found to be either higher or lower than the scheme's target cost set at the time of the implementation of the 2014 Scheme.
- 5.4 The change in cost is measured by the Government Actuary's Department every four years; one relating to a process managed by HM Treasury and additional one, specific for the LGPS, managed by the Scheme Advisory Board.
- 5.5 Members will recall that the 2016 cost management process (which resulted in enhancement in the benefit structure and possible reductions in contributions for scheme members) was paused due to the McCloud judgement.
- 5.6 Following amendments issued by HM Treasury Directions on 7 October 21, confirming that costs resulting from the McCloud remedy should be treated as scheme member costs within the cost management process, the Scheme Advisory Board has now concluded its 2016 process.
- 5.7 Despite recording a slight reduction in LGPS costs the Scheme Advisory Board has recommended no benefit/contribution changes to the LGPS minister noting "the unwelcome impact of having to backdate any changes to April 2019 would have on already hard-pressed administration teams."
- 5.8 The Scheme Advisory Board, however, remains determined to revisit the third-tier ill health provision (a temporary pension awarded for a maximum of three years) and contributions for the lowest paid members. Recommendations in these areas will be made separately to the cost management process.
- 5.9 It is anticipated that the Government Actuary's Department will now finalise the 2016 valuation for HM Treasury's cost management process. This is not expected to lead to any changes to the LGPS.
- 5.10 Finally, it is understood that the trade unions plan to bring a Judicial Review challenging the legality of the Government's decision to allocate the costs arising from McCloud as costs to scheme members.

5.11 Officers will keep the Committee apprised of any developments.

Pension Fund Accounts (Form SF3 data published

5.12 Each year all local authority pension funds in England and Wales are required to submit data on the administration and fund management to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities who in turn will produce national statistics for the LGPS. The highlights are:

- Total expenditure of £13.4 billion;
- Total income of £17.2 billion, an increase of 7.5% on 2019/20;
- Employer contributions increased by 32.46% on 2019/20 to £10.2 billion.
- Employee contributions of £2.4 billion;
- The market value of LGPS funds in England and Wales on 31 March 2021 was £332 billion, an increase of 22.14%;
- There were 6.1 million scheme members on 31 March 2021: 2 million active members, 1.8 million pensioners, 2.2 million deferred members;
- There were 82,567 retirements in 2020/21, a decrease of 6.4% compared with 2019/20.

September 2021 CPI rate announced

5.13 The Office for National Statistics announced the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate for September 2021 as 3.1%. This rate is higher than the rate assumed at the 2019 triennial valuation of 2.3% CPI, although the rate of CPI applicable for increases to pensions in April 2020 was 0.5%. Officers and their advisors will need to consider a rate of CPI for the forthcoming triennial valuation.

5.14 In recent years the Government has used this rate to base increases under the Pensions Increase Act, 1971 and revaluation of pension accounts under section 9 of the Public Service Pensions Act, 2013 on the rate of CPI in September of the previous year.

5.15 Local Authority pension funds await confirmation that this is the rate of increase applicable to all pensions in payment and the rate of revaluation for active member pension accounts and deferred pensions.

6. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

6.1 None.

Appendices

None.

Background Papers

None.

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Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property	peterbutlin@warwickshire.gov.uk

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

Local Member(s): n/a

Other members: n/a

Staff and Pensions Committee

Employers Entering and Leaving the Warwickshire Pension Fund

13 December 2021

Recommendation

That the Staff and Pensions Committee

1. delegates authority to the Strategic Director for Resources to approve applications from the listed employers subject to the applications meeting the criteria
 - 1.1. New Academies:
 - 1.1.1. Brailes C of E Primary School (Part of The Stour Federation)
01/08/2021
 - 1.1.2. Houlton School (Part of Transforming Lives Educational Trust)
01/09/2021
 - 1.1.3. The Warwickshire Academy (Part of Thrive Education Partnership)
01/01/2022
 - 1.2. New Employers:
 - 1.2.1. Premier Active 01/09/2021
 - 1.2.2. Miquill Catering Limited 01/09/2021
 - 1.2.3. Prime Facilities Services 06/09/2021
 - 1.2.4. NSL – Marston’s Holdings 01/11/2021 (new contract)
 - 1.2.5. Caterlink 22/07/2021
2. Notes the employers who have left the fund as they have no active members left in the scheme
 - 2.1.1. Rugby First Ltd on 01/08/2021

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 Coventry Diocese MAT are the letting authority for Premier Active. The Stour Federation are the letting authority for Miquill Catering Limited. Evergreen School are the letting authority for Prime Facilities Services. Warwickshire County Council are the letting authority for the new NSL – Marston’s Holdings contract. Coventry Diocese MAT are the letting authority for Caterlink.
- 1.6 All five 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 have a contract with another Scheme Employer within the Pension Fund and have 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 have 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 2021
- 4.2 Funding Strategy Statement

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 None

Background Papers

- 1. Warwickshire Pension Fund, Admissions and Termination Policy 2021
- 2. Funds Strategy Statement

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Neil Buxton, Liz Firmstone, Victoria Jenks, Alistair Wickens	neilbuxton@warwickshire.gov.uk, lizfirmstone@warwickshire.gov.uk, vickyjenks@warwickshire.gov.uk, alistairwickens@warwickshire.gov.uk
Assistant Director	Andrew Felton	Andrewfelton@warwickshire.gov.uk
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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): Cllr Andy Jenns
Other members:

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Staff and Pensions Committee

Review of the Minutes of the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Local Pension Board meeting of 9th June 2021

13 December 2021

Recommendation(s)

1. That the Staff and Pensions Committee notes the minutes of the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Local Pension Board.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Set out at Appendix 1 are the minutes of the Local Pension Board meeting of 9th June 2021, for information.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 None.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 None.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 None.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 None.

Appendices

1. Appendix 1 Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Local Pension Board minutes 9th June 2021

Background Papers

None

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Neil Buxton	neilbuxton@warwickshire.gov.uk
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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): n/a

Other members: n/a

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Local Pension Board of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme

Wednesday 9 June 2021

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Martin Reohorn (Chair)
Barnaby Briggs
Caroline Jones
Sian Marsh
Paul Morley

Officers

Liz Firmstone, Service Manager (Transformation)
Victoria Jenks, Pensions Admin Delivery Lead
Neil Buxton, Technical Specialist - Pension Fund Policy and Governance
Ian Marriott, Delivery Lead - Commercial and Regulatory
Deborah Moseley, Senior Democratic Services Officer

1. General

2. Apologies

None.

3. Board Members' Disclosures of Interest

None.

(1) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

There were no matters arising.

4. Forward Plan

Neil Buxton, Technical Specialist - Pension Fund Policy and Governance presented this report to the Board which set out a rolling forward plan for a one-year period. The plan included a number of standard items but was intended to be flexible and accommodate any developing issues at each meeting.

The Board noted the content of the plan and requested an update on the outsourcing of the administration of the Fire Pension Schemes in due course.

5. Risk Monitoring

Neil Buxton, Technical Specialist - Pension Fund Policy and Governance, presented this report to the Board and explained that a more comprehensive report would be brought to the Board in September which would also reflect an updated way of monitoring risk, focussing on risk appetite and openness to risk.

In response to questions, Neil Buxton advised that the risk register used the County Council format but that elements of the Local Government Association's format would be taken into account. The quarterly timescale also followed the timescales set out at County level.

Neil Buxton also confirmed that most of the risks had been assessed as amber and the register also detailed the actions that had been implemented to mitigate risks. By way of example, he noted risk 002 regarding employer / employee contributions not being paid – was not a particular risk whilst the administration service was managed by Warwickshire County Council, but that risk would increase once the Service was outsourced.

In response to a discussion regarding the escalation of risk, Liz Firmstone, Service Manager (Transformation), noted that the new corporate risk framework had escalation processes built in and the Team would be undertaking an exercise to review this risk register against the new framework. She explained that the new corporate framework had a slightly different risk matrix which provided for a more discerning risk score. A report that would be brought to the Board in September would highlight the key features of framework and how risks were reviewed and be clear on the process of escalation.

In response to a discussion on the escalation and scoring of risk 002 - Employee / employer contributions not paid, Vicky Jenks, Pensions Admin Delivery Lead, advised that there had been an issue with the correct contributions being deducted which had been identified and processes put in place to recognise problems at an early stage and therefore this risk had currently been assessed as green. It was agreed that this would be considered again for the next register.

The Board noted the content of the report.

6. Pensions Administration Activity and Performance update

Vicky Jenks, Pensions Admin Delivery Lead presented this report which provided an update on key developments affecting Fire pensions administration and the performance of the Pensions Administration Service, including breaches, Internal Disputes, McCloud/Sargeant and immediate detriment cases, progress with regard to i-Connect, the Annual Benefits Statement project, the

Pension Schemes Bill/ Pension Schemes Act 2021, and outsourcing of the Firefighter Pensions Administration.

In response to a question about a proposal to signpost members to the LGA member website for information regarding immediate detriment cases, Vicky Jenks advised that the Scheme's website would be updated to strip back the information provided and simply signpost to the LGA website so that there was no duplication of information and members were able to access the most up-to-date information. She also confirmed that Heywoods - pensions software provider - had not indicated that the upcoming outsourcing exercise would change their delivery model.

The Board asked further questions regarding immediate detriment cases and Vicky Jenks explained the approach that was being taken to the guidance to work out the difference between the two sets of contributions which might result in a refund or a contribution to pay. Regarding taxation, there had been a suggestion that scheme members would not be penalised, but this had not yet been enshrined in legislation, so some care was required in the advice being given and the potential to recalculate the differences. Scheme Members were required to pay gross tax contributions and contact HMRC to claim back any tax relief which was the method used for retained firefighters. An open dialogue was being kept for those subject to immediate detriment on retirement, they were getting a pack detailing both sets of benefits. It was acknowledged that there had been good feedback on the way immediate detriment cases were being dealt with and, despite the Board noting that there were more new and unusual queries being raised, Vicky Jenks confirmed that she was comfortable that there was capacity to continue to manage the situation and Neil Buxton, Technical Specialist - Pension Fund Policy and Governance, confirmed this was an issue identified on the risk register.

The Board noted the report.

7. Breaches Policy

Neil Buxton, Technical Specialist - Pension Fund Policy and Governance presented this report to the Board which explained the legal requirements for reporting breaches of the law and introduced a policy for breach reporting which had been based on the policy for the Warwickshire Pension Fund.

The Board noted the policy and considered it followed the code of practice.

8. Cyber Security Policy

Neil Buxton, Technical Specialist - Pension Fund Policy and Governance presented this report to the Board which introduced a cyber security policy for the Fund which had been produced in accordance with the requirements of The Pensions Regulator.

Barnaby Briggs asked how the online member self-service portal met cyber security requirements and Vicky Jenks advised that there would be a two-way authentication process to log on to the secure network. Members only had access to their own log-in details and, therefore, anyone falling foul of phishing attempts would only risk their own data.

In response to a query about the regularity of reviewing the policy, Neil Buxton, advised that it was sensible to keep the policy under review. This was a view echoed by Liz Firmstone, Service

Manager (Transformation) who indicated that annual review was considered best practice. This year a root and branch review of policies was taking place which would mean a lighter touch approach could take place in subsequent years.

Resolved

That the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Local Pension Board approved the Cyber Security Policy

9. Next Steps

Further details about the timescales for the outsourcing of the pension’s administration service was sought and clarification of the deadlines for completed tenders was given as 14 July 2021. An evaluation process would then be required before the next Local Pension Board meeting and a further briefing would be available at that time.

An Introduction to Fire Pension Schemes training session was being planned for September and potential dates for this would be circulated. It was also planned to circulate a questionnaire for members of the Board to identify gaps in their knowledge in order to inform the training plan. It was hoped to link with other administrators to deliver the training plan and further discussions would take place at the upcoming Fire Officers Group meeting.

10. Any Other Business

None.

11. Future Meeting Dates

Future meeting dates were noted as follows:

- Tuesday, 14 September 2021
- Tuesday, 9 November 2021
- Monday, 14 February 2022
- Tuesday, 10 May 2022

All meetings were scheduled to start at 2.00pm and would take place virtually or at Shire Hall Warwick.

The meeting rose at 2.46pm

.....
Chair

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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