

Staff and Pensions Committee

Date: Monday 6 March 2023
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: Committee Room 2, Shire Hall

Membership

Councillor Andy Jenns (Chair)
Councillor Bill Gifford (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Brian Hammersley
Councillor Christopher Kettle
Councillor Sarah Millar
Councillor Mandy Tromans

Items on the agenda:

1. **General**
 - (1) **Apologies**
 - (2) **Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**
 - (3) **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** 5 - 8
To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2022.
2. **Our People Strategy Annual Review** 9 - 28
3. **Business Plan Report** 29 - 42
4. **Pensions Administration Activity and Performance Update** 43 - 52
5. **Regulatory and Policy Update** 53 - 56
6. **Employers Joining and Leaving the Warwickshire Pension Fund** 57 - 58
7. **Review of the Minutes of the Warwickshire Local Fire Pension Board Meeting of 17 November 2022** 59 - 66

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

9. Warwickshire Pension Fund Business Continuity Plan 67 - 96

10. Exempt Minutes of the Previous Meeting 97 - 98

To confirm the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2022.

11. Future Meeting Dates

The Committee will meet on:

- Monday 12 June 2023 at 2pm
- Monday 11 September 2023 at 2pm
- Monday 11 December 2023 at 2pm
- Monday 4 March 2024 at 2pm

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 12 December 2022

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Councillor Andy Jenns (Chair)
Councillor Bill Gifford (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Brian Hammersley
Councillor Sarah Millar
Councillor Mandy Tromans

Officers

Barnaby Briggs, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
John Cole, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Andy Felton, Assistant Director, Finance
Liz Firmstone, Service Manager - Transformation
Marina Fraser-Ryan, Delivery Lead – People Relations
Sioned Harper, Team Lead Senior Solicitor – Governance
Pru Jaques, Trainee Solicitor
Victoria Moffett, Lead Commissioner – Pensions and Investment
Chris Norton, Strategy and Commissioning Manager – Treasury, Pension, Audit and Risk
Max Taylor, Graduate Management Trainee

1. General

The Chair thanked members of the Committee for agreeing to reschedule the time of the meeting.

(1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Christopher Kettle.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

(3) Minutes of Previous Meetings

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 5 October 2022 and 15 November 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

There were no matters arising.

2. WFRS Re-engagement Following Retirement: Amendment to Service Order

Marina Fraser-Ryan (Delivery Lead – People Relations) introduced the report which outlined proposed changes to the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) Re-engagement Following Retirement Service Order. This document set out the policy for abatement of pensions when scheme members were re-engaged (either by a fire and rescue authority or another public sector body) following retirement. She advised that the Pensions Ombudsman had recommended that changes be made. Accordingly, amendments had been made to the policy for abatement from a blanket approach to one which allowed for case-by-case consideration of the member's circumstances and any representations from the member prior to deciding whether to apply abatement or, where it was appropriate, to resolve that abatement should not be applied.

Marina Fraser-Ryan highlighted that there was no specific guidance on the criteria which should be considered when making the decision on whether to abate an individual's pension because of re-employment. Decisions would need to take account of the general principle of abatement, i.e., to protect the public purse. In such cases, WFRS would be responsible for the cost of deciding not to abate. She sought the Committee's approval for the proposed changes.

Councillor Gifford stated that it was sensible to follow the guidance of the Pensions Ombudsman. He moved that the recommendation be accepted and was seconded by Councillor Millar. This was supported unanimously by the Committee.

Resolved

That the Staff and Pensions Committee approves the amendments to the name and content of the WFRS Re-engagement Following Retirement Service Order as outlined within the body of the report and in Appendix 2.

3. Pensions Administration Activity and Performance Update

Liz Firmstone (Service Manager – Transformation) introduced the report which outlined key developments affecting pensions administration and the performance of the Pensions Administration Service. She provided an update which covered the roll-out of the Member Self Service (MSS) initiative; performance of the Pensions Administration Service against KPIs; and employer breaches, including good progress to obtain information from a particular Multi Academy Trust leading to a resolution (once payment and i-Connect data had been reconciled). In respect of Valuation, she advised that there had been no significant increases in employer contribution rates. She reported that the Fund had no outstanding Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) cases.

In response to Councillor Millar, Liz Firmstone advised that increased numbers of green breaches in January and April 2022 were due to slower reporting by academies during exceptionally busy periods of the academic year.

Councillor Gifford stated that the increase in the number of eligible members making use of the MSS system was positive. He highlighted the advantages of ensuring that the system was as user-friendly as possible. This would help to attract increased participation.

Liz Firmstone advised that measures were in place to refine the MSS system to make it more intuitive and user friendly. She advised that scheme members had received assurance that the system was secure and confidential. It was hoped that this would lead to increased participation.

In response to Councillor Gifford, Liz Firmstone advised that non-teaching academy staff made up a significant proportion of the Pension Scheme. The Employer Relations Teams played a key role to engage with these members to promote awareness of the MSS resource. She provided assurance that there were no plans to remove existing services for members of the Scheme who chose not to make use of MSS.

Councillor Gifford moved that the recommendation be accepted and was seconded by Councillor Hammersley. This was supported unanimously by the Committee.

Resolved

That the Staff and Pensions Committee endorses the report.

4. Employers Leaving and Joining the Warwickshire Pension Fund

In response to the Chair, members of the Committee agreed to approve the delegation of authority to the Strategic Director for Resources as set out within the report.

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:

New Academies

- Harbury C of E Primary School, 01/09/2022 (Arden Forest MAT)
- English Martyrs Catholic Primary School, 01/09/2022 (Our Lady of the Magnificat)
- Our Lady and St Teresa Catholic Primary School, 01/09/2022 (Our Lady of the Magnificat)
- St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, 01/09/2022 (Our Lady of the Magnificat)
- St Marie's Catholic Primary School and Nursery, 01/09/2022 (Our Lady of the Magnificat)
- St Marys Catholic Primary School, 01/09/2022 (Our Lady of the Magnificat)

New Employers

- None for this period

5. Review of the Minutes of the Warwickshire Local Fire Pension Board Meetings of 6 June 2022 and 10 October 2022

Resolved:

That the Staff and Pensions Committee notes the minutes of the meetings of the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Local Pension Board of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme held on 6 June 2022 and 10 October 2022.

6. Regulatory and Policy Update (1)

Victoria Moffett (Lead Commissioner – Pensions and Investment) introduced the report. She advised that the Fund’s Corporate Governance Policy Statement had been updated following its scheduled annual review. She highlighted the key changes outlined within the report. The Committee was asked to endorse the draft Corporate Governance Statement and authorise the Strategic Director for Resources to finalise the statement in consultation with appropriate persons. She drew members’ attention to the amendments to the Fund’s Admission and Termination Policy, Conflicts of Interest Policy, and Cyber Security Policy, for which approval was sought.

It had been determined that access to the Cyber Security Policy should be limited to ensure compliance with the Council’s duties to take all necessary steps to safeguard data. Discussion of this Policy (and determination of recommendation 3 of the report) would take place in closed session.

The Chair proposed that recommendations 1 and 2 be accepted. This was seconded by Councillor Gifford and unanimously supported by the Committee.

Resolved

That the Staff and Pensions Committee:

1. Notes the updates contained in the Report.
2. Endorses the draft Corporate Governance Statement of the Warwickshire Pension Fund and authorises the Strategic Director for Resources to finalise the statement in consultation with appropriate persons.

7. Reports Containing Exempt or Confidential 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 Schedule 12A of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

8. Regulatory and Policy Update (2)

Resolved

That the Staff and Pensions Committee approves the amendments to the Admission and Termination, Conflicts of Interest and Cyber Security Policies of the Warwickshire Pension Fund.

9. Future Meeting Dates

Members noted the dates of future meetings.

The meeting rose at 11.29.

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Chair

Staff and Pensions Committee

6 March 2023

Annual Review of Our People Strategy and Year 3 (2023/2024) Delivery Plan

Recommendation

That the Committee notes the activity as set out in the 2022/23 Annual Review of Our People Strategy and endorses the 2023/24 Our People Strategy Delivery Plan.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The refreshed Our People Strategy 2020-2025 was originally endorsed by both the Resource and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Staff and Pensions Committee in December 2020. Since this date, the Strategy has returned to both committees on an annual basis to review and endorse the plans for the coming year.
- 1.2 The Annual Review of Our People Strategy, at Appendix 1, showcases and celebrates the activity and performance against our organisational priorities supported by HROD over the previous year, and considers the performance data, the current context and details the key priorities for the coming year.
- 1.3 The key priorities have been considered and endorsed by Corporate Board and Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee and have been updated to reflect their feedback.
- 1.4 Following approval from Members, the Annual Review will be shared with a wider audience to support the Council's ongoing Employee Offer and the ongoing recruitment and retention of our people by continuing to confirm our commitment to making Warwickshire a great place to work..
- 1.5 **Our People Achievements 2022/2023** against agreed priority actions:
 - Leading Organisation Wellbeing - focus continues on monitoring attendance rates, wellbeing initiatives and collation of evidence to apply for Silver Thrive at Work. The annual review focus on leading organisational wellbeing was endorsed by the Staff and Pensions Committee in October 2022.
 - Engagement – the new approach has been launched and the response rate and engagement score have both increased. An annual review of

engagement was endorsed by Staff and Pensions Committee in June 2022.

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – the focus continues on progressing the action plan. The Council was delighted to be awarded the Silver Inclusive Employer Award in Septembers, which recognised the great progress made and provides the basis for future actions. An annual review focus on EDI was endorsed by Staff and Pensions Committee in September.
- Culture – a review of the culture requirements to support the council plan has been completed. To support this we have defined our culture, pulling together our values, behaviours, Employee Offer and our people and EDI visions.
- People Metrics for managers - work continues with the development of people dashboards.
- Leadership Approach – a draft approach to leadership has been developed, which articulates the expectations of leaders, along with the leadership offer to support them. We have procured a partner to work with officers in developing our leadership offer, to be launched in April 2023.
- Agile Working Approach – has developed into How We Work Best, which captures all the working arrangements across the Council. A new intranet hub has been launched, continuing to evolve and take stock of the approach, with an appreciative inquiry to understand, celebrate and embrace different ways of working being undertaken.
- Employer Offer – is now embedded in how the organisation is promoted, and ways to use it to promote the Council as an employer of choice continue to be sought.
- Recognition Platform – the Highfive recognition platform was piloted on a trial basis, with an alternative way of enabling our people to provide peer to peer recognition and thanks, being embedded going forward.
- Induction and Onboarding – Improvements on how we induct and onboard our people have been made.
- Apprentices' Pay – has been aligned with the national minimum wage rates to address attraction and recruitment challenges.
- Recruitment, Retention and Talent – developing flexible resourcing solutions, including career pathways to address attraction and recruitment challenges.
- Tier 1-4 recruitment process – approval of a reviewed approach to recruiting to leadership and management roles.
- Apprenticeship First Approach – testing a framework so that apprenticeships are routinely considered for entry roles.
- Corporate learning and development offer has been reviewed and updated, taking on board the view and input from stakeholders so that it reflects the needs of the organisation.

1.6 Our People Priorities for 2023/2024

Having considered our achievements over the last year, along with our performance measures, the workforce planning discussions with Assistant Directors, other discussions with key stakeholders and assessing the external

factors of the employment market, we have considered which actions will have the biggest impact on the issues that we are facing. The following priorities are proposed for 2023/24:

- Wellbeing – Aligned to our wellbeing offer, undertake a health needs assessment and continue to collate the evidence to apply for the Silver Thrive at Work accreditation. Procure a provider for Occupational Health and EAP.
- Our Approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Launch our approach commitment, continue with the action plan with a particular focus, working with partners, on social mobility and the levelling up agenda, the response from the Inclusive Employers feedback, the ONS Census data and the Breaking Through and Allyship programmes.
- How We Work – Undertake an appreciative inquiry into our ways of working to showcase, celebrate and embrace the different ways of working. Continue to develop and refine the Agile Working approach including a refresh of the principles to ensure effectiveness and consistency alongside exploring options for new ways of working to support recruitment and retention.
- Workload – continue through our engagement approach to enable our people to manage their workloads.
- Engaging with Off-line Colleagues – Priority focus on how we engage with our colleagues who are not on-line, as well as those who do not currently engage in the YourSay activity.
- People Metrics, Leading with Data – Launch a series of PowerBi dashboards, to provide managers with real time data and information.
- Leadership Approach – Work with our new partner Passe Partout, to co-create and deliver a leadership offer that equips leaders with the knowledge and skills to lead people to deliver our ambitions. Finalise and launch our Approach to Leadership, setting out the expectations of our leaders along with the offer of development and support.
- Performance and Appraisal Framework - business as usual annual refresh activity, including 360 feedback for tiers 0-3 leaders.
- Performance Policy – review the tone and voice of the capability policy.
- Strategic Workforce Planning – continue to develop a, including a workforce assessment, which provides insight and challenge to ensure services are able to respond to future need and provides HROD with common themes to inform priority actions.
- Contract Type Review – Review our zero hour and sessional worker contractual arrangements.
- Pay and Reward - Review our approach to Pay and Reward. Consider and plan future developments.
- Recognition / Star Award Review – making proposals for future awards and further recognition work in future years.
- Our Approach to Benefits – Consolidate the benefits offer into one document to ensure that it supports the recruitment and retention ambition. Undertake options appraisal into implementing additional benefits, such as Electric Vehicles and Lease Car Schemes.

- Recruitment and Retention Approach – Understand better why leavers are leaving and develop a suite of recruitment and retention tools, including career pathways, career change, talent management and the re-commissioning of the temporary agency contract.
- Apprenticeship First – review the trial and develop an approach to encourage growth of the use of apprenticeships and utilisation of the apprenticeship levy, along with supporting managers with induction of first-time workers.
- Corporate menu of Learning and Development – review to ensure this meets the needs of our people.

1.7 **Our People Measures of Success:** to monitor progress and help identify challenges a number of measures are tracked throughout the year. The performance against the key business measures and indicators, is as follows:

- Sickness Absence – has stabilised throughout the year at 8.5 days per FTE, which remains within the target of 8 days per FTE (+/- 1 day).
- Employee Engagement - has increased slightly to 76%, from 74% last year, but remains slightly below the target of 78%.
- Gender Pay Gaps – The gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps are all closer to 0 from last year, and all within target of 0% (+/-5%).
- Stress and Mental Health Absence – has remained consistent at 2.43 days per FTE and remains under the target of 2.5 days.
- Wellbeing Score - this new measure has set a promising baseline of 77% agreement.
- Proud to work for WCC – 80% agreement, an increase from 76% in the previous year.
- Safe to be authentic self – another new measure, setting a positive baseline at 79%.
- Disclosure rates – following a successful data campaign, there has been a significant increase in disclosure rates across all the main categories of disability, ethnicity, religion & belief and sexual orientation. Two new categories around carer responsibility and socio- economic background have also been introduced.
- Retention has stabilised at 86.4% and remains positively above the target of 85%.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 None arising directly from this report. The financial implications of each priority covered in this report will be considered as the work is programmed and are allowed for within the relevant service budget(s) for 2023/24.

3. Environmental Implications

3.1 None arising directly from this report.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 Our People Strategy provides direction and focus on the development and implementation of a range of projects and initiatives under the Strategy's six building blocks:
- Culture
 - Leadership
 - Performance
 - Organisational Development and Design
 - Reward and Recognition
 - Talent Development and Career Opportunities
- 4.2 In this year's annual review, to strengthen the content a summary of activities, measurements of success and priority actions for 2023/2024 through the employment journey has been provided. This aligns to other service improvement work across the two arms of HROD, Strategy and Commissioning and People Solutions. The employment journey has been divided into Attracting, Joining, Wellbeing, Performing, Rewarding, Developing and Moving On, and full details can be found on page 3 of Appendix A.
- 4.3 Alongside the achievements against the agreed priority areas, the annual review also celebrates other service improvements, awards and recognition across both HROD services.
- 4.4 The annual review provides more narrative on the proposed priority areas, particularly on the difference we make, to demonstrate the desired outcome each priority will seek.
- 4.5 2022/2023 has been another challenging but successful year for delivery against the Our People Strategy with some emerging priorities being identified throughout the year, including Strategic Workforce Planning and the Pay and Reward review.
- 4.6 Across the whole Human Resources and Organisational Development, other successes have included:
- Development of Our Approach to Leadership and procuring a partner to scope and develop our Leadership Offer.
 - Well received annual reviews for Engagement, Health and Safety and Wellbeing, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. These tell our story, celebrate successes and provide focus for further work.
 - The Payroll team were awarded the PPMA Award for Excellence in Service Delivery – Unsung Heroes.
 - The new approach to engaging our people has been well received with an increased in participation and an increase in engagement scores, along with some positive benchmark positions, for the new measures.

- From a commercial perspective, we were successful in continuing to provide services to Wokingham Borough Council and Stratford upon Avon District Council.
 - Alongside the longer-term strategic deliverables we have continued to support our people and enabled them to continually deliver for the communities that we serve.
 - In addition to supporting the Our People Strategy our HROD Delivery colleagues have had another busy and successful year, with increasing demand on all its services.
- 4.7 Some of the major projects and initiatives will continue into 2023/2024. Some key activities have been identified to best support the delivery of the Council Plan and respond to the internal and external employment challenges being faced.
- 4.8 Whilst the proposed activities for 2023/2024 have not been prioritised, it is recognised that demand on HROD may mean the approach and focus will have to be flexed during the year. Should that be the case further discussions will take place with Corporate Board. However, the recommendation is that the priority focus should be on the following 5 major issues:
- Recruitment and Retention
 - Pay and Reward
 - Strategic Workforce Planning
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
 - Employee Engagement
- 4.9 Officers will continue to develop the HR service that they can all be proud of, with exceptional service delivery for our customers.

Appendices

1. Appendix 1 – Our People Strategy Annual Review (2022/23) and Year 3 (2023/24) Delivery Plan

Background Papers

None

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Kate Sullivan	katesullivan@warwickshire.gov.uk
Assistant Director	Sarah Duxbury, Assistant Director, Policy and Governance	sarahduxbury@warwickshire.gov.uk
Strategic Director	Rob Powell, Strategic Director for Resources	robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Andy Jenns, Portfolio Holder for Customer & Transformation	andyjenns@warwickshire.gov.uk

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

Local Member(s): not applicable as internal organisational report

Other members: Councillor Andy Jenns

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OUR PEOPLE

Focus on Our People Strategy

Annual Review **2022/2023** & Year 3 (2023/25) Plan

Warwickshire County Council, a great place to work where diverse and talented people are enabled to be their best.



Our People Strategy - Warwickshire's Story



Message from Monica Fogarty, Chief Executive

I'm once again pleased to introduce Our People Strategy Annual Review which updates on progress made in the second year of the refreshed Our People Strategy, and additionally incorporates the priorities for year three (2023/24).

I talk often about how proud I am of our people, and their passion and dedication to serving our residents and communities and making Warwickshire the best it can be; and likewise we know that our people are proud to work for Warwickshire.

Our HROD service which incorporates both our Strategy and Commissioning and People Solutions Delivery teams oversees the delivery of Our People Strategy and this report sets out a number of the key service improvements that have taken place this year along with achievements and accreditations that the service should rightly be proud of. This includes The Unsung Heroes Award for our Payroll team in the PPMA Excellence in People Management Awards; and gaining the Inclusive Employers Silver Standard in recognition for our equality, diversity and inclusion approach.

Our people make us what we are and are at the heart of our success, and through Our People Strategy we continue to make Warwickshire County Council a great place to work where our diverse and talented people are enabled to be their best.

At a glance

The Our People Strategy provides direction and focus for the development and implementation of a range of projects and initiatives under six building blocks, which support the employment journey. Our Year 2 2022/23 activity, measurement of success and priority actions for Year 3 2023/2024 are as follows:

Joining

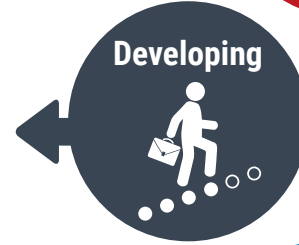
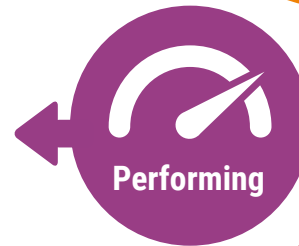
Y2 Activity – Our induction and onboarding processes have been enhanced to complement our Employee offer and Agile working.
Measures – Headcount has increased by 4.2% over the last 12 months and we have onboarded 1100 colleagues.
23/24 – we look to continue to simplify our processes to ensure a warm welcome to working for Warwickshire.

Performing

Y2 Activity – To ensure our leaders are able to enable our people to work at their best, we have developed an approach to leadership and have secured a partner to co-design our leadership offer.
Measures – HR dashboards for managers continue to be developed.
23/24 – implementation of the leadership approach and offer will take place.

Developing

Y2 Activity – Development our career pathways. Y2 Activity – Development of our career pathways. Implemented a new Learning Hub for accessing our Learning & Development activity. Introduction of Chartered Management Apprenticeship.
Measures - The Learning Hub Commissioned 290 learning events, 6517 course completions and 14598 eLearning module completions.
23/24 - review of the corporate development offer and continual development of our career pathways.



Attracting

Y2 Activity – Our induction and onboarding processes have been enhanced to complement our Employee offer and Agile working.
Measures – Headcount has increased by 4.2% over the last 12 months and we have onboarded 1100 colleagues.
23/24 – we look to continue to simplify our processes to ensure a warm welcome to working for Warwickshire. Continue to respond to feedback, review our engagement with offline colleagues

Wellbeing

Y2 Activity – Wellbeing, the way we work, engagement and our approach to inclusivity, are all key to the culture we aspire to. These are now embedded in the way we work. We continue to review the tone and voice of our policies.
Measures – attendance levels, engagement levels and EDI indicators remain positive. We have gained the Silver Inclusive Employers Award.
23/24 – Continue work towards applying for Silver Thrive at Work accreditation. Undertake an appreciative inquiry into how we work.

Rewarding

Y2 Activity – implementation and development of the VivUp benefits platform. Pilot of the High5 peer to peer recognition platform. Successful long service and Star Awards ceremonies.
Measures – 82% of our people are committed to working here.
23/24 – Review our approach to pay, reward and recognition. Consolidation of our benefits package to support recruitment and retention.

Moving on

Y2 Activity – Work undertaken in other areas such as Employee Offer, recognition, how we work, and wellbeing continue to support retention.
Measures – Turnover has steadied over the last year but remains higher than we would like.
23/24 – Continue to explore reasons for leaving and consider actions to address themes.



Focus on Our People Strategy



Through the later end of 2020, the council refreshed its Our People Strategy, to drive through the vision of Warwickshire County Council, a great place to work where diverse and talented people are enabled to be their best.

Embodying our Values and Behaviours, the Our People Strategy is built on 6 building blocks:

Our behaviours

Our behaviours were first introduced in 2016 and these haven't changed. Our behaviours frame how we should behave at work. They help us to understand how we should go about our work and the way we should interact with each other and our customers.

Our values - the Warwickshire DNA

To support the achievement of our vision, five key organisational values have been identified:

Our People Strategy building blocks

The building blocks provide the foundations for the delivery of Our People Strategy vision. We have identified six key building blocks:

For each building block we have a clear set of outcomes we need to achieve so that we can fulfill our vision and transform as an organisation in a way which is sustainable.

HROD How We Work



Achievements 2022/2023

Against our Priority Project areas

Leading Organisational Wellbeing

The Sustainable and Resilient workforce project has transitioned into the business as usual Leading Organisation Wellbeing Group. Focus continues on monitoring attendance rates, wellbeing initiatives and collation of the evidence required to apply for Silver Thrive at Work Accreditation. Staff and Pensions Committee endorsed the annual review focus on leading Organisational Wellbeing in October.



Engagement

The new Our Approach to engaging with our people has been launched, which includes our YourSay engagement activity. The first of the new look survey was completed in June, with Assistant Director led Big Conversations taking place in the autumn. Engagement has increased slightly, and the new measures have provided an encouraging baseline, in which we can continue to monitor our progress in the coming years. An annual review of engagement with our people was endorsed by Staff and Pensions Committee in June.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

The Council's EDI activity continues to progress the EDI action plan. In September we were delighted to have been awarded a Silver Award from Inclusive Employers, which recognises our great progress and provides the basis for our future actions. The annual review was presented to Staff and Pensions in October.

Culture

A review of our culture requirements to support the Council Plan has been completed, to support this work, we have defined our culture, pulling together the values, behaviours, Employee Offer, Our People and EDI vision. The how we work best appreciative enquiry will help shape our future work in this area.

People Metrics for Managers

Work continues with the development of People dashboards. We have now brought this work in-house and we look forward to implementing the dashboard in early 2023



Leadership Approach

We have developed a draft Our Approach to leadership, which articulates our expectation of leaders, along with our leadership offer to support them. We have procured a partner organisation to work with us in further developing our leadership development offer, which will be launched in 2023/2024.

Agile Working Approach

Agile Working has developed into How We Work Best, which captures all our working arrangements across the Council. A new intranet hub has been launched, continuing to evolve and take stock of the approach, with an appreciative inquiry to understand, celebrate and embrace different ways of working being undertaken.



Employer Offer

Our Employee Offer has been embedded in how we promote our organisation and we continue to seek ways to use it to promote Warwickshire as an employer of choice and sell the benefits of working with us.



Recognition Platform

The Highfive recognition platform was piloted on a trial basis, with an alternative way of enabling our people to provide peer to peer recognition and thanks, being embedded going forward.

Induction and Onboarding

Improvements in how we induct and onboard our people (new to the organisation or role) have been made, taking into account our Agile Working approach.



Apprentices' Pay

Apprentices' pay has been aligned with the National Minimum Wage rates to address attraction and recruitment challenges.

Recruitment, Retention and Talent

Flexible resourcing solutions, including career pathways, have been developed to address attraction and retention challenges

Tier 1-4 Recruitment Process

The approach to recruiting and assessing Tier 1-4 leadership and management roles has been reviewed, developed and approved.

Apprenticeship First Approach

The testing of a framework so that apprenticeships are routinely considered for entry level roles is currently underway.

Corporate Learning and Development Offer

Taking on board the views and input from stakeholders, the corporate Learning and Development offer has been reviewed and updated to reflect the needs of the organisation.

Service Improvements across HROD

Some key service improvements that have taken place across our One HROD service, including both our Strategy and Commissioning team and our People Solutions Delivery team:

- **HR Scorecard** and **strategic workforce planning** discussions with Assistant Directors, the feedback from which has scoped our priorities for 2023/2024
- **Policy review Framework**, redesigning our approach to policies, to reflect the tone and voice of the Council. The grievance policy is due to be launched, following positive engagement with stakeholders, other policy review to follow shortly.
- **Intranet analytics and demand management** approached to support improved service delivery
- **Specialised recruitment team** formed to enable internal executive search and onboarding, adding greater value and saving money for recruiting managers.
- **Commercial Approach**, saw the team successfully retender for an existing contract and onboard a new customer.
- **Health and Safety team** supported the temporary move of Westgate School into Northgate House
- **HR Advisory colleagues** have launched a number of policies and approaches in terms of pension and the Service Orders for Warwickshire Fire and Rescue service
- **The Learning Hub**, implemented a new Learning Management System
- **The Organisational Development Team**, have delivered wide range of local interventions, including team development, coaching and mentoring, supporting working relationships, performance and confidence
- **Our People Voice Podcast**, produced by our Diversity, Inclusions and Wellbeing Team, with our own colleagues as guests, talking about issues that affect their daily lives and sharing their experiences.

Awards and Recognition



Warwickshire County Council Star Awards

Homes for Ukraine, instrumental part of the Star Award winning team, for the DBS process.



PPMA Excellence in People Management Awards 2022

Payroll Team, PPMA award for Excellence in Service Delivery: The Unsung Heroes Award



Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Team, submitted Warwickshire County Council to be accredited with the Inclusive Employer Standard Silver



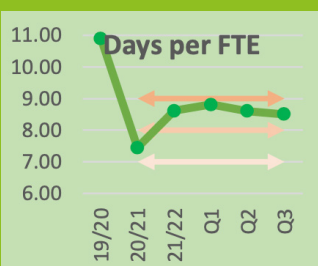
Leading Organisational Wellbeing Group, achieved Bronze status and now working towards achieving Silver.

Measuring Our Success

Across One HR the following Key Business Measures (KBM's) that are reported to Cabinet and Key Business Indicators (KBI's) reported to Corporate Board on a quarterly Basis. The following shows our performance trend.

Key Business Measures

Sickness Absence Trend



Performance has stabilised this year, with Q3 at 8.50 days per FTE, and remains in target of 8 days per FTE (+/- 1 day).

Engagement

Engagement Score 76%
 20/21 = 74% Target = 78%
Response Rate 40%
 20/21 = 39%,
 2025 Target = 70%

Employee Engagement increased slightly from last year and it is pleasing to see an increased in our response rate as we continue to work towards our 2025 target.

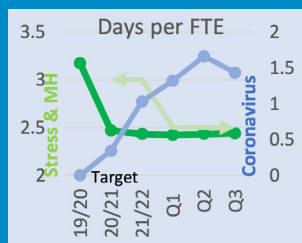
Pay Gaps

Gender 2.4%
Ethnicity 0.2%
Disability 2.4%
 Target 0% (+/-5%)

All our mean pay gaps are within target and are all closer to 0% compared with 2021/22 performance is strong against comparator data where available.

- Gender down 0.2% and below the ONS national average of 14.9%.
- Ethnicity down 1.0% from -0.8 (closer to zero).
- Disability down 1.1%

High Absence Reason Trend



Stress & MH absence target reduced from 3 to 2.5 days per FTE, our position remains consistent and tracking slightly below target. Covid-19 is now our 2nd highest reason and after significant increases, has now started to fall.

Engagement Indicators

Wellbeing 77%
Proud to work for WCC 80% (76% 21/22)
Safe to be authentic self 79%

These new indicators, which combined relevant question responses from the Your Say Survey have set a baseline for future years, with an encouraging start all recording over 75% agreement.

Disclosure Rates

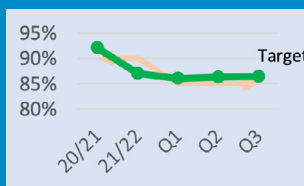
Disability 83% (+9%)
Ethnicity 96% (+11%)
Religion or Belief 94% (+14%)
Sexual Orientation 71% (+36%)

Our People Data campaign has resulted in a significant increase in disclosure rates across main categories.

We have introduced 2 new categories around caring responsibility (22.4% disclosed) and socio-economic background (21.7% disclosed).

Of those who have disclosed, the percentage of people choosing "prefer not to say" has stayed relatively the same, which indicates that more people feel comfortable with disclosing their data

Retention



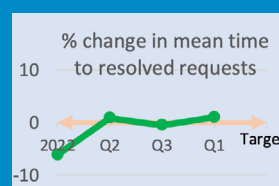
Retention has stabilised, and is currently 86.4%, compared with 87% in April 2022, and remains above target of 85%

HROD Satisfaction Score



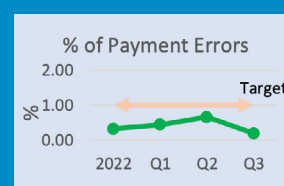
Satisfaction in both recruitment and HROD delivery are improving and above the target of 7

People Services



The target is for the time for change request to be below 0, we are currently fluctuating between +1/-1




People Services






The target is for the time for change request to be below 0, we are currently fluctuating between +1/-1

Priorities for 2023/2024

Having considered our achievements over the last year, along with our performance measures, and through engagement with Assistant Directors and other key stakeholders, as well as assessing the external factors of the employment market, we have considered the following priorities will have the biggest impact on our people:

Building Block	Priority Areas	The Difference we make
 <p>Culture, values and behaviour</p>	Culture, values and behaviour	
	Wellbeing – Aligned to our wellbeing offer, undertake a health needs assessment and continue to collate the evidence to apply for Silver Thrive at Work Accreditation. Occupational Health and EAP to re-commission.	By understanding the wellbeing needs of our people, we can design and deliver wellbeing initiatives which will maximise our people being well and in work. Achieving Silver will further demonstrate our commitment to wellbeing.
	Our Approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Launch our Approach to inclusion and continue with the actions plan with a particular focus, working with partners, on social mobility and the levelling-up agenda, the response to Inclusive Employers feedback, ONS Data and the Breaking Through and Allyship programmes	To continue our commitment to ensuring that our people feel valued, included, safe, supported and welcome, and places our approach to inclusivity at the heart of everything we do. To look for opportunities, particularly to strengthen social economic inclusion
	How we Work – Undertake an appreciative inquiry into our ways of working to showcase, celebrate and embrace the different ways of working. Continue to develop and refine the Agile Working approach including a refresh of the principles to ensure effectiveness and consistency alongside exploring options for new ways of working to support recruitment and retention.	To showcase the best of how we work and enable us to reinforce the way we need to work to deliver the Council's ambitions. Highlighting how we work will also ensure the appropriate balance for teams between the use of our office accommodation and other locations and will enable all our teams to deliver great services, whilst enabling our people to work at their best.
	Workload – Continue through our engagement approach to enable our people to manage their workload.	To demonstrate to our people that we are listening to the messages regarding manageable workloads and support all our people to work smarter not harder.
	Engaging with Off-line colleagues – Priority focus on how we engage with our colleagues who are not on-line, as well as those who do not currently engage in our YourSay activity.	To ensure that engagement levels are consistent across the council are we are listening to the voice of our colleagues.
 <p>Leadership</p>	Leadership	
	People Metrics – Leading with Data – Launch a series of power BI dashboards, to provide managers with real time data and information.	To enable managers to better understand the trends within their teams and to take informed decisions using the data provided.
	Leadership Approach – Work with our new partner Passe Partout, to co-create and deliver a leadership offer that equips leaders with the knowledge and skills to lead people to deliver our ambitions. Finalise and launch our Approach to Leadership, setting out the expectations of our leaders along with the offer of development and support.	To enable our leaders to be dynamic, adaptable, flexible and accountable. Alongside this enable our leaders to be proactive role models for inclusion and take a strengths-based, collaborative approach in achieving high-performance. Through their actions, decisions, and behaviours, they inspire a culture that enables people to feel valued, included, safe, supported, and welcome.
 <p>Performance</p>	Performance	
	Performance and Appraisal Frameworks Business as usual annual refresh activity including 360 feedback for Tier 0-3 leaders.	To ensure that our annual performance frameworks reflect the needs to the organisation.

	Policy - review of the tone and voice of the capability policy.	To enable our leaders to manage performance in a constructive and supported way.
	Organisational development and design	
	Strategic Workforce Planning – continue to develop a process, including a workforce assessment, which provides insight and challenge to ensure service are able to respond to future need and provides HROD with common themes to inform priority actions.	The enable our services to have the right people in the right jobs at the right time Supporting services to successfully deliver the MTFS position, whilst ensuring plans are in place to deliver the workforce required for the future. Support HROD in prioritising the activities that will add the most value.
	Reward and recognition	
	Pay and Reward Review – Review our approach to Pay and Reward. Consider and plan future developments	Enable us recruit and retain the best talent and to deliver on our ambition to be an employer of choice and to respond to feedback regarding pay made through the YourSay Survey and Big Conversations.
	Recognition/ Star Award Review – making proposals for future years and plan for further recognition work in future years.	To enable our people to be recognised by their leaders and peers in an appropriate and timely manner in a variety of ways.
	Our Approach to Benefits – Consolidate our benefits into one document to ensure that it supports our recruitment a retention ambition. Undertake options appraisal into implementing additional benefits, such as Electric Vehicles and Lease Car Schemes.	To showcase the employee benefits that are available to our prospective employees and prospective colleagues.
	Talent development and career opportunities	
	Recruitment and Retention Approach – understand better why our leavers are leaving and develop a suite of recruitment & retention tools including career pathways, career change, talent management and the re-commissioning of our temporary agency contract.	Enable us to recruit and retain the best talent by offering career progression and career change opportunities that make us an employer of choice.
	Apprenticeships First – review the trial and develop an approach to encourage growth of the use of apprenticeships and utilisation of the apprenticeship levy, along with supporting managers with induction of first- time workers	To create an entry level career pathway into a diverse range of roles across the council that enhances the recruitment and retention of new talent.
	Learning and Development Menu – review to ensure this meets the needs of our People.	To enable our people to develop existing and new knowledge and skills through a range of learning and development activities that are both relevant and meet the organisation's needs.

Strategic People and HROD Service Improvements	
Policy, legal and compliance – Continuing to review our people policies to reflect the changing tone and voice of the organisation whilst ensuring they cover legal requirements, ensure recent employment law requirements are implemented.	To ensure our policies and supporting documents are concise and approachable thereby enabling managers and Colleagues to use them more effectively.
Horizon scanning, forthcoming policy, legislation and Industrial action – Ensuring the organisation is ready to adopt any changes – examples include carers leave, flexible working rights, and a potential review of EU derived employment law along with potential industrial action.	To provide assurance that we are adopting any changes required to meet our legal obligations.
HR Commercial Strategy – Developing our strategy so our traded services remain strong in an increasingly competitive marketplace.	To continue to deliver trusted and valued solutions and advice to our traded customers.
Approach to Health and Safety – review our approach and commitment, continue with our action plan, with a particular focus on the Policy framework and lone working.	To ensure that we are compliant and championing good working practices in terms of health and safety.
Data Metrics - Continue to consider our service performance metrics, ensuring this right data is collected and that we are measuring customer satisfaction across all our delivery functions.	So that we can understand how we are performing as a service and identify where we can improve our service to customers.
Agree our service offer, in line with predicted headcount, with the organisation, ensuring that we are adding the most value.	Our customers are clear on the services we offer and the roles and responsibilities associated with them.
Service Simplification - continue with simplification and addressing our failure demand	Customers see improved service performance and HR teams are able to focus on value add activities.
HROD Wellbeing - ensure the wellbeing of our teams, especially during busy periods, maximise the retention of our talent.	Ensuring that the priority the organisation places on wellbeing is focussed on the HROD service as well so that our teams are supported to do their best work.

Conclusions

2022/2023 has been another challenging but successful year for delivery against the Our People Strategy, with some emerging priorities being identified throughout the year, including Strategic Workforce Planning and the Pay and Reward review. Particular successes include:

- Development of Our Approach to Leadership and procuring a partner to scope and develop our Leadership Offer.
- Well received annual reviews for Engagement, Health and Safety and Wellbeing, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, which tell our Story, celebrate successes and provide focus for further work.
- Our Payroll team were awarded the PPMA Award for Excellence in Service Delivery – Unsung Heroes.
- Our new approach to engaging our people has been well received with an increase in participation and an increase in our engagement scores, along with some positive benchmark positions, for our new measures.
- From a commercial perspective, we were successful in continuing to provide services to Wokingham Borough Council and Stratford upon Avon District Council.
- Alongside the longer-term strategic deliverables we have continued to support our people and enabled them to continually deliver for the communities that we serve.
- In addition to supporting the Our People Strategy our HROD Delivery colleagues have had another busy and successful year, with increased demand on all our services.

Whilst some of our major projects and initiatives will continue into 2023/2024, we have identified some key activities to best support the delivery of the Council Plan and respond to the internal and external employment challenges we are currently facing, particularly regarding recruitment, retention, workload and wellbeing.

We will continue to develop the HR service that we can all be proud of, with exceptional service delivery for our customers today and tomorrow.

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Staff and Pensions Committee

6 March 2023

Business Plan Report

Recommendation

That the Pension Fund Investment Sub Committee considers and approves the Business Plan attached at Appendix 1.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 It is best practice for local authority pension funds to operate a formal and documented Business Plan for their operations. This report sets out a recommended Business Plan for 2023/24 (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 The Business Plan sits alongside other key documents which govern the strategy and operations of the fund, including the Investment Strategy and Funding Strategy.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The fund has an investment strategy and a funding strategy designed to manage the financial position of the fund. The Business Plan is designed to ensure that these two strategies are updated and implemented appropriately, and that the overall administration and management of the fund is efficient and effective.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 The fund has a climate risk policy designed to minimise the fund's contribution towards climate change and minimise the fund's exposure to risk driven by climate change.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 None

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

5.1 None

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Warwickshire Pension Fund Business Plan 2023/24

Background Papers

None.

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

Local Member(s): not applicable for pension fund report

Other members:

WARWICKSHIRE

pension fund

Business Plan

2023/2024

Contents

1	Introduction
2	Activity
3	Long-Term Objectives
4	Key Performance Measures
5	Key Business Plan Items
6	Actions

Appendices

A	Administration Performance Measures
B	Investment Performance Measures
C	Single Action Plan

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the business plan for the Warwickshire Pension Fund for 2023/24, including objectives, strategic priorities, and an action plan to achieve them.
- 1.2 Warwickshire County Council (WCC) is the Administering Authority of the Warwickshire Pension Fund ('the Fund') administering both the Local Government and Firefighter Pension Schemes. This business plan relates to the Local Government Pension Scheme only.
- 1.3 The Warwickshire Pension Fund is administered by the Strategic Director for Resources on behalf of Warwickshire County Council (the scheme manager), five district councils and other scheduled and admitted public service organisations and their contractors.
- 1.4 The administration of the fund is carried out through Warwickshire County Council's Staff and Pensions Committee, the Pension Fund Investment Sub Committee, and the Local Pension Board.
- 1.5 The committees are comprised of elected County Council members whilst the Board is an equal mix of representatives of employers and scheme members with an independent chair in accordance with the requirements of the Public Services Pension Act 2013.

2. Activity

- 2.1 At March 2022, the total membership of the fund stood at 54,329, an increase of 3.4% in one year. Pension fund membership continues to increase over the long-term. This increase is expected to continue due to automatic enrolment and increased public awareness of pensions.
- 2.2 The number of employers has increased to 206 at March 2022, and this also continues a long term trend of an increasing number of active employers, driven for example by academisation and the contracting out of services by organisations within the pension fund.
- 2.3 The complexity of the scheme continues to increase over time, for example the implementation of the McCloud remedy, the Guaranteed Minimum Pension reconciliation, and the simpler final salary pension activity being gradually replaced by more complex calculations for pensions which have to incorporate different rules and retirement ages for different periods of membership.
- 2.4 The fund value has continued to increase and was at £2.782bn at March 2022.
- 2.5 The complexity of investment activity has steadily increased with the introduction of a variety of "alternatives" funds.

- 2.6 In the longer term, pooling will reduce the amount of fund managers that the Fund commissions directly, however the increased complexity in terms of the number of different mandates invested in is likely to remain.

3. Long term objectives

- 3.1 The Fund's fundamental objectives are that:

- i.) Pension benefits are paid to members accurately and on time; and
- ii.) The funds are available to pay benefits when they fall due.

- 3.2 To do this the Fund will:

- i.) Ensure the governance arrangements of the Pension Fund allow officers, employers, Pension Fund Committee and Pension Board members to discharge their responsibilities efficiently and effectively;
- ii.) Deliver a high-quality benefit administration service, working effectively with scheme employers and maintaining a constant focus on data quality and customer service; and
- iii.) Ensure the financial sustainability of the Fund through effective forecasting of long-term liabilities, determination and collection of appropriate contributions and generation of an appropriate risk adjusted return from the fund's investments.

4. Key Actions and Performance Measures

- 4.1 Key actions and performance indicators for the Fund are organised into the categories of administration, investment, and governance / management.

Administration

- 4.2 Administration service performance measures are set out in Appendix A.

- 4.3 Alongside the key metrics for the administration service a number of key activities will be progressed, these include:

- The implementation of the McCloud remedy;
- Embedding the operation of i-Connect into business as usual;
- Expanding the number of members using the online member self-service portal;
- Preparation for the introduction of the Pensions Dashboard; and
- Pensioner payroll reconciliations to pension systems.

Investments

- 4.4 The Fund needs to ultimately focus on ensuring that the rates of return required by the triennial valuation are achieved and that enough income is

generated to cover any shortfall between contributions, benefits and expenses.

- 4.5 To support this aim, the Investment Strategy sets out a Strategic Asset Allocation (Appendix B), and within each investment fund a target risk / return profile is delivered over the appropriate timeframe, i.e. performance is usually measured over the medium to long-term.
- 4.6 In addition to business as usual the following key activities will be undertaken:
- Ensuring compliance with the 2020 UK Stewardship Code.
 - Further development of ESG monitoring and climate change actions.
 - Supporting the development of further products within the Border to Coast Pension Partnership.
 - Review of the implications of the levelling up white paper as further guidance is issued.
 - Recruitment of a permanent Senior Accountant.
 - Respond to the pending LGPS pooling reforms guidance.
 - Raising the profile of fund manager performance monitoring.

Governance / Management

- 4.7 In maintaining the good governance of the fund, the following additional performance measures and key actions will be delivered:
- Cash flow management will continue to have a high profile to ensure that it is not necessary to sell assets inappropriately under distress.
 - The pension fund accounts are prepared and published on time, without qualification by external audit. Delays in approving the accounts have been experienced in the last 2 years however due to factors outside of the Fund's control (external audit capacity and delays in Government issuing guidance on infrastructure valuations).
 - Review and implement as appropriate the requirements of the Scheme Advisory Board Good Governance project and the Pensions Regulator Single Code of Practice.
 - Continued focus on employer covenants where necessary.

5. Key Business Plan Themes

Workforce Planning

- 5.1 Workforce planning will be undertaken to promote staff retention and maintaining resilience within small and specialized services.
- 5.2 The Fund will consider succession planning in respect of committee and board membership in order to maximize the chances of identifying and

recruiting new members when required and will consider ways to promote diversity.

- 5.3 Both the administration team and the governance and investments team have increased resources in recent years, and this has improved the performance, governance and resilience of the Fund's operations. Capacity will be kept under review but no further increases in general capacity are planned for at this time. Resources required for specific projects will be identified and approved through business cases and project management approaches.

Ensuring Appropriate Governance

- 5.4 The Fund will review, when available, the outcomes of the Scheme Advisory Board Good Governance project and the Pensions Regulator Single Code of Practice and take steps to implement any new arrangements that are required.
- 5.5 Considering the pending changes in governance requirements and the passing of time since last being considered, the Fund will review the pension fund committee governance structure and terms of reference considering any new guidance, best practice and comparators in other Funds.

Climate Change / ESG Policy

- 5.6 The Fund will continue to take opportunities to support the fight against climate change and to mitigate the Fund's exposure to climate risk and will look to improve its use of metrics relating to ESG and Climate Change (metric benchmarks for use by the Fund were agreed in March 2022).

Developing Improved Systems

- 5.7 i-Connect and Member Self Service have been implemented in the last 2 years. i-Connect has become business as usual, and Member Self Service will continue to expand its coverage to a wider proportion of the scheme's membership.
- 5.8 Implementation of Pensions Dashboard functionality will be an important activity for the Fund but will be driven by externally set timelines. In the short term it is important for the Fund to focus on advanced preparation for the anticipated changes wherever possible.

Collaboration

- 5.9 The Fund will collaborate with other funds and the Border to Coast Pension Partnership in a number of ways including:
- Regional Pension Fund Managers group
 - Joint communications working group
 - Pooling administration management group
 - Software provider user groups

- The Border to Coast Operational Officers Group, Joint Committee, and Section 151 Officer groups.

Strong Investment Management

- 5.10 The 2022 valuation presents a significantly improved funding level at a whole-fund level despite very significant volatility in financial markets in the last few years.
- 5.11 Some of the fund's investments remain outside of the pool. As Border to Coast matures and develops more products the Fund may increase its allocations to the pool. At the same time the Fund will ensure it retains strong links with fund managers outside of the pool to exercise appropriate stewardship of all its assets.
- 5.12 Being able to reach allocation targets in private markets where opportunities to invest can take time remains a challenge that the Fund faces.
- 5.13 Fund manager performance is critical to the Fund and the Fund will seek to implement a more empirical and formal set of criteria for when to enhance the scrutiny of an underperforming fund, where under performance could mean a number of issues including low returns, taking unacceptable risks, not implementing the expected style, etc. and when to explore seriously the option to move funds elsewhere.

Pooling

- 5.14 The Border to Coast Pension Partnership will continue to develop new products and Warwickshire Pension Fund will work with BCPP and partner funds to help to shape the products being developed.
- 5.15 Warwickshire Pension Fund will retain a preference for investing in pooled products that meets its objectives but retains the option to invest with other managers where this is appropriate. Illustrative of this is that in 2022/23 some new investments were made into private debt and infrastructure assets managed outside of the pool, in order to achieve the optimum risk/return profile for the Fund.
- 5.16 The Fund will continue to work alongside the pool and partner funds on responsible investment and sustainability, including making more use of metrics to evidence and promote sustainable activity.
- 5.17 The Fund will also work with the Border to Coast Pensions Partnership and Partner Funds to develop the next 5 year strategic plan for the pool.

Investing in Employer Liaison

- 5.18 The fund will continue to work closely with employers, providing information, support, signposting, and training to help employers to meet their responsibilities.

- 5.19 2023/24 will be the first year of the revised employer contribution rates from the 2022 valuation and the Fund will monitor for any issues arising from this.

Review of Cashflow Requirements

- 5.20 Officers will continue to monitor cash balances closely so the Fund can meet operating and investment cashflow requirements. The new cashflow strategy will be implemented, including the implementation of an additional money market fund to hold cash balances and to diversify risk.

6. Actions

- 6.1 Appendix C sets out a summary of the actions planned for the coming year. The activity plan focuses on significant change activity and activity to do with delivering key functions.
- 6.2 Actions are grouped into the following categories:
- Ensuring a high-quality administration service
 - Actuarial activities
 - Maximising Investment Benefits
 - Ensuring Good Governance
 - Sustainability
- 6.3 A new section has been created in respect of sustainability to raise the profile of this area of activity.

Appendix A

Administration Performance Measures

Key Performance Indicator	Fund Target (95%)
1. Letter detailing transfer in quote	10 days
2. Letter detailing transfer out quote	10 days
3. Process and pay a refund	10 days
4. Letter notifying estimate of retirement benefits (Active)	15 days
5. Letter notifying actual retirement benefits (Active)	15 days
6. Process and pay lump sum (Active)	10 days
7. Process and pay death grant	10 Days
8. Initial letter notifying death of a member	5 days
9. Letter notifying amount of dependents benefits	10 days
10. Divorce quote letter	45 days
11. Divorce settlement letter	15 days
12. Send notification of joining scheme to member	40 days
13. Deferred benefits into payment	15 days
14. Calculate and notify deferred benefits.	30 days
15. Average days from retirement to payment of lump sum.	Measure of member experience

Strategic Asset Allocation

Asset class	Current Target Asset Allocation (%)	Asset Allocation Range (%)
UK equities	6.0	+/-2.5
Overseas equities	31.0	+/-2.5
Fundamental global equity*	5.0	+/-2.5
Private equity	6.0	n/a
Total Growth	48.0	
Property	10.0	n/a
Infrastructure	10.0	n/a
Private debt	7.0	n/a
Multi asset credit	10.0	n/a
Total Income	37.0	
UK corporate bonds	10.0	+/-1.5
UK index linked bonds	5.0	+/-0.5
Total Protection	15.0	
Total	100.0	

* Refers to passive global equities invested in line with the RAFI All World 3000 index, which weights underlying constituents by fundamental factors as opposed to traditional market capitalisation weightings.

Single Action Plan

C1. Ensuring a high-quality administration service

Ref	Action	Timescale
1	Annual Pensioners Newsletter issued	April-June 2022
2	Annual benefit statements issued	By 31 August 2023
3	Embedding Member Self Service, expanding the number of users	April March 2024
4	Annual Allowance statements issued	By 5 October 2023
5	Employer Engagement/training event	November 2023
6	Administration performance - KPIs reported to the Staff and Pensions Committee and Local Pensions Board	Quarterly
7	Review of Pension Fund website	Quarterly
8	Review of complaints and compliments received, and report to Staff and Pensions committee during the year	Quarterly
9	McCloud Project	Dependent on issue of requirements
10	Data quality review	Annual
11	Develop pension dashboards	Dependent on issue of requirements

C2. Actuarial Activities

Ref	Action	Timescale
12	Monitor employer contribution performance through the year	Monthly
13	Review, investigate, and mitigate potential sources of funding risk	April 2023
14	Review employer covenants and risk management for non-statutory employers and review of employer monitoring arrangements	July 2023

C3. Optimising Investment Risk and Return

Ref	Action	Timescale
15	Support the development of new Border to Coast fund products, for example the property fund	As funds launch
16	Continue to move the investment mix towards the long-term Strategic Asset Allocation	Ongoing
17	Appropriate engagement with the governance of Border to Coast via the Joint Committee, Operational Officers Group, and Section 151 Meetings, and through the exercising of shareholder voting rights	Ongoing
18	Implementation of an additional money market fund to assist in the management of cashflow	June 2023

Ref	Action	Timescale
19	Implementation of a system with criteria to trigger enhanced scrutiny of underperforming funds with a view to potential reallocation of funds elsewhere	September 2023
20	Respond to the new pooling guidance and regulation "Edinburgh Reforms"	Dependent on issue of requirements
21	Support the Border to Coast Pension Partnership in the development of their 5 year Strategic Plan	March 2024

C4. Ensuring Good Governance

Ref	Action	Timescale
22	Deliver the Pension Fund Annual General Meeting, aiming for positive feedback from all stakeholders	November 2023
23	Production of statement of accounts	May 2023
24	Publication of Annual Pension Fund Report	November 2023
25	Regular and effective review and management of Fund risks	Quarterly
26	Review of the pension fund committee structure and terms of reference	March 2024
27	Maintenance of a Policy Register / schedule for policy reviews, and the timely delivery of policy reviews	Quarterly
28	Maintenance of business continuity planning	March 2023
29	Respond to the Scheme Advisory Board Good Governance Review	Dependent on issue of requirements
30	Respond to the tPR Single Code of Practice	Dependent on issue of requirements
31	Respond to the Government's levelling up agenda and consider the Fund's position and approach to considering local investing opportunities	Dependent on issue of requirements
32	Testing of cyber security arrangements	September 2023
33	Succession planning for committee and board membership	March 2024
34	Maintenance of a training strategy and training log	

C5. Sustainability

Ref	Action	Timescale
35	Further develop the Fund's Climate Risk Strategy and the Fund's approach ESG, including the development of goals and milestones and monitoring of metrics	Ongoing
36	Ensure compliance with the 2020 UK Stewardship Code	Ongoing
37	Implement TCFD disclosure requirements	March 2024
38	Engage with pooling partner funds and Border to Coast on climate change and RI developments	Quarterly

Staff and Pensions Committee

6 March 2023

Pensions Administration Activity and Performance Update

Recommendation

That the Staff and Pensions Committee notes and comments on the content of the 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 arising directly from the content of this report.

4. Member Self Service - MSS

- 4.1 We continue to promote the use of MSS with our pension scheme membership and currently have 27.7% (8479) of eligible members signed up to use the online facility. This is up 0.7% from the last time we reported to the Board.
- 4.2 We are about to commence a project to contact our Pensioner members to introduce the facility to them. Pensioners will be able to see the current value of their pension in payment and update their personal details. The updates to personal details such as address, and email contact will then be downloaded from the Altair administration system and uploaded into the payroll system so that the member only has to do one update for both systems. This will also ensure both systems match.

- 4.3 We have been informing Pensioners that the removal of paper payslips will happen on 30 May 2023. This date has been chosen as it is the first month pensioners will receive a full month of pensions increase due from 10th April 2023. The amount paid in this month is generally what should be paid for the rest of the financial year, unless there are any tax code changes or other changes. If such changes occur, we would write and confirm those with the member. It is hoped that by introducing MSS to Pensioners, they will be encouraged to sign up so that we then have an email address to which their e-payslip can be sent out. E-payslips are password protected.
- 4.4 We will use the following platforms to promote the service: Working for Warwickshire, digital newsletter, Employer newsletter, banner on team members' email signature and individual member correspondence by letter, email, or telephone. We aim to analyse the sign up to MSS and identify any gaps where we can target promotion and encourage members to sign up if they haven't already.

5. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- 5.1 Appendix 1 shows the KPI performance for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 January 2023. The KPIs and target timescales are listed in Appendix 2. 8 out of 14 KPIs are meeting their target and the remaining 6 have all seen improvements in the total number of cases being completed within the KPI deadline. There is only one KPI which is below 85%. Appendix 2 confirms the timescales within which each KPI must be delivered.
- 5.2 For KPIs that are not being achieved:

KPI 1 - Letter detailing transfer in quote

A review of the process for these tasks has been undertaken and a redesign is being implemented. This should help to improve the percentage of cases processed with the KPI timescale.

KPI 2 - Letter detailing transfer out quote

This KPI is at 87.93% and the PAS will continue to work to bring this up to the 95% target.

KPI 3 - Process and pay a refund

This KPI has increased to 90.96% this year from 87.93% last year and work continues in order to improve performance. A high volume of deferred benefit casework has impacted on the resource available to process claims in this area.

KPI 4 - Letter notifying estimate of retirement benefits (Active)

We are currently working through the late pay award recalculations. As the April pay award was delayed until November, new enhanced pay figures for previous retirements mean pension must be recalculated. This has increased the workflow and pressure in the short term while this work was completed in

December and January. We now expect to see the time taken for notifying estimates to decrease again accordingly.

KPIs 8 & 9 - Initial letter notifying death of a member and Notification of Dependants Benefits

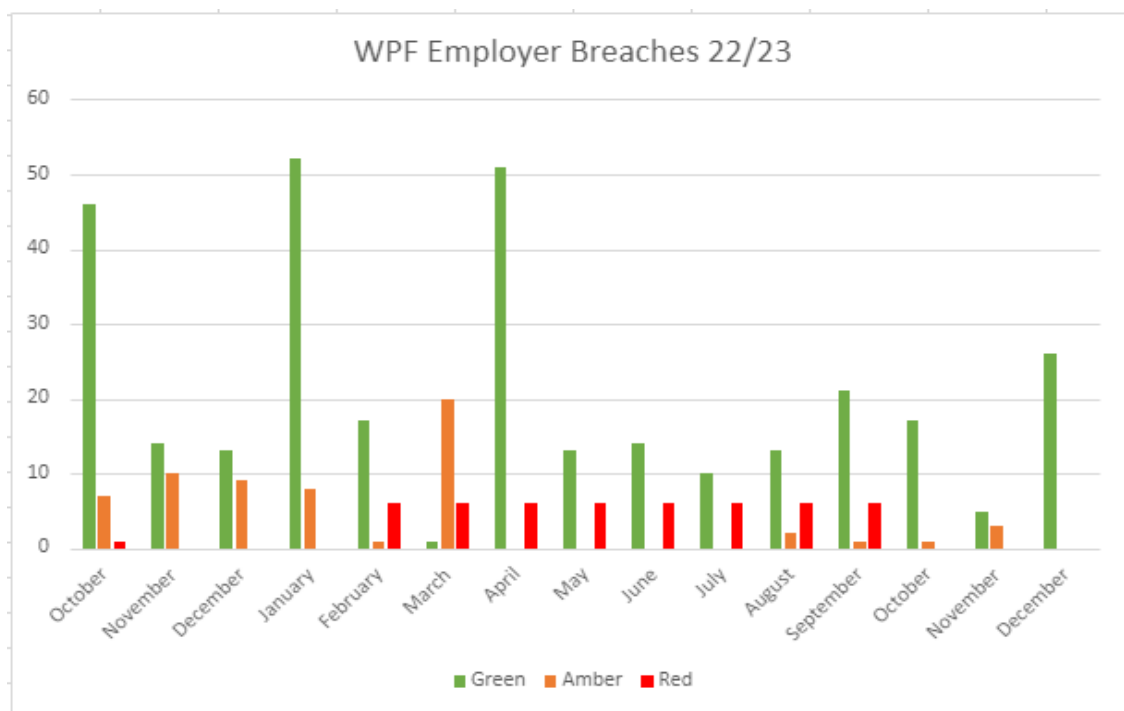
While the KPIs are currently showing as under 95% both of these are improving due to the recent workflow redesign, and have achieved the 95% target for the last month, so the average will start to increase. We have a team member attending Local Government Association training on Survivor benefits in April which will increase the number of officers trained to work on these queries.

6. Workloads

- 6.1 The PAS continues to monitor work being received by the team and ensure we have the resources to manage the work.
- 6.2 Appendix 3 shows on a monthly basis, the amount of work received, and the amount of work being completed. For the year we have opened 35430 cases and closed 35051.

7. Breaches

- 7.1 In accordance with the Fund's Breaches Policy, any amber breach results in direct contact with the employer responsible to resolve the issue. If this does not result in the necessary action required, further escalation can be used.
- 7.2 The table below indicates the number of breaches the Fund has recorded for the period 1st April 2022 to 31 December 2022:



A table depicting the number of breaches per month, these are colour coded

7.3 We are noticing that if an employer changes payroll provider, this can create a gap in the submission of data via i-Connect. This can be because the employer is giving priority to making sure employees get paid. We have included an article in the Fund’s monthly employer newsletter to highlight the need to make sure that in any payroll specification, attention is given to the need to provide information to the Fund, and that this must be achieved from the Go Live date with the new payroll provider.

8. Valuation

8.1 All rates and adjustment draft certificates were shared with employers in November and the Fund has received minimal queries. A consultation on the Funds Funding Strategy Statement (FSS) was also held.

8.2 The new rates are applicable from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026.

8.3 The Fund has been in consultation with two employers regarding their revised rates and their ongoing membership of the fund. Any changes to rates will need to be signed off by the Pension Fund Investment Sub Committee.

9. Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP)

9.1 The Fund has no outstanding IDRP cases, which is a positive reflection for the Fund.

10. Pensioner Payroll Key Performance Indicators

- 10.1 Pensioner payroll for Warwickshire Pension Fund is administered by Warwickshire County Council's payroll team.
- 10.2 The payroll team administers 39 payrolls for internal and external services.
- 10.3 Each month there are 39,000 payments made, of which 14,398 are for pensioners in the Warwickshire Pension Fund. This equates to 37%.
- 10.4 The PAS and payroll teams meet on a quarterly basis to discuss issues regarding the service provided and include a standing agenda item covering the payroll service's KPIs for the pensioner payroll. We have also requested that there is a dedicated pensioner option for members who want to provide feedback about the service, so that pensioner comments can be identified, and their questions addressed specifically.
- 10.5 The PAS receive very few queries or complaints from pensioners regarding the payment of their pension, but we continue to monitor this and will raise any issues directly with the payroll team as and when they occur.
- 10.6 The table below provides information on the pensioner payroll service KPIs. Priority is given to ensuring payments are made by the agreed payment dates. Please note the customer care indicator is only recorded for formal complaints.
- 10.7 Nil indicates no complaints have been received

Indicator	Description	Measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Customer Care	We will respond to any queries about service delivery within 5 days. (Formal complaints)	95% of queries will be responded to within 5 days.	NIL	NIL		
Accuracy	Paying people accurately.	99% of all requested staff payments will be paid accurately.	100%	100%		
Assurance	Paying people on time.	100% of input submitted onto Your HR before deadline will be paid on the relevant scheduled pay day.	100%	100%		
Statutory returns	We will make all statutory returns by the required deadlines.	100% of third party payments and statutory returns will be submitted on or before the deadline.	100%	100%		
Satisfaction with service	We will achieve constantly high levels of customer satisfaction	Traded wide net promoter score will be 8.8 or more.	9.3	9.2		

11. Outsourcing – Schools who convert to Academies

- 11.1 When a school outsources a contract, and the contractor is granted admission into Warwickshire Pension Fund, the contractor is not covered by the Department for Education (DFE) guarantee. The DFE guarantee provides assurance that if an Academy fails, the pension liabilities for the Academy would be covered.
- 11.2 Academies are asked to obtain approval from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) if they are looking to outsource a service in all cases and Funds should ask for proof of this when processing a request for such new admissions.
- 11.3 If approval is not obtained, this presents a risk to the Fund for these admissions if they are allowed to join using a passthrough arrangement. If the contractor fails then the Academy would pick up the pensions bill, but If the Academy then fails the DFE would not step in to cover the liabilities.
- 11.4 The ESFA is currently reviewing this policy and may look to alter the position due to the fact that certain individuals who were originally employed by the school are not being protected.
- 11.5 The Fund has identified that there are a small number of contractors where ESFA approval is required and this has not been obtained by the Academy. The Fund will be contacting these Academies to request that the approval is retrospectively requested. The majority of the contracts cover fewer than 10 members of staff. In total we estimate this affects approximately 60 members.
- 11.6 ESFA approval will be required before allowing a contractor to enter the Fund on a passthrough agreement. If approval is not obtained the Fund will assess whether a bespoke arrangement will need to be put in place.
- 11.7 A communication will be forwarded to all schools/Academy procurement teams to bring this to their attention.

12. Pensions Dashboards

- 12.1 The Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) are running the Dashboards Programme where all pension schemes will need to be able to connect to Dashboards. This will allow people to see all their pension pots in one place. Local Government Pension Schemes will need to establish their connection to the Dashboard by September 2024. Work has begun on establishing the technical requirement and the potential resource required to prepare for dashboards and support additional information requests that come through from members once the Dashboards go live.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Key Performance chart

Appendix 2 – Key Performance indicators

Appendix 3 – Workflow chart

Background Papers

None

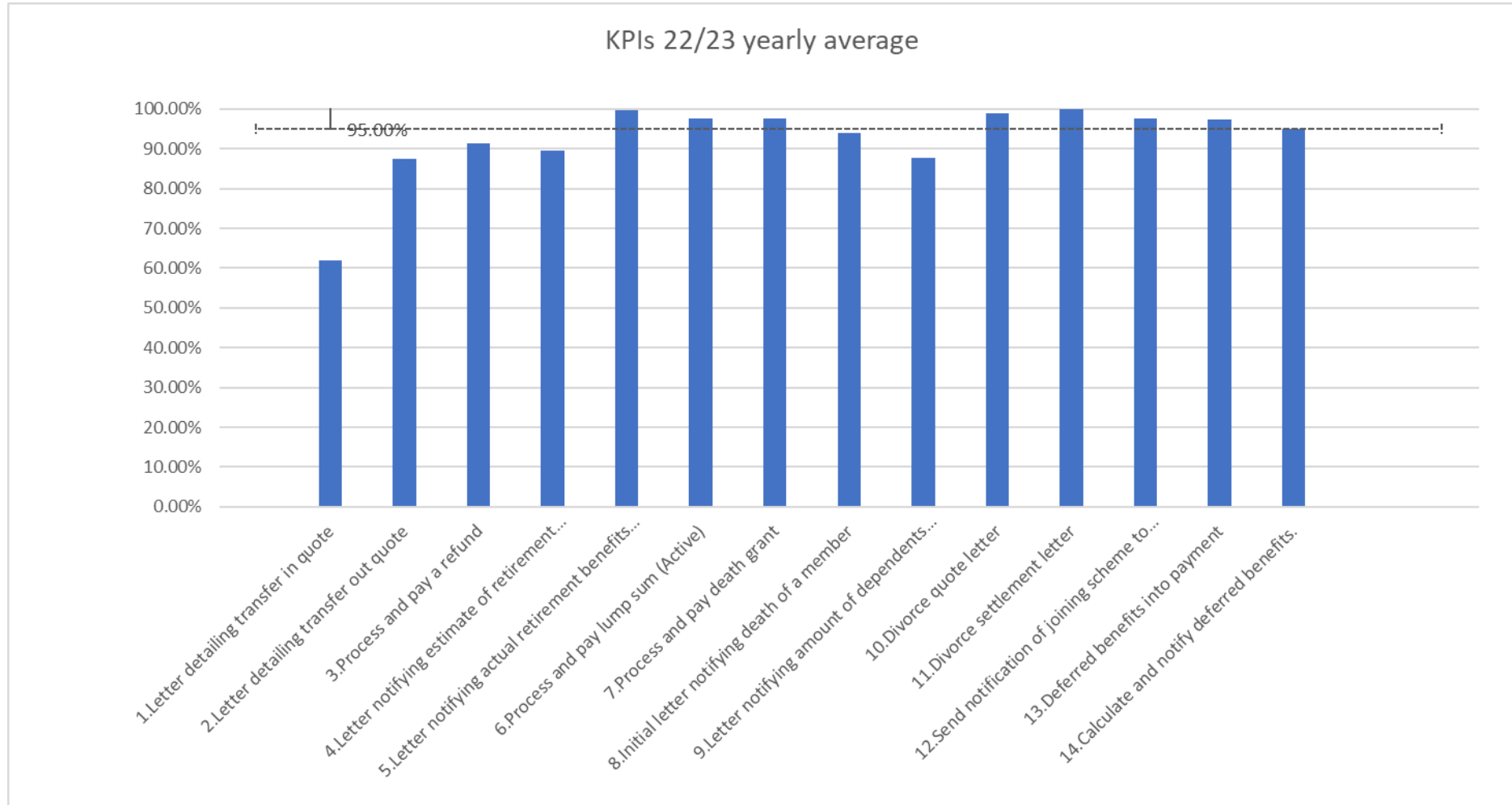
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Strategic Director	Rob Powell, Strategic Director for Resources	robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk
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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): Not applicable

Other members: Cllrs Peter Butlin, Bill Gifford, and Andy Jenns

Appendix 1



A table that shows the 14 KPIs and the level of achievement marked against a target of 95%

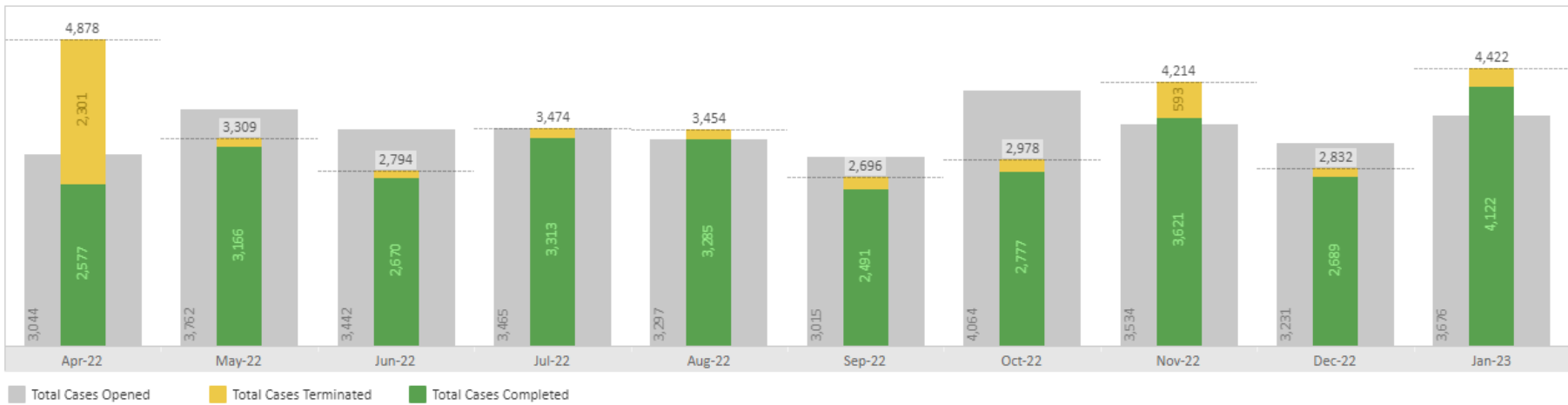
Appendix 2

Key Performance Indicator	Fund Target
Target performance	
1.Letter detailing transfer in quote	10 days
2.Letter detailing transfer out quote	10 days
3.Process and pay a refund	10 days
4.Letter notifying estimate of retirement benefits (Active)	15 days
5.Letter notifying actual retirement benefits (Active)	15 days
6.Process and pay lump sum (Active)	10 days
7.Process and pay death grant	10 Days
8.Initial letter notifying death of a member	5 days
9.Letter notifying amount of dependents benefits	10 days
10.Divorce quote letter	45 days
11.Divorce settlement letter	15 days
12.Send notification of joining scheme to member	40 days
13.Deferred benefits into payment	15 days
14.Calculate and notify deferred benefits.	30 days

Appendix 3

34,530 Cases Opened
30,711 Cases Completed
4,340 Cases Terminated
35,051 Total Closed (Completed + Terminated)
-521 Opened to Closed Variance (Less cases were opened than were closed over the period)
101.5% Opened to Closed %

Total Cases Opened & Total Closed Per Period
 Total closed cases are broken down to show volume completed and volume terminated



A bar chart that shows the number of workflow cases created and completed per month

Staff and Pensions Committee

6 March 2023

Regulatory and Policy Update

Recommendation

That the Committee notes and comments on the updates contained in this Report.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This Report covers the review of a number of policies held and operated by Warwickshire Pension Fund (the Fund). The Fund reviews its policies annually to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. There are no significant changes recommended as a result of the current review
- 1.2 This Report also provides an update in respect of regulatory issues that have arisen in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) arena since January 2023.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Any implications arising from changes to specific policies have been dealt with in the body of the report

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 There are no environmental implications arising directly from this Report.

4. Supporting Information

Review of Policy and Process

- 4.1 The Fund has reviewed its Bribery and Fraud Policy and considers that no amendments are currently required.

- 4.2 The Fund is in the process of reviewing its Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure as part of the planned review cycle and no material changes are anticipated at this stage.
- 4.3 The Fund felt that it was best to postpone the review of the Governance Process until the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) has released the findings of their Good Governance Review. If the findings are not released before the end of this year this review will take place within the next committee cycle. One of the areas that Officers feel will need to be included in the next update of our Governance Processes and the Corporate Governance Policy Statement later in the year will be an account of how the Fund will best deal with succession planning to both the Staff and Pension Committee and Local Pension Board.
- 4.4 Our Fund Discretions have also been reviewed and the Fund considers that no circumstances have arisen that require it to make any amendments.
- 4.5 Officers have also reviewed the Fund Business Plan, and the Business Continuity Plan. These are covered by other reports on this agenda and the second will be presented as an exempt report because of the nature of its content.

Regulator Updates since January 2023

- 4.6 The Single Code of Practice, which will be renamed as the General Code of Practice was expected to have been laid before Parliament by the end of January 2023. The lead officer at The Pensions Regulator (TPR) has however confirmed that there will be a short delay and that it is intended that the DWP will lay it before Parliament by the end of February 2023. At the time of writing this report we have not received any further information.
- 4.7 The Local Government Association has published its response to the HMRC consultation on The Public Services Pension Schemes (Rectification of Unlawful Discrimination) (Tax) Regulations 2023 (resulting from the McCloud judgement). As the LGA response covers the same main areas of concern held by the Fund Warwickshire Pension Fund has not made its own individual response.
- 4.8 The Scheme Advisory Board's Secretariat is currently planning for the Scheme Advisory Board's 2022 Scheme Valuation Report. The Report is aggregated using data from individual fund Valuation Reports and provides a central reference for the Government.
- 4.9 The LGPS employee contribution bandings have been published, they will be published on the website and communicated to our employers.
- 4.10 On 30 January 2023, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities launched a consultation on changes to the Scheme Advisory Board's (SAB) cost management process. The consultation closes on 24 March 2023. This is the mechanism designed to ensure a fair balance of risk

regarding the cost of providing public service defined benefit (DB) pension schemes between members of those schemes and the Exchequer (and by extension taxpayers). The Fund will review the consultation and decide whether to make a response.

- 4.11 On 12 January 2023, The Pension Regulator (TPR) published a new version of the “Dealing with Transfer Requests” guidance with updates made to the section headed ‘Direct members to mandatory guidance from MoneyHelper’. The guidance assists pension schemes when applying the Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Conditions for Transfers) Regulations 2021. Under the new guidance, when telling members that they must receive guidance about scams from MoneyHelper, schemes should provide a link to book online or by telephone to obtain that guidance. The guidance also now makes it clearer that members must use this link to book a MoneyHelper safeguarding guidance appointment. Otherwise, they may accidentally book a Pension Wise appointment or obtain general MoneyHelper advice. The Fund will use this information to assist members in making informed decisions about their transfers.

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

Local Member(s): Not applicable

Other members: Cllrs Bill Gifford and Andy Jenns

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Staff and Pensions Committee

6 March 2023

Employers Joining and Leaving the Warwickshire Pension Fund

Recommendation

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 required for admission:

- Newbold And Treddington CofE Primary School, which entered the Fosse Multi-Academy Trust on 1 November 2022.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Pension Fund must accept applications from scheduled bodies where the requirements of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 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.

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 The committee is referred to the Warwickshire Pension Fund, Admissions and Terminations Policy 2021 and the Funding Strategy Statement 2021, copies of which can be read here

<https://api.warwickshire.gov.uk/documents/WCCC-67491560-1273>

<https://api.warwickshire.gov.uk/documents/WCCC-67491560-1282>

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

If approved the Pension Fund Administrator will ensure the appropriate steps are taken to admit the listed employer upon confirmation from the Strategic Director for Resources.

Background Papers

None

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

Local Member(s): Not applicable – pension fund report

Other members: Cllr Andy Jenns

Staff and Pensions Committee

6 March 2023

Review of the Minutes of the Warwickshire Local Fire Pension Board Meeting of 7 November 2022

Recommendation

That the Staff and Pensions Committee receive, consider, and comment on the minutes of the meeting of the Warwickshire Fire Local Pension Board held on 7 November 2022.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Local Fire Pension Board held on 7 November 2022 are attached as an appendix.

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

Appendix

- 1. Minutes of the meeting of the Local Fire Pension Board held on 7 November 2022

	Name	Contact Information
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Portfolio Holder	Councillor Peter Butlin, 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: none

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

Monday 7 November 2022

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members

Martin Reohorn (Chair)
Barnaby Briggs
Caroline Jones
Paul Morley
Tony Morgan
Councillor Brian Hammersley

Officers

Liz Firmstone, Service Manager (Transformation)
Vicky Jenks, Pensions Admin Delivery Lead
Jan Cumming, Senior Solicitor and Team Leader
Andy Carswell, Democratic Services Officer
Lisa Eglesfield, Team Lead Benefits
Martin Griffiths, Technical Specialist Pensions Fund Policy and Governance

Others Present

Matt Mott, West Yorkshire Pension Fund
Helen Scargill, West Yorkshire Pension Fund

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Sian Marsh.

(2) Board Members' Disclosures of Interest

Barnaby Briggs declared an interest in the event the Board discussed immediate detriment, as he was an immediate detriment case himself.

(3) Public Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2022 were agreed as an accurate record, save for a small amendment to Item 6 to say “retirement pathway process” instead of recruitment.

2. Risk Monitoring

The item was introduced by Vicky Jenks (Pensions Admin Delivery Lead). There had been no major changes to the risk monitoring report, although some small typos had been corrected. It was highlighted that risks relating to cyber security remained high because of the significance of any potential impact.

Responding to the Chair, Vicky Jenks said the risk register scores were reviewed by officers on a monthly basis and any changes would be highlighted at the following meeting. Helen Scargill suggested pension dashboards should be added to the register. This was agreed by members.

3. Pensions Administration Activity and Performance update

Vicky Jenks said work was ongoing between the Warwickshire and West Yorkshire Funds to ensure the correct processes were in place and full understanding of roles and responsibilities had been confirmed. Work on the retirement pathway process was nearing completion after what had been a lengthy process out of necessity. It was hoped the results could be shared with members soon. Helen Scargill said the West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) would soon be sending out letters to members who were now in scope for remedy, following further clarification from LGA. Helen Scargill informed the Board that an update on the requirements for Pensions Dashboard was included in the latest monthly report sent by West Yorkshire. WYPF would be working on the connectivity to the Dashboard on behalf of the Fire Authorities they administer, but Authorities would need to ensure they were aware of what they would be responsible for.

Helen Scargill confirmed that she had attended the LGA annual conference held on 25 and 26 October. She also reminded members that a full disaster recovery had been undertaken by WYPF, and full notes on the lessons learned would be available soon.

Members' attention was drawn to the most recent key performance indicator statistics.

Members were reminded of the possible industrial action to take place and advised how this could impact on pension contributions. Helen Scargill advised that if a scheme member were to strike for one hour on a particular day, then the whole day would not count towards their pension. It was felt it was important to communicate this fact to scheme members.

Members' attention was also drawn to the explanation of how abatement, where members may have more than one firefighter pension in payment and are re-employed within a Fire Authority and may have more than one new employment, would be calculated, after WYPF had received information from the Local Government Association. Helen Scargill said that going forward the WYPF would implement the same policy as the LGA.

Paul Morley said he had received an enquiry from a member Union that had transferred in from a different service and was not able to see it on the member online portal. He asked if this was an

issue that had been raised and if there was anything in place to resolve it. Helen Scargill said she was not aware of any global issue. Paul Morley said he would ask some of the individuals affected for more information so the matter could be investigated.

Regarding the potential strike action, Paul Morley asked for clarification regarding how lost pension/service could be made up following a period of strike action. Helen Scargill said they would be given the opportunity to pay pension contributions for the missing period. The payments would be based on the period of time the members had been on strike for, rather than a whole day's worth of contributions if they had only been on strike for one hour. The Chair clarified that if a member went on strike during a night shift, this would result in two lost days of pension payments. If a member decided not to pay contributions to cover lost pension/service they could work additional days in order to make sure they achieved maximum service for pension purposes.

The Chair stated the Council was able to use its discretion to not pay employer pension contributions, as the member could have to cover both employee and employer contributions, but it was unable to have a blanket policy not to pay.

Vicky Jenks said discussions had been taking place at monthly meetings with the WYPF regarding the reconciliation between the pensioner payroll and the administration systems.

Some communications had been made available to members via the LGA regarding Matthews (second modified retained exercise), and responses were starting to be received. Although this was taking place, clarification was still being sought on who would be responsible for the management of the project. Helen Scargill said WYPF would not get involved until a member chose to become a modified member and a new record was needed.

Following a suggestion made by the Chair, it was agreed that the Board would consider only the most recent monthly report at each Board meeting. It was agreed that if issues arose from previous month's reports then the matter could be revisited.

4. Governance and Policy Update

The item was introduced by Vicky Jenks. Members' attention was drawn to the fact that around 9,000 firefighters, who were claimants for age discrimination, were due to receive a compensatory payment due to uncertainty around proposed changes to their pensions, which had been found to be discriminatory. Some of these claimants were from Warwickshire.

Vicky Jenks reminded members the Pensions Dashboard was due to go live in September 2024, and that it had been agreed to add the topic to the risk register. Work on data quality and reconciliation with payroll was ongoing to ensure data made available to members via the Dashboard would be accurate. Additionally a project working group at WCC would be established in relation to Matthews project,

Helen Scargill said the required information in relation to deferred pensioners and beneficiary pensioners had been submitted to the National Fraud Initiative. This was to check nobody was receiving pension payments they weren't entitled to.

Responding to a question from the Chair, Vicky Jenks said there had been around 25 members who had taken up the option to purchase service as part of the first modified retained exercise.

Information was now being gathered to identify members in scope for the second exercise and a letter and form would be sent out to those. Vicky Jenks said information would be sent to a member's last known address, but other ways of contacting people were being explored. These would need to comply with GDPR. Barnaby Briggs said there was a retired members association who might be able to assist with finding members. He said he would be happy to pass on information to those involved with the association if it would assist. Vicky Jenks said information that was sent out would be generic, as individuals' personal data could not be shared. She also said the Fund may need to rely on essential guidance on what to do where pay information was not held. Vicky Jenks confirmed WCC held information going back to 2006.

5. Forward Plan

Vicky Jenks told members it had not been possible to bring an update on the abatement policy to the Board before now, but it would be discussed at December's Staff and Pensions Committee meeting. The Board would have the opportunity to discuss it at the next meeting in February. It was hoped an update on the discretions policy would also be available for February. The other items due to come to the next meeting were outlined. Vicky Jenks said training would need to be arranged for the Board's new member, Councillor Brian Hammersley, and this could be coordinated with other authorities if they also needed to take part in training.

Responding to a point raised by the Chair, Vicky Jenks said attempts were being made to consolidate codes of practice and good governance so there were fewer of them. Matt Mott told members that Code of Practice 14 was due to be withdrawn as part of the consolidation process. The new process was due to be announced in the spring. Matt Mott said a meeting or training session could be arranged on the new code and how it would benefit Fire and Rescue Services, pension scheme members and administrators.

6. Chair's annual report

The Chair introduced the item and explained the key areas the Board had considered during the 2021/22 municipal year, including the transfer of administration and the memorandum of understanding for immediate detriment cases.

Jan Cumming (Senior Solicitor and Team Leader) noted that the report contained legal advice that had been given to the Council and wanted to clarify if the Chair was satisfied this could be made public or should remain exempt. The Chair said he had taken it from the previous year's report so was already public, but was happy to seek clarification.

7. Any Other Business

The Chair said he had attended the recent LGA Pensions Conference. He did not feel there were any new issues raised that had not been discussed previously in relation to pensions. However, he stated his belief that some Boards appeared to have exceeded their remit and turned themselves into decision making Boards. He did not believe this was an issue in Warwickshire.

Regarding the proposed industrial action, Barnaby Briggs said the Fire Brigades Union was currently balloting on whether or not to accept the pay offer. The results on this were likely to be known in a week's time. After this, the possibility of strike action would be discussed and contingency plans would be put in place. Barnaby Briggs said a meeting with pensions staff would

be needed to clarify that information being sent out to scheme members in relation to strike action was correct.

Responding to the Chair, Vicky Jenks confirmed there were no new IDRPCs or breaches to report.

8. Future Meeting Dates

Members noted the future meeting dates.

The meeting rose at 2.54pm

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Chair

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