

## COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

### Report of the County Treasurer

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Board before taking effect.

**Recommendation: that the Committee approve the revised Communications Policy.**

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Communications Policy is one of the four statutory statements that the Fund is required to have in place. It sets out the Fund's policies on the provision of information and publicity about the Scheme to members, representatives of members and employing authorities. It sets out the format, frequency and method of distributing such information or publicity; other key organisations that we communicate with; our values in relation to communications; and the professional expertise available to the Fund.
- 1.2. The Communications Policy is reviewed on a regular basis. The strategy was last revised in November 2012, and the policy is therefore due for a further review. A revised draft is attached at Appendix 1. The strategy was considered by the Pension Board at their meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, and comments made by the Board have been taken into account in the draft presented for approval.

#### 2. Communications Policy

- 2.1. The Communications Policy covers the following areas:
- 2.2. Why We Communicate  
This section provides a simple introduction explaining the importance of communicating with employers and employees (including active, deferred and retired members) and how each of these groups is entitled to receive expert support and information.
- 2.3. Our Methods Of Communication  
The Devon Pension Fund aims to use the most appropriate and efficient means for reaching the employers and scheme members, and this section sets out the various methods of communication available. A link to the Pension Fund's Annual Report and Accounts and other key fund management documentation is also provided
- 2.4. Fund Governance  
This section contains information regarding the management of the Fund and includes links to the minutes of the Investment and Pension Fund Committee and Pension Board.
- 2.5. Our Values  
This section clearly states the standards and values of Peninsula Pensions and provides a link to the Customer Charter which has been created specifically with scheme members in mind. The Customer Charter sets out core standards of service which are measurable and encourages members to provide feedback on the experience of using the service, including what to do in the event that a customer is unhappy with the service received.
- 2.6. Professional Know How

The Devon Pension Fund employs the services of a range of specialists. This section provides information about the fund's actuary, investment fund managers, independent advisor and explains how the Fund obtains legal advice.

#### 2.7. Other Organisations We Connect With

This section highlights some of the external organisations that the Fund engages with on a regular basis and provides a summary of the connection.

#### 2.8. Meeting Stakeholder Information Needs

Scheme Members and Employers have been identified as the two key stakeholder groups connected to the Devon Pension Fund. Appendix A to the policy clearly states the information requirements of each group and notes the corresponding product(s) and frequency of delivery and availability, in order to satisfy the information requirements.

### **3. Amendments to the Communications Policy**

3.1. Some key amendments to the Communications Policy are highlighted below:

- Screenshots and links from the Peninsula Pensions website have been added in order to assist users with website navigation;
- Following the launch of the Altair Self-Service portal, members are able to access their own pension records online. A section detailing what information is available via the self-service portal has been added to the policy;
- The list of organisations that we connect with has been expanded to include the LGPS Scheme Advisory Board (SAB), the Local Government Association (LGA) and The Pensions Regulator.

### **4. Future developments of the Policy**

4.1. A stakeholder mapping exercise is currently being undertaken, in conjunction with the Devon County Council in-house communications team, in order to identify additional stakeholders connected to the Devon Pension Fund and to assess their information requirements.

4.2. Devon Audit Partnership will be conducting an audit of the Communications Policy and will identify recommendations for improvements which will be considered for inclusion at the next review.

### **5. Conclusion**

5.1. The Committee is asked to approve the revised Communications Policy.

Mary Davis

Electoral Divisions: All

Local Government Act 1972

List of Background Papers - Nil

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