**LOCAL PENSION BOARD - 24 MAY 2021**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES**

**PENSION FUND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS REPORT**

## Purpose of the Report

1. To provide a regular update to the board regarding progress in respect of areas of identified improvement within the Pensions Section.

## Background

2. The Continued Improvements and Systems team has been created to assess and improve existing processes, maximising the use of technology, whilst exploring other areas including tenders, new legislation, governance and data quality as set out in the February 2021 report to the Board.

## Continuous Improvements

3. A summary of the Leicestershire County Council Pension Fund's (the Fund) current position in regards to its key areas are attached within Appendix A, further detail on progress made can be found below:-

### Member Self Service (MSS)

4. The Fund provides a Member Self Service facility for scheme members on its website (https:/leicsmss.pensiondetails.co.uk/). All scheme members have the opportunity to register for an MSS account which allows them instant access to their pension details. It allows members to see the current value of their pension benefits as well as the ability to transfer documents securely to and from the pensions section. Active and deferred members are able to perform their own pension calculations, whilst pensioner members are able to download and print off payslips and P60s. A demonstration of the system was most recently provided to the Board following the meeting on 8th February 2021. A key aim for the Fund is to encourage scheme members to sign up for the service.

5. A very constructive meeting was held between officers from Pensions and Leicestershire Police in April, during which several areas were identified as ways of increasing the visibility of MSS. Specifically:

- The production of an intranet article intended to raise awareness and encourage sign up. This would be scheduled for release immediately prior to the production of Annual Benefit Statements towards the end of August;

- Consideration for inclusion in Leicestershire Police's virtual induction programme, currently being developed;
  Amendments to existing letters sent to staff following a change in contract or upon leaving.

  A follow up meeting has been scheduled for mid-June.

6. Statistics regarding the current number of scheme members registered have been provided below. The figures demonstrate clearly that the closer to retirement age a member is, the more likely they are to register for the site. However, the intention is to increase registration across all age groups.

| | All Employers | County | City | Police |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Active Members** | **12,436 (34.2%)** | **2,833 (35.6%)** | **2,754 (33.1%)** | **734 (43.3%)** |
| 0-39 | 2,271 (20.8%) | 548 (23.9%) | 444 (19.0%) | 155 (25.0%) |
| 40-49 | 2,670 (29.1%) | 621 (29.3%) | 536 (26.9%) | 136 (38.4%) |
| 50-59 | 4,914 (43.2%) | 1,079 (43.7%) | 1,119 (41.1%) | 301 (59.5%) |
| 60+ | 2,581 (52.6%) | 585 (54.7%) | 655 (51.0%) | 142 (66.0%) |
| **Deferred Members** | **7,586 (25.0%)** | **2,360 (24.1%)** | **1,714 (22.2%)** | **294 (30.7%)** |
| 0-39 | 1,080 (14.6%) | 260 (13.5%) | 218 (11.9%) | 71 (18.5%) |
| 40-49 | 1,766 (20.9%) | 499 (19.2%) | 406 (18.4%) | 76 (30.2%) |
| 50-59 | 3,700 (31.6%) | 1,227 (29.3%) | 879 (29.5%) | 117 (43.8%) |
| 60+ | 1,040 (37.4%) | 374 (35.5%) | 211 (30.3%) | 30 (52.6%) |
| **Pensioner Members** | **10,753 (39.4%)** | **3,759 (36.0%)** | **2,669 (38.7%)** | **389 (48.6%)** |
| **Dependant Members** | **564 (20%)** | **204 (20.1%)** | **152 (20.9%)** | **18 (23.1%)** |

**Table 1: Member Self Service Statistics as at 21st April 2021**
**Figures show members who have partially or completely registered for MSS**

7. A key performance indicator relating to new registrations on MSS has been introduced with a monthly target of 650 but also an annual target of 7,800 to take into account monthly fluctuations. This is part of the Fund's quarterly Administration Report to the Board.

8. In addition, several minor changes have been made to the site, with the intention of increasing visibility of the information held on the website.

9. More retirement option forms have also been prepared, to increase the number of registered members who will be able to receive their correspondence through the site.

10. Finally, work has begun on a suite of 'Quick Start' guides to assist users in getting the most from the website. It is intended that these will cover registering on the site, using the benefits modeller and completing the death grant nomination screen initially.

## Implementation of New Postage, Printing and Scanning Solutions

11. An agreement has been put in place for officers from Leicestershire County Council's Central Print Team to take over the scanning of incoming post. This arrangement started at the beginning of April and the transition has proved successful so far. It reduces the amount of time Pensions Officers would be required to spend in County Hall, as once incoming post is scanned, the next stage of the process, i.e. to index the documents can be done whilst working remotely. This also helps with Business Continuity arrangements in the event of any future major incident. Discussions are also ongoing regarding arrangements for Central Print to deal with printing.

## Employer Risk

12. Officers have arranged to purchase EPIC (Employers Pensions Information Centre), a product developed by South Yorkshire Pension Fund. EPIC is an employer database that is designed to assist officers in the recording of key employer data. It has been designed to enable the recording of key items that are not held in altair including financial data and employer contacts, which will make targeted correspondence easier to produce. It will also provide alerts for annual exercises such as bond reviews, employer policies and the storage of key documentation, e.g. admission agreements. An implementation date has not yet been agreed and is subject to South Yorkshire's other commitments.

## Pension Scams

13. Pension Scams are an area that The Pensions Regulator (TPR) is keen to highlight across the pensions industry. The Fund fully supports this and have signed up for their 'Pledge to Combat Pension Scams' which encourages administrators to do what they can to protect scheme members. An extract from the TPR website is provided in Appendix B.

14. Officers therefore have plans to put in place additional web content to raise awareness of scams that relate to pension benefits, along with a downloadable leaflet, "Don't let a scammer enjoy your retirement". Links to external sites will also be added, including the Financial Conduct Authority's 'ScamSmart' website. A further link pointing to scam information will also be added to the notes relating to Annual Benefit Statements, one of the most popular areas of the site.

15. In addition, arrangements are in place for all members of the Payments and Taxation team to enrol on a 45 minute e-learning module covering pension scams, which is available on The Pensions Regulator website.

## Recommendation

16. It is recommended that the Board notes all areas of the report.

## Equality and Human Rights Implications

None specific

## Appendices

Appendix A – Summary of current position

Appendix B – The Pension Regulator Scams Pledge Information

## Background Papers

8 February 2021 - Local Pension Board – Pension Fund Continous Improvements Report – February 2021

## Officers to Contact

Ian Howe

Pensions Manager

Telephone: (0116) 305 6945

Email: Ian.Howe@leics.gov.uk


Declan Keegan

Assistant Director of Strategic Finance and Property

Telephone: (0116) 305 6199

Email: Declan.Keegan@leics.gov.uk